

CONTENTS

English Section

1.	Matri Vani	...	...	...	1
2.	The Sad-Guru— M. M. Varma	...	...	...	3
3.	From the Diary of a European —Melita Maschmann	...	...	...	7
4.	Ma Anandamayi in Madras and Tiruvannamalai —S. S. Cohen	...	...	...	15
5.	Reminiscences—Brahma Datta Dikshit	...	...	...	28
6.	From an Indian Journey — Astrid Setterwall Angstrom	...	...	...	32
7.	Old Diary Leaves—Atmananda	...	...	...	37
8.	Matri Lila	...	...	...	45



*Just as there is a veil of ignorance for the individual,
so there is also a door to Knowledge.*

MĀTRI VĀNI

Undertake only work that is an aid to *sādhana*; so that no time may be wasted by attending to it. Anything at all can be accomplished by sustained effort. You must spare no pains to make the mind concentrated. How many lives has man not frittered away in eating, drinking and sleeping! "I am immortal"—this is the idea that should give direction to your life.



According to one's actions the fruit is reaped. Nevertheless, by the contemplation of God, fear withdraws. Whether in the company of saints and seekers after Truth or in solitude, in whatever way it may be, you will have to invoke Him, otherwise freedom from the veil of ignorance cannot be won. Is it possible ever to bribe God? By cheating, you yourself alone will be cheated.



When one sees a stone, it cannot be called a *vigraha*;* and seeing a *vigraha* it cannot be called a stone. Where it is regarded as a focus for the Presence of God, there He actually *is*. Just as it is said that everything is God's own *vigraha*. Once it is regarded as God's *vigraha*, it is only fitting that one should strive after the direct perception of this fact. So long as one speaks of a stone one is foolish,

* *Vigraha*—Concrete External Presence as Form.

An image consecrated through *mantras* or through the devotion and adoration of the worshipper becomes the Deity Itself. It is therefore incorrect to translate *vigraha* as 'idol' or 'image'.

the fact of God's immanence has not yet been grasped. The delight in the things of this world, in sense-objects is fleeting indeed. It does not last, it is impermanent. But where God and God alone stands revealed, there is no such thing as impermanence. Your attention is directed towards the world, not towards the Eternal, you are identified with that which is transient, in constant flux. What is revealed thereby? The perishable. In the perishable there is no Self-revelation. How can Reality, true Being be in that? For the destructible has not been destroyed. The perishable must perish.

*

*

*

When the mind is full of worldly desires, it is their very nature to make the mind confused. This is why effort is necessary. So long as you do not become absorbed in *dhyāna* and *japa*, it has to be performed by constant endeavour. To be moderate in eating, sleeping and so forth is imperative. Look, when you go on a journey you take with you only as much as you need. You don't carry along all that is in your home. Thus, when becoming a pilgrim on the path to God, you should take only exactly as much food and sleep as will help you to live always in the presence of God. There is a saying: 'As one eats so one becomes'. Thus, withdraw the mind from outer things and make it turn within.

— — —

The Sad-Guru

M. M. VARMA

In a previous issue of *Ānanda Vārtā* (Hindi Section), some fascinating side-lights had appeared from the pen of Swami Narayanānanda Tirtha on the question whether Sri Sri Mā Anandamayī herself gave 'initiation' to aspirants. A significant point made out in the article appeared to be that, though Sri Mā herself never gives formal initiation, many an aspirant have a deep personal impression of receiving initiation from her in a profound, inner sense—in different indirect ways or through her sweet, kindly gaze, etc.

Sri Mā attaches great importance to the Guru, and many of her devotees take formal initiation from different Mahātmās, some from the venerable *Didimā*. Sri Mā encourages this, although she herself does not give formal initiation. That does not mean that she can disclaim her status *vis-a-vis* the Source-Guru, so to say. The Guru is not the body; and the *Guru tattva* is one, from which our MOTHER is inseparable. Indeed, there are many spiritual seekers who look upon her as Mother and *Sad-guru* in one. A person who has even once received her *kirpa-drishti* may be forgiven if he or she declines to differentiate it very much from 'initiation'.

So, apart from the general practice of *sādhakas* taking formal *Guru-dīkṣā*, there would appear to be a wider aspect of Sri Mā's teaching on the subject. In the light of the same, the inner significance, the higher potential of the Guru can be better understood from Sri Mā's own observations, some of which are quoted below (chiefly from certain old issues of *Ānanda Vārtā*):—

"God is the real Guru.

"It is the Beloved Himself who appears as Guru.

“The real Guru is our own *Ātmā* (Self).

“There is a state in which one realizes that one’s Guru is the World-Teacher and the World-Teacher one’s Guru. When the status of a Guru becomes revealed to one, one understands that it has nothing to do with any *person*; the Guru is none else but the World-Teacher. Guru is the name for Him who, out of deep darkness, can reveal the hidden Truth..... One’s Guru exists in many forms as the Guru of each and everyone, and everyone else’s Guru is in fact one’s Guru : now you see how the Guru is one.

“A Guru is not an ordinary preceptor—a Guru is He who has the capacity to deliver man from the sea of becoming (*bhava sāgara*).

“There are various kinds of initiation : by *mantra*, by touch, by a glance, by instruction. Contact with a Superman does bear fruit..... Then again, there is yet another possibility : without instruction, without a glance, touch or *mantra*, power may be conferred, whether the recipient be aware of it at that very moment or only very much later....

“Furthermore, just as a flood carries everything along in complete equality, so the Superman quite naturally and spontaneously makes his own what was wrongly believed to be alien. Here ‘mine’ and ‘thine’ do not exist – only the Self, Self luminous, He and He alone... A mother does not keep accounts of what she does for her children – for are they not her own ?

“Everything can be made possible through the Guru’s Grace’.

Maharshi RAMANA too did not give formal initiation to anyone. Nonetheless, many devotees would bear unflinching witness to having received initiation from Him through His benign gaze or through an inner outpouring of His grace in subtle ways. In striking similarity to Sri Mā’s utterances on the subject as regards the real import of the Guru, will be read the observations of Maharshi Ramana:—

“Guru’s silence in the loudest *updeśa*. All other *dikṣā* (initiation)* are derived from *mauna* (silence).....They are therefore secondary. Does the Guru hold you by the hand whisper something in the ear? You imagine him to be like you yourself. Because you are with a body you think that he is also a body in order to do something tangible to you. His work lies within.”

“There is no difference between God, the Guru and the Self. God, who is immanent, in His Grace takes pity on the devotee and manifests Himself as a being according to the devotee’s standard. The devotee thinks that He is a man and expects relationship as between individuals. But the Guru who is God or the Self incarnate, works from within..... Thus, the Guru is both ‘external’ and ‘internal’. From the ‘exterior’ He gives a push to the mind to turn inward ; from ‘interior’ He pulls the mind towards the Self.

“For the *Jñāni* (Realized Soul) all are one. He sees no distinction between Guru and disciple. He knows only one Self, not a myriad selves as most people do ; so for him how can there be any distinction between persons? However, for the seeker the difference between persons is there. For him there is undoubtedly the relationship of Guru and disciple.

“Guru not being physical, his contact will continue after his form vanishes. Still, one can go to another Guru after one’s Guru passes away. After all, Gurus are one, as none of them is the form.

“The disciple’s experience of the Master’s Grace whereby he gets spiritual awakening, is likened unto that of the elephant waking up from sleep on seeing a lion in his dream. Just as the mere sight of the dream-lion wakes up the elephant from his sleep, even so the mere gracious glance of the Master dispels the disciple’s sleep of ignorance and awakens him to the Real.

* e.g. *sparsh* (touch), *chakshus* (sight) etc.

“Of course, coal takes time to ignite, but charcoal is comparatively, quicker, while gunpowder ignites immediately.

“However, just as what got into the jaws of a tiger never comes out, those who have come under the benign notice of a Guru would never be forsaken”.

* * *

Such is the glory of the *Sad-Guru* ! The *Sad-Guru* is indeed a Messenger of Certainty. And it is experience of those who have taken refuge in the holy feet of a Divine Personality that, *ipso facto*, they are beneficiaries of initiation.

Jai Ma !

From the Diary of a European

MELITA MASCHMANN

VIII

(*Translated from German*)

Ahmedabad, November 1963.

A *Samyam Mahavrata*, a week of fasting and meditation is being held here. The Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha arranges for such a function every year, usually in a famous place of pilgrimage. This time an exception has been made to this rule to fulfil the last wish of an ardent devotee of many years' standing. Shortly before passing away, about four years ago, he requested Mataji to have a *Samyam Mahavrata* performed in his compound at his expense. His family was most anxious to fulfil his desire.

From the first moment one receives the impression that the function has been organized with much generosity and efficiency. We are met at the railway station and are taken by cars to the residence of our host. In his garden he has erected a pretty little cottage made of asbestos sheets for Mataji's use. Nearby an elegant, very spacious pandal for the *satsang* has been put up. It is well constructed and equipped with lights, sixteen electric ceiling fans and loudspeakers. About two thirds of the area are roped off and reserved exclusively for the participants of the *Samyam Vrata*. Everyone of them should have sufficient space to sit comfortably and without touching his neighbour, an indispensable condition for serious spiritual exercises. In the space beyond the ropes guests from Ahmedabad are accommodated.

The participants of the *Vrata*, who have come from all over India, are put up in the houses of neighbours. For those who live a little further away, there are usually cars to take them to their place of residence.

The *vratis* are allowed to choose between two types of diet, classes A and B. On the first day all the participants observe a complete fast on Ganges water. Several tanks containing the precious liquid have been placed in the garden and we are asked to drink of it as much as possible, since it is supposed to purify both body and soul. The water has been brought specially from Hardwar in sealed tins. On the following days, those who have chosen the diet of class A partake of one simple meal at midday only and fast again on Gangeswater on the 7th day, while class B receives in addition to the repast at midday a tumbler full of hot milk every night and also a midday meal on the last day. There is of course no smoking, no chewing of betel, no tea and no coffee during the whole week.

