
In this world, every single person is crazy after something or other — some more and some less. What a comedy *Bhagavan's* play is ! What a madhouse He has created ! He Himself sporting with Himself!

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

*The Eternal, the Ātman—
Itself pilgrim and path of Immortality
Self contained—THAT is all in One.*

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CONTENTS

1. Sri Sri Ma's Utterances ... 277-281
2. In Association with Sri Sri Ma
Anandamayee—Amulya Datta Gupta ... 282-290
3. Ma Anandamayi as I saw Her
—Sarla Jain ... 291-294
4. Call of Ma—Gopal ... 295-302
5. A touch of Ma's feet
—Sachindra Nath Mukhopadhyay ... 303-306
6. A Sweet Incident—Smt. Saroma
Mookerjee ... 307-308
7. Ma Touches us : I. in diversity
—Dr. P. C. Datta ... 309-315
8. The Yoga Yatra of Shri Aurobindo
from Baroda to Pondicherry ... 316-331
9. What God does is for best
—Dr. Roma Chowdhuri ... 332-335
10. The Ideal Women of India
—Sri M. Rama Rao ... 336-341
11. Miracles—Sachinath Chakraborty ... 342-354
12. Doctor's Visit Given by Ma
—Dr. Baren Guha Roy ... 355-360
13. Revised Rules on "Diksha" ... 361-363
14. Ashram News ... 364-367
15. Obituary ... 367-368

Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

A certain gentleman once said, "Ma, do tell us something as to how the inner feelings of young boys and girls can be kept pure."

Ma replied, "You yourselves teach them, so you yourselves should know that ! Look, you make young boys wear the sacred thread, but nowadays the boys are throwing it away. If someone complains to me of it, I say, they have done the right thing. You take so much trouble to impart education to young boys and girls, to make them learn lucrative skills, you adopt so many methods to get them educated ; but what is the importance of the sacred thread, why people do *sandhya*, *puja*, etc., what is the harm if these are not done, about such matters you teach them almost nothing ; that is why they also cast them aside as useless. Hence, the fault is not only theirs ; *you* are also guilty."

The same gentleman said again, "Well, Ma, this you have said about children ; now *do* tell us something for ourselves."

Then Ma said, "You Babajis are now nearing the age of retiring with a pension. Verily, you desire uninterrupted joy ; just as in the hope of getting a pension you have been working uninterruptedly in your office, similarly, try to take His name uninterruptedly with each and every breath you take. Only then you will get that permanent

peace which all crave for. Therefore, I say, keep your attention turned towards Him. Go on doing your work with full force — you will also get a full reward then. In the beginning, one has to start practising little by little like children ; even if one feels no inclination, one should practise. After that, when gradually one develops a habit of doing the practice, one cannot give it up any more. In this way, go on practising, each one of you, the *japa* of your *ista mantra* in rhythm of your each breath.”

Hearing these words of Ma, the gentleman said, “Ma, it will be possible if there is *kripa*.”

Ma said, “*Kripa* is all the time showering like the rain ; one should do a little bit of *sadhana* just in order that one is able to grasp it. The little bit of power you have — employ that ! Read the saered texts, take His name, do *japa* — as much as you have power to do, go on doing. After that, He is there to do all that is to be done. The stomach does not get filled if the morsel of food is only put into the mouth.”

At this, another gentleman said, “But if I don’t have any power to do *sadhan*, *bhajan*, etc. ?”

To him Ma replied, “I will not accept this excuse. Just now, as you said, ‘If I don’t have any power’ etc., from your saying so it became clear that there *is* power in you. The little bit of capacity for working that you have, if you don’t put that to use, then it is your fault. ‘He alone makes me do all things ; I am but an instrument in His hand’ — you don’t have the right to say so. By

performing one's duties according to the moral rules, when the actions that bind one to the external world are all exhausted from external sphere of one's life, then the person realizes, 'Oh, I am really unable to do anything of my own will ; it is only He who is activating me, I am just an instrument.' This realization comes only when he finds that he cannot do anything out of his own will, *He* is the manifest, he is a mere tool in His hands. Hence, at the present stage, you have no right to say 'everything is being done by His grace'. At all times, you should hold on to only that which will help you one the path of realization ; all that is not going to give you any help, you should abandon that."

A gentleman, who was a physician, said, "Ma, do say something for the ladies."

Ma said, "What is there to say ? Serve your husbands. Remember, you are not able to see that Supreme Lord ; He Himself is residing in your homes in the form of your husbands. Do their *seva* with this feeling. And your children are with you in the form of the child *Gopala* and the *Kumari*. With this faith, go on serving them. And, who indeed is the husband, the Lord ? In fact, Supreme Lord Himself is everyone's Lord. All these men you see are also yearning for that One Person : hence, they are also females. Just as wives want their husbands, these people (pointing to the menfolk present) also want that Supreme Husband. Therefore, all are women for all are craving for just the One." Saying so, Ma started laughing.