The main programme of the morning begins with half an hour's recitation from the Vedas and *kirtana*, followed by collective silent meditation from 8-9 a. m. and that of the afternoon starts with a similar exercise from 3-4 p. m. The rest of the time is occupied by readings from the Scriptures, lectures and religious music up to 10 p. m. and sometimes longer. At midday there is a fairly large interval, during which however *kirtana* is sung by small groups taking turns. From the first day I have the impression that an elite has gathered here : people who are serious in their spiritual pursuits. One can observe that quite a number of them are not anymore beginners in the practice of meditation. The general standard of education appears to be high. Many faces of both men and women, young and old, bear witness to their spiritual heritage and self-mastery.

The evening before the actual function commences, we are asked to reserve our seats for the whole week by placing our *āsanas* somewhere within the enclosure for *vratis*. Mataji, surrounded by a varying number of Swamis, is seated on an elevated platform. At times her mother also appears there for a short while.

What Mataji achieves physically in these days is quite incomprehensible. She remains in the pandal for most of the programme. Every morning I am told that she has had hardly two or three hours of rest during the night. In front of her cottage rows of people are at all times waiting to talk to her privately. Continuously cars arrive, carrying some distinguished citizen of the country, be he a minister, a scholar, a mahatma or a business magnate. Several times daily whole families or other groups come who wish to do *arati*. Whole schools gather to have her *darśana*.

Again and again one wonders: how can any human being, and even more so one of Mataji's age, stand all this? But as soon as one sets one's eyes on her, all anxieties are allayed: she sparkles with dynamism. Often one hears her laughter from somewhere. Or one suddenly notices how she escapes people by stepping into a car. Numerous householders and institutions have solicited her visit. As soon as she enters the pandal the general attention reaches a climax which greatly helps the speakers. Suddenly even the tired people are able to concentrate again.

It is wonderful with what ease the problem: 'elite or masses' has been solved here. The actual *vratīs* have every convenience they require, while hundreds of outsiders also profit daily by the week of *sādhana* in a way that meets their needs. Many of the *vratīs* do not only strictly observe the fast, but also manage with a minimum of sleep. At 4 a. m. already some sit for their prayers in the pandal where they are able to concentrate undisturbed. Even during the interval at midday several are sitting in corners doing *japa*. One can feel that many have shut out everything else. I have met a number who observe silence for the whole week. Among them are not a few who have something very convincing in their appearance, their behaviour and the expression of their faces: maturity, kindness and wisdom.

The organization of the actual daily programme is in the hands of a young *brahmachari*, who has been with Mataji since his boyhood. He attends to his difficult task with a rare amount of skill and tact. The young man holds the reins very lightly. His voice never sounds irritated, not even loud when he gives instructions over the microphone. Occasionally he raises his hands and half laughing, half supplicating begs for cooperation in some measure that has to be taken. The remarkable thing is that he succeeds in maintaining perfect order in spite of his consistent abnegation of the use of power.

The standard of the speakers seems to be amazingly high. Everyone of them improvises freely. Not one holds even a small piece of paper with notes in his hands. The liveliness and capacity to modulate their voices, the expressiveness of their gestures, all this makes it difficult for the audience to follow their own trains of thought or to doze off. The most striking difference of the style of such religious meetings between east and west seems to be that in the west they are mostly grave, solemn and often rather stiff, whereas here one-third of the precious time is spent in laughter. All the lectures deal with serious subjects. Interpretation of sacred Scriptures, religious education, problems of religious life in the family, meditation, contemplation, etc. and yet, at times one peal of laughter is followed by another. Among the speakers are personalities revered throughout India for their wisdom and learning. Unfortunately I hardly understand any thing of their talks but the atmosphere which conveys competence, sensitiveness and profound religious experience allows me to participate to a certain degree.

The whole congregation welcomes the moment when the microphone is placed before Mataji during the last half hour of the daily programme. Then questions may be put to her. Mataji replies with the rapidity of lightning. No sooner has the question been pronounced, the answer is

already there. Sometimes just one or two words, sometimes a series of sentences. Mataji herself declares that her replies are not mind-made. One can notice that this is so. She opens her mouth, and not her reason but her '*kheyāla*' responds. Quite frequently her words make the whole pandal roar with laughter for minutes together. Mataji herself is so amused about her replies as if someone else had given them. Off and on it happens that she suddenly seems startled at a question: "I have no *kheyāla* to reply to this," she says. Occasionally she passes a question on to a Swami or Pandit. As far as I can judge it is usually a matter of some complicated or disputed interpretations of Scriptures, which are subjects for scholars. But perhaps she just wishes to make a friendly gesture towards the learned speakers. Often a voice from the audience can then be heard: "We want to hear your answer, Mataji, !"

Again and again Mataji admonishes all seekers to abandon the world. More precisely : not their worldly duties, but all worldly distractions. To pursue worldly pleasures means to tread the path of death, whereas to relinquish them is to advance towards "the death of death." Usually one imagines an apostle of world abnegation to be of a gloomy, ascetic type. I feel sure that this type also must exist in India. But I find it surprising and thought-provoking that the attitude that demands a complete breaking away from the world is lived by the most serene and joyous human beings I have ever come across. Almost all the speakers, amongst whom are many *sannyāsis*, possess a particle of the fluid of serenity and cheerfulness that is so fascinating in Mataji.

During the hours of silent meditation in the morning and early afternoon the atmosphere becomes very intense. Many of the *vratis* sit absolutely still during the whole hour. Some keep their spine very straight, others look more relaxed. Mataji sits without any effort or stiffness. Usually she starts by sitting upright and after some time leans back on

a cushion roll. Sometimes she remains sitting upright throughout the entire meditation. After having kept her eyes shut for several minutes, she opens them, turns her head to one side and then very slowly rotates it by 180°. In this way she can look at every single persons in the pandal. Her gaze moves calmly and attentively along the rows of meditating men and women, without lingering anywhere. Systematically it takes in the whole assembly. Not because it is looking for something, but because it wishes to distribute equally to all a spark of its divine Light. Mataji's face at that time bears a completely impersonal expression. One is reminded of a searchlight that is a mediator of light, not its source. Often Mataji repeats this gazing round in the second half of the hour. At that time I observe an indescribable kindness in her features, an expression that makes me surmise that during the meditation she communicates with the more advanced of the *vratīs* in a way of which I cannot have the faintest idea. Her countenance seems to evince that she dives into a realm of unfathomable peace. In order to meet her there one must have traversed some distance on the path to Illumination.

Noteworthy are Mataji's movements during the time of collective meditation. For instance, when her hair gets into her face. Her arm raises itself infinitely slowed down and sometimes stops half way as if it had forgotten its destination. The impulse that she has received from her consciousness seems vague and not of normal strength.

At the end of the hour, when the soft call "*Hē pita, hē hitā.....*" is intoned, Mataji on some days is at once "down here" again, on other days only after several minutes. When she takes longer to "return", there is an effulgence in her eyes, a reflection of the Great Light in which she has been immersed.

Above Mataji's head there is a modern painting representing a yogi wandering through a forest. His body seems to glow. His radiation attracts animals to him. The picture

is the last of a series illustrating the stages on the spiritual path. On the picture over Mataji's head, birds assemble indefatigably, while they don't even go near the other paintings. The same holds good for a few squirrels which constantly play in the timberwork just above Mataji's seat. Nowhere else in the pandal can I discover even a single one. Perhaps this is the living confirmation of what is indicated in the painting : that the Enlightened One attracts also animals.

Today Mataji has sung. To call it "singing" is equally wrong as to say of someone who is performing a rope-dance that he is going for a walk. It was simply indescribable : a course of human demeanour so different from anything I have ever experienced that I feel like saying : a mountain has sung or an angel or a rose.....It did not sound 'beautiful' (the girls say Mataji has a cold)—her voice was strangely rough, very gentle, almost soundless. She reclined her head slightly and closed her eyes. Her lips were half open. I saw only that the total letting go of the world, which one can at times notice in her face, was shining in her features. There was a deep hush in the pandal. The stillness streamed out of her like water from a powerful spring and overflowed everything. Suddenly the first call emerged :

'He Bhagavān ! A delicate, blissful cry.

Dhyēa Bhagavān

Prēya Bhagavān

Jnēya Bhagavān

Shrēya Bhagavān

Ānandamaya—Hē Bhagavān

Mangalamaya—Hē Bhagavān

and again : Hē Bhagavān."

Little melody, hardly any words, only invocation : "God!" She does not sing, the sound gushes out of her so

spontaneously and with such bewitching sweetness, like the perfume of a matchless rose. THE Love-song; all those that one has ever heard are just ashes. Beloved God! The bliss of the drop, which, returning home falls from the cloud into the ocean—becomes the ocean. But these words and metaphors are only paths that mislead. Nothing occurs except the invocation of Love. "God, singing to Himself," would my Indian friends say. And although we do not understand it, it would surely express more of the truth than we are able to convey with our means.

The *Samyam Mahavrata* concludes with a fire sacrifice, celebrated by several priests. Then Mataji stands on a landing and distributes *prasāda* : sugar balls stream as from a fountain in all directions. At midday a delicious meal is served, consisting of a variety of tasty dishes and sweets. Over the loudspeaker we are warned : "Be careful, *vratīs*, you have become used to frugal and scanty diet, do not eat too much, it might not agree with you !" One of our hosts says, "This feast is an ingenious climax of a week of fasting and austerity. Whether one is able to exercise moderation in spite of feeling hungry and in face of the tempting dishes shows whether one is a good *vratī*."

Ma Anandamayi in Madras and Tiruvannamalai

S. S. COHEN

(Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai.)

It is seldom that Rishis in this country go about to preach their gospels and inspire and uplift the people by their example and inner experience. Usually they are sedentary and, by the power of their mighty tapas and Supreme Realization, automatically act as giant spiritual magnets and attract to their abodes seekers from many lands and climes. Yet, there are illustrious names in history, e. g. Lord Buddha, Sri Shankaracharya, Lord Gouranga and others, who travelled the length and breadth of the land and showed the way to infinite peace and happiness by their teachings and devotional songs. To this category belongs Sri Anandamayi Mata, the famous saint of Bengal, whose name is known in every household in North India. Although she became known very early in life and began her peregrinations about two decades ago, she had all this time not felt inclined to turn South*—or could it be that Heaven had reserved her peculiar activities for the North, while South India was enjoying the ineffable presence of two Rishis of the first magnitude : Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo, who brilliantly shone there for about half a century : Rishis who could have illumined any age by their vivid spiritual lustre ? Now that both of these have passed into Mahanirvana and the people have to have a living God who speaks the language of men to turn their hearts and minds to Him, Mataji

† Reprinted from Ananda Varta, Vol, I/2 in 1953.

* She visited South India once many years ago, when she was known only to a few : (Editor's note)

has come South to fill the gap. She set foot on the soil of Madras on October 27th, 1952, at about 8-45 a.m. with twenty of her devotees, headed by Sri Hari Babaji Maharaj and Didi, her personal attendant. She was received at the railway station by some of the most prominent citizens of the city and brought to the spacious bungalow "Abbotsbury", belonging to Sri J.H. Tarapore, in Teynampet, Mount Road. In "Abbotsbury's" vast grounds a large shamyana with an inner bedroom had been constructed for her own use out of mats and palm leaves over which whole pieces of new long-cloth and beautiful curtains were spread. It was suitably decorated, carpeted and electrified.

Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan of Ramanashram had met Sri Mataji last year in Delhi, and had taken a promise from her that if she ever blessed South India by a visit, she Mrs. T. should be given the chance to serve her by making all the arrangements necessary for her stay, etc. Last September the promise was fulfilled and Mrs. T. immediately contacted the highest in the administrative, juridical and social life of Madras, and with her characteristic tremendous energy in a short time succeeded in forming a powerful Reception Committee as well as making excellent arrangements for the honoured guest's accommodation, which made her stay of one week a very great success. The people of the city poured in their hundreds to have Mataji's darśana. From the first to the last day of her stay there was a constant stream of visitors, dozens of whom daily kept waiting for hours to see her. Her appearance, her magnetic personality and her sweet conversation charmed everyone and attracted big audiences to her bhajans and talks. The language difficulty was a serious bar for the majority of Southerners to contact and understand her. The translation from Hindi into Tamil or English proved extremely inadequate to convey to the people the essence of her teaching. The translators who knew Hindi were not sufficiently conversant with the spiritual subject with which she dealt, and those who were so conversant, did

not know Hindi, with the result that the most significant parts of her answers were either slurred over or distorted. Mataji herself did not make it any easier for the baffled translator to wade his way through all she said; but out of the depth of her knowledge of the Supreme she poured out streams of ideas, which kept him whipping his memory to retain all he heard, and his wits to unravel the mystery of her meaning. Nonetheless the audiences remained extremely satisfied, particularly those who could directly contact her through the Hindi language.

Her very presence silently exhaled the perfume of purity and joyful innocence which pervaded and won all hearts. Her child-like, guileless laughter, the hope she instilled in the minds of the troubled questioners, the deep sympathy and understanding with which she met their suffering, gave immense solace and turned sorrow to happiness and at times to tears of relief.

Mataji's one-week stay was crowded with engagements; even the few hours she could snatch in the daytime for some rest were not without peering eyes and private interviews. Many were these interviews, wherein woes and laments and prayers for redress were made to her, as it is generally done to the sacred image of the Mother of the Universe in temples. She patiently listened to them all, and with infinite compassion answered sweetly and persuasively. One of the questions was—

“Do ceremonies performed for the dead actually benefit them? If so, for how long?”

Mataji : Yes, they do benefit them, and for always, for even if the departed person were reborn, these prayers, being spiritual in nature, would not fail to uplift the soul, which, after all, never dies, but remains the same from life to life, continually progressing in its onward march towards God, till it finally merges in Him and thus attains its Libera-

tion—*Mukti*—, which is Supreme, Everlasting Bliss.

Then knowing the history of the grief-stricken couple who had put the question, she related anecdotes of bereavements which resembled the one they had suffered, and told how in one case the departed child was seen by his pining mother in a dream extremely happy in the company of thousands of other children, and how the deep yearnings of the mother caused the soul of her dead child to take birth again in her womb very soon afterwards, which disturbed his rest and retarded his progress. Grief is thus shown to be most harmful to the beloved-ones whose loss we mourn. The other case she related was that of the death of an only son. The mother, seeing the father unconcernedly smoking his hukka in a corner, piteously wailed and, with abundant tears accused him of hard-heartedness, to which he replied : “Do not think me to be indifferent to my son’s death, but just now I am puzzling, which son’s death of all the dozens of sons I have had in the last eighteen lives I should mourn.” This gave great comfort to the couple concerned, which made them look upon Mataji as a saviour-mother in whose lap they could always take shelter from the stormy blasts of life.

On the night of October 29th, Sri Mataji for the first time answered questions in public. The talk was opened by a young lady who wanted to know the remedy for the fainting spells she had contracted almost from childhood, and which used to seize her whenever she heard bhajans, attended puja or concentrated on the statue of Sri Krishna in her house. Mataji cross-examined her, and for ten minutes gave her full explanation of the import of her complaint, and finally exhorted her to practise self-control. “As”, she argued, “you remain unconscious during these spells, and as they have all this long time caused you no spiritual progress, nor furthered your sādhanā, you should consider them unfavourable, and therefore make an effort to steady yourself whenever the impulse to

faint begins to be felt. Take to *japam* and strengthen your mind by repeating God's name," and, placing her hand on the shoulder of the young lady, Mataji, smilingly, and with extreme tenderness, said: "You have had the darshan of Sri Krishna, now I am having your darshan" and folded her hands before her in salutation, which made everybody laugh, except the young lady who burst into tears out of excessive joy. At this stage a voice asked :

Voice : What is the easiest way to God ?

Mataji : Profuse tears.

Voice : And if tears do not come ?

Mataji : Then you should seek the company of those who shed tears, namely *Satsang*. This is the easiest way to God through love and devotion.

The next night, the same voice rose :

Voice : People are asked to worship God, to sing His praise in bhajan, to perform puja, to repeat constantly His name, and they do all this without knowing what God is. Will you please explain ?

Mataji : God is all-knowledge, and one cannot know His true nature till one attains Self-realization. Then one will find Him to be none other than oneself, the only *Atman*, the only Self there is, that He is with form as the world and without form as *chit*, Pure Consciousness. In the meantime prayers, worship, *japa*, *dhyāna*, etc. have to be performed. A lady stood up and asked with warmth :

Lady : How can our minds be free for prayer and meditation when we are so much burdened by work and family responsibilities : husband, children, etc.. ? What should we do in that case ?

Mataji : Let the work be done of its own accord without your exertion. Work without the feeling that it is you who are working. Take it to be God's work, done through you as His instrument. Then your mind will be at rest and peaceful. That is prayer and meditation,

Sri Anandamayi Ma has a partiality for temples and ashrams, and takes great interest in visiting as many of them as possible. It is erroneously stated in certain quarters that the *Mukta*, the Enlightened One has, by merging with the Absolute, cut himself off completely from the world and its activities. These *Muktas*, on the contrary, enjoy the world without the sense of participating in it, and in all the actions they perform they are free from the sense of doership and thus free from sorrow and delusion. They see the Divine Mind in the multitude of forms, colours and qualities that fill the universe in an eternal Play, which is all joy and bliss. They experience this gigantic Play within their own mind, which is also God's, and themselves its detached spectators. Yet, Mataji looks at the *murti* in temple as the outer symbol of the Formless God in a special sense, and feels the devotional fervour which, for decades and centuries, lakhs of worshippers have poured out to it.

So, on the 28th morning she and her party motored up to the big temple in Mylapore and to a few smaller ones in the city. On the 29th at 5 a. m., they visited the famous temple of Conjeevaram about fifty miles from Madras ; and on the 30th, the Seven Pagodas (Mahabalipuram), where ruins of many old Hindu shrines exist in profusion. On their way back they climbed to the world-renowned Tirukazugukuntram mandir on the top of a hill, where two eagles come every day from a long distance at about 11 a.m. just to feed from the hand of a special priest and return with clocklike regularity in fair and foul weather and without a single day's break in all the many centuries of which tradition speaks. As Mataji's knees were too weak to permit her to climb the great number of steps, she was carried to the top in a palanquin.

Ramana Bhajan is being performed on the last thursday of every month in the house of Sri P.S.G. Rao in Adyar, Madras. Mataji had accepted an invitation to attend it. As in this month it falls on the 30th, she and her party went in the evening of that day to Gandhinagar, Adyar. In the gard-

-en of his bungalow Sri P. S. G. Rao had made excellent arrangements for the bhajan. Mataji sat on a sofa under floral decorations, and facing her at the farther end squatted scores of Brahmins who chanted in rhythmic cadence the Veda verses which have been daily recited in Ramanashram at Tiruvannamalai during and after the life time of the Master, followed by "*Upadesa Saram*" in Sanskrit, the verses which He himself (Sri Ramana Bhagavan) had composed. The very large audience spread out on the lawn, in the whole open space and the verandas of the bungalow. Mataji's presence, the large exhibited photograph of the Maharishi and His all-pervading influence, the *Veda parayanam* and the incense uplifted and thrilled all present.

Sri Mataji's evenings were usually devoted to visiting outstanding places of interest, e.g. the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, the Ramakrishna Math in Mylapore, the Gujerati Sangha, the Bengali Club, and the gardens of certain people, one of which was that of Sri J.H. Tarapore. It must be incidentally mentioned here that Anandamayi Ma never enters a house where a *grihasta* lives. All she does to bless the person concerned, is to enter his compound, sometimes even without stepping out of the car, halt for a few minutes and then leave. At Sri Tarapore's, however, she did come out, but stood on the car platform, and, opening the big box of apples offered to her along with other fruits, with her own hand distributed almost all its contents to those present, not excluding the gardener of the bungalow. The Tarapore family and those who received *prasād* directly from her hand felt themselves singularly blessed by this special mark of her Grace. At the Gujrati Sangha and the Bengali Club there was music, but more than the music in the former place, there was the riotous joy of the children who swarmed every inch of it, even in laps, over shoulders and backs, and under knees. The Bengali music was exquisite.

On some days there were at "Abbotsbury" three darshans, namely :

10 to 11-30 a.m.
4 to 5-30 p.m.
7 to 9 00 p.m.

The first two items were variable according to the circumstances and the engagements of the day concerned, but the last-one did not vary, and was solely reserved for bhajan, except the last fifteen minutes, when all remained in silent meditation. These attracted large crowds which were accommodated in the wide open space of the garden just outside the shamyana. On the last five nights after 9 p.m, when the majority of the audience dispersed to their distant homes, the minority, which was appreciably large, moved into the shamyana ante-room and filled it to capacity. Mataji then came in, sat on the sofa and answered questions, some of which have been reported above. That was a happy time for all to have direct contact with her through speech. On one of the last nights a question was asked, as to when and at what age and through what *sādhana* she had attained Enlightenment. She laughed in her characteristic child-like way and said that she was not aware of any date or time when she had attained Enlightenment, she knew of no *sādhana* deliberately performed, nor of any suddenness in spiritual Illumination, which made a distinction between a life that had gone and a new-one that had taken its place, that she was now as she had ever been. We have had to draw our own conclusions.

On another night, November 1st, Dr.T.M.P. Mahadevan, Head of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Madras, undertook the difficult task of translating Mataji's answers on the spot, and the next day he gave the following written record of the talk :

"Where questions arise, there is answer too. Who questions whom? There is only one *Ātman* everywhere :

you are that. Where there is duality, there is misery. You are non-dual, eternal. You seek and desire truth, knowledge, bliss because you are that. No one wants *Mrityu, Ajñāna, Duhkha*, (Death, Ignorance, Sorrow). True, evil has a fascination for man, who, attracted by it, falls. This is due to *vāsanā*, which means non-recognition (*na*) of the existence of God (*vasa*). To counteract it, one must be attracted towards God, one's true Self. You are *pūrṇa* (complete).

Question : How to distinguish *pūrṇatā* from *apūrṇatā* ?

Mataji : You are *pūrṇa*, and so you ought to know. There is the veil of *ajñāna* ; but in the midst of that, there is the door of *jñāna*. You have to find yourself. Of course, the guru will help you. You can begin from anywhere. What is required is *ekāgratā* (one-pointedness). Enquire : "Who am I ?" and you will find the answer. Look at a tree : from one seed arises a huge tree; from it come numerous seeds, each one of which in its turn grows into a tree. No two fruits are alike. Yet it is one life that throbs in every particle of the tree. So, it is the same *Ātman* everywhere.

"All creation is that. There is beauty in the birds and in the animals. They too eat and drink like us, mate and multiply ; but there is this difference : we can realize our true nature, the *Ātman*. Having been born as humans we must not waste this opportunity. At least for a few minutes every day we must enquire as to who we are. It is no use taking a return ticket over and over again. From birth to death, and death to birth, is *samsāra*. But really we have no birth and no death. We must realize that.

Question : How do we know there is re-birth ? There is the function of breathing in the body. As soon as it stops we die. How can we say that we are born again ?

Mataji : Yes ; that is ignorance. Why go so far as re-birth ? One does not know what will happen the next moment. Yet, there is knowledge. Those who have crossed the veil of ignorance tell us that we are the eternal *Ātman*.

I am only a child and do not know how to lecture or give discourses. Just as a child, when it finds something sweet and good, takes it to his mother and father, so do I place before you what is sweet and good. You take whatever pleases you. Mine is only a child's prattle. In fact, it is you alone that question and you alone that answer. You beat the drum, and you hear the sound."

Mother addresses every man as 'pitaji' and every woman as 'mataji'.

At a very early hour on November 3rd, Mataji's car was ready to take her to Pondicherry, the next stage on her journey. Although it was very early in the morning, a number of admirers had collected earlier still to bid her farewell. Their hearts were full and heavy at parting from her. I looked at a particular face usually imperturbable, in which I was interested, and read in it a solemn, pensive emotion, which a month ago I could not have dreamt it was capable of feeling for any saint or any religious institution, and I heartily rejoiced. It was one of the miracles Mataji had performed in the short space of only one week: She had relieved the long pent-up sorrow of my friend.

TIRUVANNAMALAI

After attending one or two functions of the routine programme of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and spending the night in one of the Ashram houses near the seashore at Pondicherry, Mataji motored to the beautiful temple of Lord Nataraja at Chidambaram early next morning. Nataraja symbolises the Supreme Brahman dancing the Cosmic Dance as the manifested universe: the Formless Intelligence assuming countless forms and movements in an eternal Play.

Mataji was scheduled to arrive at Tiruvannamalai on the same day, the 4th, at 12-30 midday, when Mrs. Taleyarkhan in concert with the Trustees of the big Arunachaleswara temple and the local officials prepared to receive her with temple honours. But exactly at 11 a m., i.e. 90 minutes before the

scheduled time, her car quietly glided into Ramanashram ; thus leaving Trustees, officials, elephants, and priests cooling their heels in the shade of trees on the Chidambaram High Road, waiting for her, totally unaware of her early arrival.

A few minutes afterwards she went round the Ashram to see the places sanctified by the holy presence of Sri Ramana Bhagavan in his life-time. Before His samadhi, She reverently stood with folded hands, and enquired about how the sacred body had been buried, and whether there was a lingam on the *samādhi*. The lingam she could not see because it was covered with flower garlands. Then she entered Mathurbooteswara shrine, which was built over the remains of the Master's mother and climbed to the *sanctum sanctorum*, where she was shown Sri Chakra and the sacred lingam. At 5 p. m. she attended the usual *Veda parayanam* near Sri Maharishi's samādhi, and between 7 and 9 p. m. the bhajan programme, as in Madras.

All the Ashram devotees and many members of the Managing Committee who had come from Madras, gathered in the Ashram at 9 a. m. on the next day, the 5th. The ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of the Meditation Hall, which is proposed to be built over Sri Bhagavan's samādhi, was performed, and at its end, Sri Anandamayi Ma approached and strewed flowers over the foundation-stone to the joy of all present. Then she made the eight-mile pradakshina of Arunachala Hill by car.

At a darshan gathering on the 6th morning, Mataji replied to questions :

D. M. put the first question.

D. M. : The other day in Madras you said that if one has no tears to shed in the search for God, one should resort to *Satsang*. I have had *Satsang* for many years, and yet, I see no appreciable improvement in myself.

Mataji : Your being here now and your asking the question are tears. By tears is meant perseverance in the

search with devotion. How can you say then you have not benefited by those years of *Satsang*? But for them you might not have reached even so far.

A discussion ensued in which some of the Ashramites, Avadhut Baba, and lastly, Sri Hari Babaji took part.

On the same night, she delighted the Maharishi's disciples by leading the bhajan in calling the name of Bhagavan "Oh Bhagavan", "Eh Bhagavan", "Ha Bhagavan" etc.—for about ten minutes, suitably changing the modulations of the tune and the words of the appeal at each call. Her delicate, pure voice has the youthful timbre of that of a girl in her teens, which makes the glory of her spiritual state all the more captivating. It did captivate a neighbour at my left, judging from his loud groans and by what he later told me. Said he : "Seeing and hearing Mataji, I get flabbergasted. I am one of those half-determined seekers, who hang between the material and the spiritual, inclined to lose hold neither of the one nor of the other. Mataji seems to be my conscience in human flesh... Now the question is, to leap or not to leap."

The bhajan that night—the last night—was closed earlier than usual, as a Ramana devotee took the congregation to the big Hall and showed them some films he had taken of Sri Bhagavan sometime before His last illness. The Masters was not at His best in them : general debility had already overtaken His constitution, and the rheumatism in His knee-joints had turned his legs shaky. Yet, His countenance had not lost any of its radiance and dignity, and His movements any of their gracefulness, which must have told volumes to Sri Anandamayi, who had not seen Him in the flesh. After the brief show, a member of the Managing Committee approached Mataji and with folded hands begged her to visit our Ashram again, to which she smilingly replied ; "I am not going anywhere : I am always here. There is no going nor coming—all is *Ātman*," which very much reminded us of the very words of our Divine Guru, Sri Ramana Bhagavan.

On the 7th, at 5 a.m., Mataji stood under the arch of Sri Ramanashram gate in clear moonlight with Sirius brilliantly twinkling overhead. She looked around, and, seeing the small circle of Ramana bhaktas gathered to see her off, affectionately bade them farewell, then entered her car and sped away on her journey in the direction of the Southern Cross, extremely satisfied at the reception given to her here, and at the peaceful atmosphere of the Ashram. Sri Hari Babaji expressed a wish that their stay might have been a month instead of only three days. He was the next centre of attraction; but although self-asserting and strict in matters of time, a thing Sri Mataji never bothers about, he throughout effaced himself. His quietness and his very kind heart endeared him to all those who got to know him intimately.

Farewell, beloved Mataji and, to speak the language of men, God be with you in your holy mission to bring peace and good cheers to the thousands of your children who need them, and who eagerly crowd to behold Thy divine face, and, seeing it, turn their minds and hearts to God. "God, after all", say they then, "*does* exist, and not only in some remote world in this far-flung universe, but *here and now*".

Reminiscences

BRAHMA DATTA DIKSHIT

Ocean of peace and serenity, ocean in which all desires had met like Ganga and Yamuna, and yet calm and quiet; fountain of eternal happiness, full-blossomed life, and beauty transcending earthly standards : This was in my mind the picture of those saints about whom I had read a lot and who are called 'God Incarnate.'

During incarceration in 1920, I read about Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Rama Tirtha. I had seen Bapu. I had a craving to see a living embodiment of God with these my eyes. I knew persons who had witnessed Swami Rama reciting 'Om, Om, Om' with great joy and tears flowing down his cheeks, Malaviyaji wiping the sacred tears with his *dupatti*.

While picnicking at Kali Kuan, Vindhyachal, about 25 years ago, Brahmachari Ramananda narrated the glories of God in his own classic way. The atmosphere was very calm, the air filled with the fragrance of jasmin, the moon shining high above, and all around Nature lay smiling. Kirtan and spiritual conversation interspersed with light talk and food. One gentleman suggested to go and see Ma Anandamayī. I read in the 'Leader' that Mataji was due to arrive at Vindhyachal shortly. The nights were passed in expectation. In dreams I beheld the vision of Mother, the very face that tallied in all details with what I saw afterwards in waking. After that the longing for satsang and the desire to drink fully at the feet of this fountain grew strong. The ocean was deep and full, my cup frail and small. I cannot claim to be among God's devotees. This life of frailty human weaknesses has been kindled to spiritual light and depth, but all silently, simply by Mother's contact, breathing in the same serene atmosphere in which she lived, catching occasio-

nal glimpses of her divine smiles, and listening when Mother deigned to utter a few words. Her child-like behaviour thrilled all. Mahamahopadhyaya Sri Gopinathji used to come and sit by her. How Mother answered the most complicated questions in the simplest words, surprised all. Women with staunch faith, but unlettered, asked :

Question : Mataji, some say : "worship Krishna", some suggest : "worship Mahadeva," others fix fasting days, yet others say, "eat well to make the body strong;" some again say : "worship of the husband is real *Pūjā*". How are we to realize God and by what path ?

Mataji : Daily you take food : dal, rice, chapatis, vegetables, chutney, etc. Rice by itself you never eat, neither can you relish chutney alone. It is the proportionate mixing that makes food wholesome and tasty. In a similar way, engage in everything that leads to God. Sin resides only where the remembrance of God is thrown into the background and ephemeral things are given prominence. The *Guru*, *satsang* and your own conscience are always driving you towards God. Only do not lag and stop the voice of God.

An eminent lawyer asked : "Mataji, how can we realize God ? Can we also see God ?"

Mataji : Do you really want to see God ? How much time and labour you have devoted to the study of law ! How much do you devote or propose to devote to the realization of God ? Certainly God is greater than law.

Such straight and simple replies convinced all. In fact, I never asked any question. Before me I had the living answer to all queries and doubts. If her very presence and vision in the physical body cannot dispel illusion, I do not know what can.

Once I had a longing for kirtan in Mother's presence, but could not voice my hidden desire. When I was leaving,

Mother said : "Tomorrow you shall arrange for kirtan !" And to-morrow was the blessed day when Mother sang together with all and danced in spiritual ecstasy. The long and beautiful garland of roses from neck to foot, herself clothed in a spotless white sari and her sweet, entrancing voice can never be forgotten. I felt that I got far more than I deserved.

Another day I had a desire to touch Mataji's feet. When I was leaving, Brahmachariji asked me to purchase sandals for Mother. So, quite naturally, Mother allowed me to take the measurement of her feet. She smiled. I understood those smiles and they ennobled and guided me.

Luckily the measurement was taken on a piece of paper on which I had written a poem about Mother. When I recited it, she said : "So you can also recite poetry !"

I don't believe in ritual, yet I used to perform the *Nava Ratri Vrata* twice a year for a week, as purification of body and mind. Once, when in jail, just after I had completed the fast, perhaps in 1944, Mother came to jail to give *darśana*. Basu Babu had the privilege of her actual *darśana*. I was so fortunate as to receive *prasāda* and blessings in the form of a fine garland from Basu Babu.

In happiness Mother is always with me, and in distress which is the result of my own actions, she consoles and helps. But have I the courage to say that I am faithful to Mother ? I hang my head in shame when I remember that once I went for her *darśana* as usual and offered *praṇāma* from a distance. She ordered the door to be shut. She obviously did not approve of my going there. Why ? I know it, I deserved more than scolding and indifference. When you enter a temple, make sure that you are serene and pure in body and mind. An unclean body and a distracted mind spoil the serenity. Mother is never angry. She showers blessings and *prasāda* always. But as a Mother she does reprimand to guide on the path.

Once, at Sarnath, I had the audacity to ask what conversations had been held between her and Gandhiji. To which her stern and appropriate reply was : "All this won't be repeated here."

Only Mother can give me the opportunity to write the description of "In what form God revealed Himself to you" asked by a renowned *sanyāsi* and narrated by Mataji. My heart has tape-recorded it.

— — —

From an Indian Journey*

ASTRID SETTERWALL ANGSTROM

Try to be aware of all that gives you real joy! That brings you closer to God.

—Anandamayi Ma

Late one evening I took a taxi from the hotel where I lived outside of Benares. I had been given the opportunity to be present at a *Kirtan* in Anandamayi Ma's Ashram. The driver left the car in the main street, for the lanes along which he was going to conduct me were too narrow for a car to pass.

It is dusk. In the small stores that open up towards the lane I see people moving against the warm light of old-fashioned kerosene lamps. Those we meet have to step aside to let us pass. The driver asks for the location of the ashrama. Friendly voices answer him; arms raised out of folded scarves point the direction. The further we walk the more remote I feel from the ordinary ideas of time and space that rule our everyday lives.

Finally we arrive at a fairly big house and enter the patio where the driver settles down to wait. A European lady receives me. She wears a sari as most Westerners who live here do for practical reasons. I am told to take off my shoes and we mount a stair that leads to a loggia which widens into a veranda covered with heavy curtains, making it almost like a room. Inside this veranda, behind light iron-work gates, is a small shrine with large portraits of Anandamayi Ma.

*Translated from the original Swedish by the author and reprinted here with the kind permission of the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, Calif., U. S. A.

On a large cushion, in front of the gates, the Mother herself is sitting, all dressed in white. In the obscure light I can discern that her face is refined, with almost chiselled features. Her big brown eyes are intensely expressive—as if they held a secret joy in their depths. She radiates a reassured freedom that is owned only by one who has no desires. A friend who knew her in her youth tells me that she used to fall into long states of *samādhi*. It could happen any time when she was busy in her home. Therefore, she could never be left alone. Once she was in such a state for twenty-one days. She was unconscious of her body which had to be nursed and taken care of by others. But nowadays she seems to be constantly living in a state of bliss and at the same time to retain her consciousness of the world around. Even now I hear her joking with those who sit nearest to her and I notice how she bends forwards with keen interest to watch the love-play between two large insects on the floor. All the time this indescribable smile lingers on her face.

The veranda has become full of people. Silence falls. *Kirtan* begins. A number of girls sit together. One of them leads the singing and plays the accompaniment on a harmonium. At first only she and an elderly man sing together, but later the others join. The girl sings and plays with eyes closed in deep feeling: "Talk of Mother, sing of Mother, repeat the Mother's Name!" The refrain is only "Ma, Ma, Ma"—many, many times. There are several children among us. In front of me sits a tiny, slender boy who joins in the refrain with all the force he has. His whole body rocks in rhythm.

Now and then during the evening a part of the curtains is shoved aside. People enter from the darkness and prostrate before the Mother, adorning her knees and feet with garlands of white jasmins or yellow tagetis, as they would do before the image of the Mother goddess in the temples. Anandamayī Ma does not say anything. She only smiles her smile that includes everyone and all things.

The song continues. The Mother has been sitting with closed eyes. Now she opens them and calmly directs her glance to each one. It is a glance that penetrates. In this way she gives of her own purity, and she fans the spark of universal life that burns in everyone to a stronger and clearer flame. It is not always words that mean most. Many of the God-inspired ones give of their life in silence. There are others who after twenty or thirty years of silence perhaps put their wisdom into words. I have been told that the Mother does not talk much.

The number of wreaths at the feet of Anandamayi Ma increases all the time. After a while the singing stops. A young man with brightly shining eyes begins to play his Sarod and to sing alone, directing his song to the Mother whose eyes are resting on him. Apparently there is some fun towards the end of his song because all, including the Mother herself, laugh.

Now she nods to the girls and they begin to sing again, filling the room with praise of the Mother of the Universe who helps in need, the Divine Mother whom we meet in all forms, who creates and sustains. She also destroys but only to create anew, and at the same time She embraces us with merciful arms. Out of Her embrace we step into life on earth; in Her love we live; to Her heart we return. The first *mantra* we learn is "Ma". In many cases it is also our last word. These floating songs, sung with unlimited devotion create their own atmosphere. I sit on the floor as near as one can be to another being, but here I do not mind the close touch of others. The outside life seems so distant and the strong feeling of oneness with everyone and everything through the Mother is the Real.

After a while Anandamayi Ma rises and walks out on a terrace overlooking the broad, majestic, deep blue Ganges. The silence remains unbroken. The Mother lets her gaze follow the whirling water. Her face is so tender. Her whole personality radiates a secure warmth. There is no exagge-

rated emotionalism in her. Her sense of humour always comes forth. She is as she is—perfectly natural, charged with life.

The cool evening breeze sweeps around me as I stand before the luminous face of the Mother. I am asked if I would like an interview with her tonight—with the help of an interpreter. No ! Tonight it is not a question of words. Only one thing ! I ask for her blessing. Her face seems to me to be very ancient and at the same time radiating youth as she raises her hand to the holy sign.

* * * *

I left Benares and was away for more than a week. When I returned, the Mother who never stays long in one place was still there. I found a note in my hotel room saying that if I wanted to see her again I should come to the ashrama at once because she would be leaving in the late afternoon.

The terrace lies bathing in sun. People come and go or sit meditating. A man gives me a sign : "Come now." I follow him into a room where Anandamayi Ma sits on a bed dressed, as always, in white. I touch the floor with my forehead in greeting. Her eyes meet mine. We smile. Her face is calm, quiet, happy. But our word "happiness" does not render what it expresses. It seems as if her gaze pierces through to that which the eyes of others do not see. It is difficult to tell what one experiences in the presence of a God-intoxicated person. Words limit such experiences that do not have language as their means of expression. She smiles : "You are the Mother and I am your little child ! So it is !" She even tries to say it in English. We laugh. The girls in the room laugh. And all is simple and gay. She touches my forehead and my hands and she hangs a wreath of yellow flowers around my neck.

She begins to talk. Her clear girlish voice sounds almost like a bird's twittering :

“Through pure concentration *all* is possible, But the least trace of egotism prevents the spiritual growth. The one who wants to lead a spiritual life must be quite transformed and change all values. The cause of our misery is that we cling to forms and believe them to be real. This we must understand: *Real joy exists only in spiritual life.* The only way to experience it is to know and understand what the universe really is. We have to orient ourselves so that we see the whole world divine. It is said in the *Isa Upanishad*, ‘Everything that moves in this world must be covered with the Lord.’ Our old world has to go. And instead we shall see the world as it is, see God in all, see how the Divine breaks through names and forms. There is not a place where God is not. The only thing we have to do is to open our eyes and see Him—in good and evil, happiness and unhappiness, in joy and sorrow and in death. One may exchange the word God for life. To be conscious that ‘All Life is One’ gives a bliss that does not change. If you feel unhappy and restless it comes from ignorance of this truth, from being rooted in the idea of manifoldness and differences between individuals and things. All, all are only variations of That which is the center, which is the One.”

“You have been touched by the Mother,” my Indian friend says when I tell her of my visit with Anandamayi Ma. According to the Indian way of thinking, this is very meaningful. One thing is certain. One does not forget Anandamayi Ma. She awakens the consciousness.

Old Diary Leaves

ATMANANDA

Seek God for His Own Sake

Kishenpur, 23rd April 1960.

During the *Satsang* two blind men came to talk to Mataji. One of them asked : "How can I get the vision of God ? Please tell me the easiest way to it."

Mataji : Seek Him for His own sake.

The blind man : Which is better, the path of devotion or that of knowledge ?

Mataji : Adhere to God's Name. Repeat His Name day and night and get engrossed in Its sweetness.

Question : When I still had some eye-sight I used to read many books. But now this is impossible. How will I gain understanding ?

Mataji : Turn to God, He will give you understanding.

The other blind man : Mataji, give me your blessing.

Mataji : Pray to God and you will feel His blessing.

A lady : You said : 'Seek God for His own sake.' Well then, if I seek Him with selfish motives, will I not find Him ?

Mataji : If you seek God with whatever motive, you will get something of Him and if you pray for anything of this world you may also obtain it. Yet the things of this world are not worth praying for. One should seek God, not with any motive but solely for His own sake. Neither should one feel concerned about one's spiritual progress, for this is also not unselfish. Seek God because it is your nature to do so, because you cannot remain without Him. Whether and when He will reveal Himself to you rests with Him. Your duty is to call out to Him constantly and persistently and

not to waste your energy on anything else. It is not fitting to compare and reason, saying : 'Such and such a person has been engaged in *sādhana* for so many years and yet has not reached anywhere.' How can you possibly judge of what is happening to anyone inwardly. At times it occurs that a person while practising *sādhana* appears to have changed for the worse. How can you tell whether certain undesirable tendencies had not been hidden within him and have now been brought to light through his spiritual endeavours ? To say : 'I have performed so much *sādhana* but no transformation has been effected,' is also not the attitude to be taken. All that you have to do is to call out to Him unceasingly and untiringly and not to look for the results of what you are doing. Who can tell whether you may not by any chance be the fortunate one among millions who will succeed ?'

Question : Sometimes I feel quite desperate because I do not seem able to succeed.

Mataji : You feel desperate when you have desires and they remain unfulfilled. But when aspiring for God, how is it possible to feel desperate?

In the course of the conversation Mataji said : "It is well to keep in mind that whatever one enjoys of worldly happiness, be it good food or anything else, uses up some of the merit (*punya*) that one has accumulated. It is therefore commendable to remember God at all times and to welcome whatever happens as coming from God. Similarly should one try to bear in mind that any suffering or adversity that one has to go through expiates one's accumulated evil karma."

Seek God within Yourself.

Mataji sometimes tells stories to illustrate some truth.

"A rich merchant was preparing to go on a business tour. A thief, eager to rob the rich man, came to him

dressed in fine clothes and pretending to be a merchant himself, he said: "I also have to travel the same route. It is not safe to venture forth alone when one is carrying money. Let us make the journey together." It was agreed.

In the morning, before starting from the inn, the merchant would take out all his money, count it carefully and put it back into his pocket. He did this quite openly while the thief was watching him and planning to steal the money that very night. After a tiring day they settled down to rest until sunrise and soon the merchant was fast asleep. The thief had kept awake. He got up from bed and searched his companion's luggage, his bedding and his person. The merchant never opened his eyes but slept on peacefully. Try as he may, the thief failed to discover a single farthing. This went on day after day. Every morning the merchant counted his money, making the thief's mouth water, but at night no money was to be found. Finally, in his despair, the thief decided to question the merchant. 'Friend', he said, 'I must make a confession: I was deceiving you. I really sought your company to get hold of your money. Every night I tried my hardest, but all my efforts to lay hands on your treasure proved futile, although I searched very thoroughly. Do please tell me by what magic you kept your money hidden from me!' 'It is quite simple,' replied the rich man, laughing heartily. 'From the beginning I suspected your evil intentions, yet I was quite free from anxiety, because I knew that you could never guess my hiding-place. Every night the money was lying safely under your own pillow. I felt sure that this was the one place you would never search and so I was able to sleep most peacefully.'

"God is within everyone," commented Mataji, "but man goes out in search of Him. This is what constitutes God's Play and God's Creation."

The Most Essential Thing.

Vrindaban, February 1957.

Two European ladies, both psychologists came to see Mataji. The following conversation ensued :

Question : Psychologists cure patients by talking to them. With you it seems that your emanation cures people even without words. It is our endeavour to help people. What is the most essential thing we should do for them ?

Mataji : Who in this world can be called normal ? Everyone appears to be mad after one thing or another : some after money, some after beauty, some after music, others after their children, and so forth—nobody is really quite balanced.

Question : What then is the remedy ?

Mataji : Just as one does not water the leaves of a tree but its roots, so one also has to grapple with man's disease at its root. Man's root lies in the brain. Therefore the remedy for all ills is to still the mind. When man's mind has been stilled, all will be well with him, both physically and psychologically.

Question : How does the mind become still ?

Mataji : By treading the path that leads to the realization of "Who am I ?" Your body that was young and is old now with its greying hair does not last for ever. It is not the real 'I'. Therefore man has to find out who he really is. When he tries to do this, his mind will be supplied with the right nourishment that will calm it. The right sustenance for the mind cannot be had from anything that is of this world and therefore perishable, but solely from that which is Eternal. The taste of the eternal will still the mind.

The universe was created out of joy and this is why you find joy in the things of this world. Without joy life is an ordeal. You must try to attain to that great joy which has brought forth the world.

Question : What is the special contribution a woman has to make as apart from a man ?

Mataji : A woman is essentially a mother and consequently her duty is to serve everyone. Further, since she is daughter, wife and mother all in one, to recognise the oneness of the three. Besides, in every woman is contained a man and in every man a woman. If man were not contained within you, you would not be able to recognize a man ; and if woman were not contained within a man, he would be unable to recognize a woman, Thus one of the most important tasks of a woman is to discover the man in herself.

Question : What then is the special contribution a man can give ?

Mataji : Man is the reflection of the Supreme *Puruṣha* the one who upholds the universe. True manliness means divinity. But then there is *Ātmā* which is beyond man and woman. Everyone has to find that *Ātmā* that lies hidden within himself. It is the task of every human being to unfold both the man and the woman potentially contained within him or herself and to realize the *Ātmā* which is beyond man and woman.

A Practical Question.

Almora, May 1954.

One of Mataji's outstanding characteristics is that she usually does not reply from any particular point of view, but throws light on every problem from various angles. Here is a striking example.

Question : Suppose I have business dealings with someone and he cheats me by not giving me my money's worth. It is right to go to court or should I shrug my shoulders and keep quiet ?

Mataji : Some feel : If I do not give this person a lesson, he will go on cheating and become worse, and so they go to court.

But there is another way of looking at it: 'Who is it that has cheated me? Are not all forms, all beings manifestations of Him? What I have been deprived of was evidently not my due, it is God who has taken it from me.

There is a third way of dealing with the culprit, illustrated by the following story: A thief broke into the hut of a *sādhu* and stole whatever he could find. As he was escaping with his loot, the *sādhu* returned home. From a distance he saw the burglar with the load on his head. He quickly followed him, shouting: 'Wait a moment, brother, there are a few more things that you might want. Would you not like this, and that, and this as well?' The thief was so overcome by the astounding way the *sādhu* reacted that he fell at his feet, left off stealing and became a *sādhu* himself.

There is a fourth way of looking at the problem: Is it my business to punish the evil-doer? Listen to another story:

One day an ardent *bhakta* of Sri Krishna was walking absorbed in the contemplation of his Beloved, completely oblivious of his surroundings. Without noticing it, he stepped right on some newly washed clothes that had been spread out on the ground to dry by a washerman. 'Have you no eyes,' shouted furiously the washerman whose work had been spoiled. Getting hold of a stick he was about to beat the *bhakta*.

At that moment Sri Krishna was having food with Rukmini. All of a sudden he jumped up, and without explanation, hurried away returning after a short while. 'My Lord', questioned Rukmini, 'why did you leave so suddenly in the middle of your meal and how is it you have come back so speedily? Sri Krishna replied: 'A very dear *bhakta* of mine was in danger of being belaboured with a stick, so I hastened to his rescue. But when I saw that he had picked

up a stone, ready to throw it at his adversary, I returned here without delay. Since he was protecting himself, there was no need for me to intervene.'

There is still another aspect of the matter to be considered. Once a saint was being badly abused by someone without any reason. He reflected : 'What a terrible punishment has this man incurred by his grave injustice!' He therefore gave him a light slap to lessen the disagreeable fate his offence would inevitably bring about.

And lastly : if the person who cheated you were your own brother, would you call his action 'cheating' ? To remove something from one's home is not called stealing : one takes one's own. Are not all men brothers, children of one Father ? Who is to punish whom ?

Whichever of these points of view appeals to you most, according to it you should act.

Question : Suppose one feels the evil-doer must be taught a lesson and goes to court, does one not thereby injure oneself, especially if one happens to be a seeker after truth ?

Mataji : Yes, certainly, for by acting thus one's ego will be enhanced.

Kishenpur, April 1957.

Question : If one has surrendered to God completely, is it right to take legal action in case of misappropriation of one's possession ?

Mataji : The fact that you ask whether you should go to law-court shows that you should do so. At the moment you probably feel that it would be nicer not to take any action, but later when you may be in need of what has been taken away, you will regret that you kept quiet and it will worry you. But when seeking your right you should do it in a strictly lawful way, always speaking the truth, etc. If you had really surrendered to God completely you would never ask such a question.

Question : Some people say that a thief steals only from a thief. Surely, I am not a thief !

Mataji : When someone secretly removes what belongs to you, you call him a thief. However, there is a stage of spiritual achievement where God is perceived in all forms and actions. What then will be the significance of I and 'mine' ? Find out who you are and what belongs to you ! Then, if someone removes anything without your knowledge you will not feel that it has been stolen. If there is only ONE ATMA, how can there be a thief ?

There is another state where one may say that such and such a person is a thief, without judgement and without resentment, for at the same time one will also see that it is the ONE who expresses in countless ways, that God's hand is in everything that happens.

Matri Lila

(January 15th—April 30th, 1967)

This winter, Vrindaban was, as it were Mataji's headquarters. Having reached there on November 5th from Bhopal, she remained until March 8th, with several short interruptions of course. In the last issue of this journal we have already reported about Divali in New Delhi (Nov. 10th-12th), about Mataji's visit to Agra (Dec. 19th-21st), her stay in Varanasi (Dec. 22nd-27th) and Allahabad (Dec. 28th-30th) and a few hours in Delhi on Jan. 6th. Mataji left Vrindaban again for a week on January 24th. She first went to Modinagar for one night, proceeding from there to Sukhtal on the 25th to be present at the consecration of a temple dedicated to Shakamvari (Durga) that took place on the 26th. While at Sukhtal she visited the Ashram of Swami Sri Vishnuashram at his special request. Returning the same evening to Modinagar, she drove to Delhi the next morning. Instead of going to our New Delhi Ashram, she graced with her presence the house of Sri J.N. Dutt, resting for a few hours in a room reserved for her use. From Delhi she took the night train to Lucknow on January 27th. A tremendous crowd came to see her off at Delhi station, Sri Gurupriya Devi with a few others had arrived in Lucknow from Varanasi the previous night and met Mataji at the residence of Sri Rameshwar Sahai where Mataji and the whole party had their midday meal. Then everyone left for Naimisharanya, reaching there the same evening.

Naimisharanya is said to be one of the holiest places in India. The legend has it that 88,000 Rishis performed *tapasyā* there for one thousand years. Rishi Vyāsa is supposed to have composed all the 18 *Purānas* at Naimisharanya. When, in 1960, our 11th *Samyam Mahavrata* was performed there at the Ashram of Sri Naradananda Swami, it was

found that not a single complete set of *Purānas* existed in Naimisharanya. It seemed appropriate that at least one copy of each *Purāna* should be kept in the place where they had been written and that a portion of a *Purāna* should be read daily by a *pandit*. At Mataji's suggestion this practice was started straight away by Brahmachari Bhaskaranand. When Mataji and her party left after the completion of the *Samyam Vrata* and a *Bhagavata Saptah* in November 1960 the task of continuing the regular daily reading of the *Purānas* was entrusted to a *pandit*. Some of the leading members of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha further decided to build a small *Purāna Mandir* in which the 18 *Purānas* would be kept and read in rotation all the year round. Accordingly a plot was acquired for this purpose at the highest spot of Naimisharanya, above Hanuman Tila, on a hill.

This time, in January 1967, Mataji visited Naimisharanya to be present at the laying of the foundation-stone of the *Mandir*. Sri Prayag Narayan of Sitapur had made excellent arrangements for the stay of Mataji and her party. They were housed in five cottages directly on the banks of the Gomati river, where Mataji had also stayed in 1960 for a few days after the functions were over. Mataji remained for three nights. She was in an excellent mood in those sacred, peaceful and charming surroundings of great natural beauty. A number of officials and devotees came from neighbouring towns for Mataji's *darśana* and some to talk to her. Mataji had brought only a mere handful of companions with her. Sri Gurupriya Devi and those who had come from Varanasi returned there again when Mataji left for Vrindaban, where she alighted in the morning of January 31st.

A few quiet days followed. Then Mataji responded to the clamouring of the Delhi bhaktas to be in their midst during the celebration of the Saraswati Puja on February 14th. She spent five very busy days in Delhi, almost constantly besieged by throngs of people. Pandit Sundarlal, an

old devotee of Sri Haribabaji, who had been coming to Mataji for many years, requested her to take him to Delhi, where he wanted to join Sri Haribabaji and go to Bandh. He thus accompanied Mataji in her car. This turned out to be his last journey, for the aged Pandit fell ill and left his body in Bandh.

On returning to Vrindaban, Mataji had a comparatively quiet time, although visitors kept on pouring in. Among them were quite a few from various foreign countries, as for instance the Ambassador of Czechoslovakia. One day some camera men of the British Television came to film Mataji. She was very gracious and sang "*Krishna Chheliya*" for them. Mr and Mrs Desjardins with their two children stayed for 3 days. Their little son, not yet three years old shouted for joy whenever he was taken to Mataji who gave much attention to him and his sister. The little boy had been 4 months old when he first had Mataji's *daršana*. Even then he had seemed to recognize her. A painter from Finland who comes to Mataji almost every year arrived with a young man from Switzerland. Melita Maschmann, the German novelist was on her 3rd visit to India this winter. She was already with Mataji in Bombay during Durga Puja and accompanied her to Vrindaban. Her last book (in German of course) has just appeared. It is mostly about Mataji and contains a dedication to her in Bengali. The authoress presented the first copy to Mataji in Dehradun in the beginning of April. An American young lady has stayed with Mataji from the middle of January up to date.

On March 2nd, Swami Chidananda, the Head of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, arrived for a short visit. He gave a talk and also sang kirtan.

*

*

*

For the last several years Mataji has made it a point to be with Sri Haribabaji on his birthday, which falls on Holi and is also the birthday of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

This time, Sri Haribabaji requested Mataji to spend not only Holi but also Sivaratri with him at Bandh. It was also his 82nd birthday. Mataji responded to his call. On March 7th, Mataji's party travelled there by bus from Vrindaban and Mataji with three or four companions followed by car on the 8th morning.

Sri Haridham Bandh is a unique place, situated in the interior of the U. P., at a distance of 12 miles from Anup-sahr, the nearest Railway Station. The road is bad for the last 4-5 miles and negotiable only by bullock-carts and, with difficulty, by jeeps. Until nearly 40 years ago the villages of that area were inundated by the over flowing Ganga every rainy season. The State Government built a dam, which however proved inadequate to stem the impetuous floods and finally broke down. So the plight of the villages continued. Sri Haribabaji used to wander about in that area, doing *tapasyā*. Moved by their misery, he organized the inhabitants of a number of villages and together with them erected a strong dam made of sand and earth with the labour of their own hands and out of their own resources. He taught them to build in the name of the Lord and to sing "*Hari Nāma*" all the time while working. The constant repetition of *Hari Nāma* has become a special feature of the place. Someone remarked this time: "In Bandh the very earth is singing kirtan." It is believed that the power of this uninterrupted kirtan has made strong the dam, which stretches for miles and has to this day withstood the yearly onslaught of the floods. The population of about 40 neighbouring villages are deeply devoted to Sri Haribabaji, in fact they regard him as an incarnation of the Lord Himself and implicitly obey his bidding, putting themselves and their own completely at his disposal. Bandh has many houses, a *satsang* hall, and a temple with *vigrahas* of Radha Krishna and Nitai Gouranga. There are now several tube-wells, electricity and proper sanitation. The whole place is kept spotlessly clean and the spirit of service of the villagers is

GRAPHIC PICTURES

Of Some

Holy places connected with the early Life

of

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

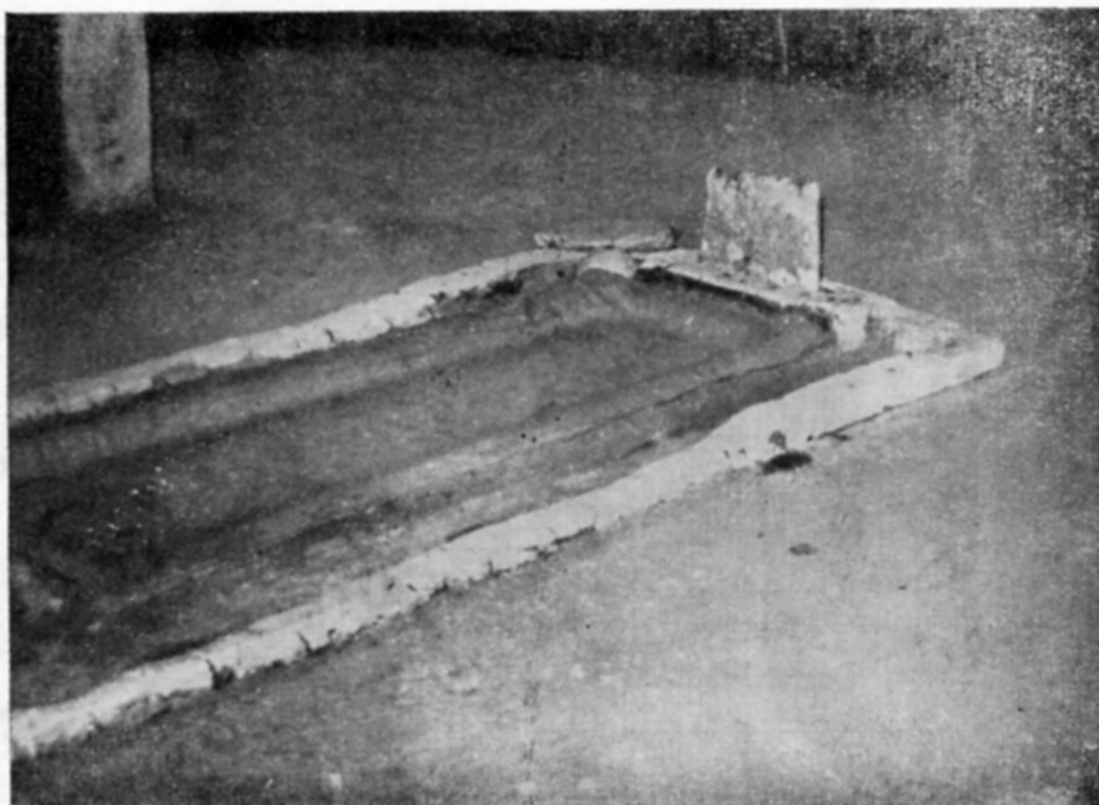
in

East Pakistan

*Shahbāg, the garden-house of the Nawabs of Dacca,
and*

the Ashrams at Siddheswari and Ramna in Dacca City.

*—By courtesy of Prof. M. Ahmed, M.A., B.L.,
Dacca*



Grave of a Muslim Saint in Dacca where Ma performed Namaz and recited the Holy Quran.



The house at Shahbag where Ma lived for a number of years.



The dancing hall at Shahbag which was sanctified by Ma's presence.



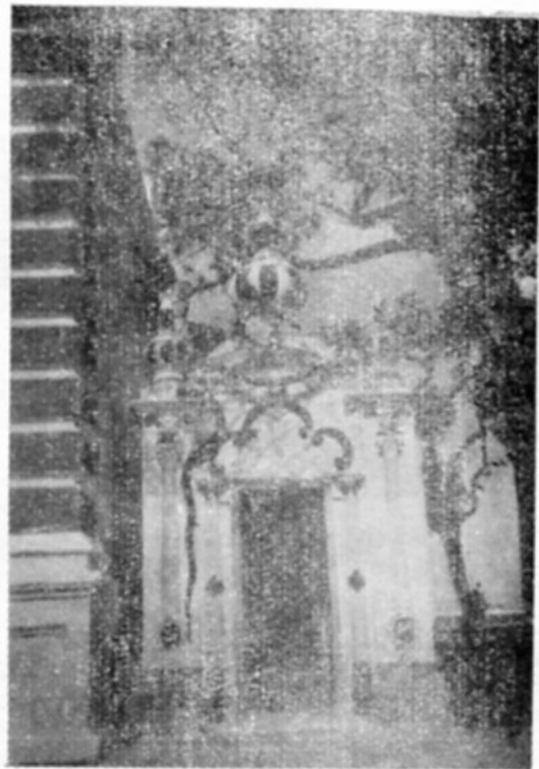
Temple of Siddheswari where Ma once lived.



The famous Shivalinga in the Ashram at Siddheswari.



Yagna Temple in Ramna Ashram



Shiva Temple in Ramna Ashram.



Front view of the Ashram at Ramna established in 1929.



Ashram at Siddheswari established in 1926.



Annapurna Temple in Ramna Ashram



Matri Mandir in Ramna Ashram.

unequaled. Having been in Bandh before, nearly 20 years ago, Mataji found the place greatly developed and improved. She is always happiest in unsophisticated rural surrounding. She simply loved Bandh. The few people who had come with Mataji deemed themselves singularly fortunate to see Mataji in this delightful, carefree mood, perfectly at ease. They felt that Mataji would have liked to remain in Bandh for ever. Being such an inaccessible place even for cars, there were no visitors at all. The villagers had been asked not to disturb Mataji in her house and to come for *daršana* at *satsang* time. So, for once the door of Mataji's room could be kept open without anyone intruding.

Even for Sivaratri, which fell on March 9th, only seven visitors arrived from outside. 20 people in all celebrated the all-night *pūja* in the room next to Mataji's. The door was kept open and she was thus present throughout. Between 2 and 3 a.m. when most people were about to doze off, notwithstanding the kirtan that was being sung in the intervals between the *pūjās*, Mataji started singing loudly and with great fervour, clapping her hands all the while. She continued for about 10-15 minutes. Instantly everyone was fully awake and alert, filled with new inspiration. The attendance was a record in smallness of members, but the night will remain unforgettable to all who were present.

Mataji's party at Bandh included a young artist from Los Angeles. We quote from her letter: "...Every day at about 10.30 a.m. we accompany Ma to the *Rāsa līlā*, which by the way is fabulous. It really is superb! Inspiring. At 4.30 p.m. we again are with Mataji in a huge tent and sit on the stage with Her and Sri Haribabaji who reads and discusses the scriptures. At 6.30 p.m. we all take a walk with Mataji on the *bāndh* (dam). It is a most peaceful moment. At 7-30 we have kirtan and at about 8.30 Mataji goes again to the tent for Haribaba's kirtan and talk. One evening Mataji talked for half an hour with the microphone. I just happened to have brought my tape recorder and got

a perfect recording.....There is much kirtan going on here all the time—and so unique. Whenever Haribabaji goes anywhere, a small village band accompanies him with blaring trumpets playing 'Hari bol' or the *Mahāmantra*. Mataji and Haribabaji often cross paths on their evening walks on the *bāndh*. They speak but little, only a gentle *pranāma* and walk on. At 9 p.m. they both go into the *Mandir* and Ma every night touches all the statues with Her hands and puts Her head on their feet.....”

The '*Rāsa līlā*' was actually the *Līlā* of Sri Gouranga, which had been written by Swami Premanand of Manipur. He took 14 years to get it ready, scanning all the literature on the subject and then trained the actors also. It truly was very special. The audience forgot that a drama was being enacted and followed with breathless attention. Even Mahatmas were moved to tears. It seemed real, not a play. By chance a sculptor from Navadvip (Sri Gouranga's place) arrived and made beautiful statues representing Sri Gouranga, Radha Krishna, and the *sakhis* etc. that served as a background during the performances.

* * *

Mataji was to go to Dehradun immediately after Holi, but at the last moment she accompanied Sri Haribabaji to Moradabad for 5 days, leaving Bandh on March 29th. She and Haribabaji were put up in a new house that was opened thereby. Their host was Sri S.N. Khanna, Principal of the K.G.K. College. On April 4th, Mataji alighted in Kishenpur for a short visit of 6 days only. Didima and Didi arrived from Varanasi on the 5th. At Moradabad and Dehradun Mataji's health was not very satisfactory. In spite of this, Mataji went to Kalyanvan twice to visit Ram Mandir and to inspect in detail the new building behind the temple which is nearing completion. Large crowds came daily for Ma's *darśana*, among them also more than half a dozen foreigners. On the 7th-8th April *Akhand Rāmāyana* was chanted in

Rama Mandir and on the 9th the *Hanuman Chālisa* from sunrise to sunset.

On April 10th, Mataji motored to Kankhal where Didima's *Sannyāsa Utsava* was celebrated on the 14th. At Kankhal Mataji's health improved visibly. She was up and doing during the whole day of the festival, supervising-every thing and came downstairs twice for several hours. In spite of the very limited space in our small Ashram called 'Sant-niketan' everything proceeded beautifully. Many arrived from Dehradun and quite a number also from distant places. Didima is over 90 years old and it is our very good fortune that she seems to have grown younger instead of older during the last few years. *Guru pūjā* was performed to her as usual on that occasion. A number of *sādhus* and all present were entertained to a feast at midday, while kirtan was kept up all along. From 4.30-6 p.m. three Mahamandaleshwaras of Hardwar gave lucid talks on renunciation. Early morning and in the evening *ārati* was performed. The next day, being the Bengali New year's day, the door of Mataji's room opened again and again to allow everybody to do *pranām*. Mataji was therefore late for the evening *darśana* held on the Ashram roof. A touching little incident took place. An old woman came and, to the amusement of the congregation, did *pranāma* to an American lady who was sitting near Mataji's empty armchair. When, towards the end of *darśana* time the old woman went up to Mataji and caught hold of Mataji's feet, which is forbidden, she was severely rebuked, by those sitting nearby. To comfort her, Mataji patted her and said : "What a joyful face you have ! How simple you are ! This is why I could pick you out from the crowd." Mataji then asked her name and address, about her family, etc. Her name was Simladevi and she stayed at Harki Pauri in Hardwar. Someone then told Mataji that Simladevi had bowed to the American lady. Mataji : "You are quite right. There is only *Janardana*, none else. To whomever you bow, you bow only to Him.

Even animals, trees, stones—all are He.” It then came to light that Simla Devi had fasted all day, as she had decided to eat only after having Mataji’s *darśana*. In the morning she had tried in vain for it, now at last she had succeeded, Mataji gave her a large papita and a bag full of oranges, saying : “You have not taken even a piece of fruit all day, now go home and eat all these.” Then she added : “You say you have four sons but no daughter. Tell your husband that today, on New year’s day, you got a daughter. I am your daughter. A mother never forgets her daughter. Come and see me again.” Needless to say that Simla Devi was beaming with happiness and moved to tears by Mataji’s affection.

From April 14th-16th Satyanarayana Puja was performed in front of a picture of Lakshmi Narayana. On the 17th early morning Mataji had a ‘vision’ of a wonderful building not of this world. Several Mahatmas were staying in it. There was also a thatched hut for Mataji. In one of the rooms of the house a woman was singing kirtan with deep feeling, entirely absorbed in it. Mataji heard : “*Bhava bandhana mukti kāraṇa*”, the next word was not clear and then “*dukha hāri*.” Mataji decided on “*sarva jayā Siva*” for the missing word since Kankhal is the place, of *Siva* and later changed it to “*Lakshmi Nārāyaṇa*” because of the Puja that had been performed for three days. Mataji went on singing to herself for about half an hour and then asked the Ashram girls to sing *akhandā kirtana* of the 2nd version until 9 p. m. The kirtan has a very beautiful melody. The next morning they sang the first version with “*sarva jayā Siva*” until 3 p. m. Mataji remarked : “Lakshmi Nārāyaṇa has given this kirtana to this Ashram and it will remain here for ever.”

Among the girls who sang was also Moroni, Bholanath’s niece, whom he had adopted when she was one year old and who was thus brought up by Mataji herself. She had come with her two grown up children, her husband having passed away about a year ago.

On April 19th everyone dispersed and Mataji shifted to 'Santi Nivas', a house on the road between Hardwar and Rishikesh belonging to Sri J. K. Birla. Mataji reached Dehradun on the full moon day, which was on the April 24th.

Sri Gurupriya Devi and a party of Ashramites are due to arrive in Kanpur on May 2nd to start Mataji's birthday celebrations which will be held this year in Kanpur at the cordial invitation of the Jaipurias. Mataji herself is expected Kanpur on May 12th and to stay there at the Swadeshi House until the 27th. to reach

Mataji is completing her 71st year. On this joyful occasion we all join in the fervent prayer that Mataji may keep her body in radiant health and vigour for many, many more years to come for the good of this sorrow-stricken world which so sorely needs the blessing of her presence.