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Ma once said, "Whatever task you willingly undertake, being guided by your own wish, you should make full effort to complete that."

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Ma says that keeping *mauna* (silence) for a long time is also a great help to *sadhana*, and advises to abstain from communication even by writing or a gesture, while one is observing *mauna*, as far as possible.

* * *

On being requested again and again to show the right path to a certain young man, Ma said, "Look here, such a kind of personal advice is not generally given ; but I am telling you : do *satsang*, and try to take some shelter or the other. If you just place yourself under the protection of a Guru, then the path which is most suitable for you will by itself open up to you."

* * *

Ma : "All of you, in unity and harmony, go on doing that which will yield spiritual good. Moreover, you see, whatever is to happen *will* happen."

* * *

One day, sitting in the "Yajna-Mandir" of the Vindhya-chal Ashram and observing the smoke-stained walls on all sides, Ma said, "Due to the fire, all the four walls, the ceiling, even the utensils

have got a smoky colour. It so happens, you know. Colour changes in the presence of fire. Can't you clean these utensils? The utensils for *puja* should be shining, the place of *puja* should be clean; with this cleanliness around, one's mind also becomes clean while doing *puja*. You keep this vessel (pointing to the person's body), too, unclean like those vessels outside."

At this, the person who had the duty of cleaning utensils said, "I can definitely clean those vessels outside, but how can I clean the inside of this self?"

Ma said, "Verily, this body is also an utensil for *puja*; do remember that this is an utensil for *puja*, and do try to utilize it only for the purpose of *puja*, and only then will you see that even the inside is becoming clean."

Man must go out in search of That which is concealed behind the world. He should choose an abode that will make it easy for him to proceed to his true Home.

—Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

Sri Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta

(Translated from Bengali)

(Continued from previous issue)

8th Baisakh, Sunday

As Sri Ma was leaving Dhaka the next day, she did not go out anywhere today.

When I arrived at the Ashram, I found Sri Ma sitting on the veranda of the Smriti Mandir. The ladies were all crowding round her.

Ma was speaking a few words only to those who had come to meet her. The Sanskrit Professor of the Jagannath College had arrived. He started reciting prayers in Sanskrit with the object of venerating Ma. Somesh Babu of Dhanmandi had also come to meet Ma. Ma requested Khukuni Didi to present some fruits to him and to the Professor of the Jagannath College. Didi did so. On receiving the fruits, Somesh Babu said, "Ma, I have a *dakshina* even before performing the puja."

I stayed at the Ashram upto noon before returning home.

When reaching the Ashram in the afternoon, I found a tremendous crowd gathered there. The maidan was filled with hackney-carriage, motor cars and rickshaws.

Ramayana was being sung inside the Ashram. In the evening, Jatu Bhai performed Arati in front of Ma. Immediately afterwards, Sachin Babu started performing Kirtan.

When I returned to the Ashram at night the Kirtan had been completed. At the end of Kirtan, round about midnight, Sri Prafulla Ch. Ghosh took Sri Ma to his house. Sri Haribaba accompanied them. After an hour or so, Ma returned and sat down on the veranda of the Smriti-Mandir. We also crowded round Ma.

Sri Ma asked me, is not your home at Bakshi Bazar ?

I: Yes, Ma.

Ma: We passed in front of your house.

Sri Prafulla Ghosh's house was at Armanitolla. To come to the Ashram from there, one does not have to come Bakshi Bazar. So I thought Ma was making a mistake, especially as she had not seen my new house. So I said to Ma "No Ma, you have not crossed in front of my abode."

I have indeed come via Bakshi Bazar. Your house is bang on the road, near Satya Babu's house. Is it not so ?

I: Yes, Ma.

I started blaming myself in my own mind. I temporarily believed Ma could make a mistake. Such was the extent of my belief in her ! But how could I imagine or have belief that the abode of my poor self would come under Ma's "Kheyai".

Whatever it may be, Ma repeated, "I had imagined that reaching your abode I would start

calling you out, but because it was so late at night, and because Haribaba was with me, I refrained from doing so.

We all started laughing. After conversing with us for some time, Ma went along to rest, and we also returned home.

9th Baisakh, Monday

On arriving at the Ashram in the morning I learnt that Sri Ma had gone to the Jagannath Hall. She was not there long. On returning she at once sat down to lunch. Those Ashram sadhus who had accompanied Ma, had also finished their meal and were packing up their bedding. Everybody was busy arranging for their imminent departure. After her meal, Ma went and sat down in the Panchabati outside. She asked the girls to move a bit, and then asked us to sit elsewhere.

To wish for something which remains unfulfilled

A lady requested Ma to suggest a name for her child. Ma passed on the request to Nitish Babu, who simply laughed and went away. Ma requested a few others to suggest a name, and they suggested a few names. Ma said, "These kinds of names are not liked these days. The name must be 'fashionable'." Somebody suggested "Gauranga". Ma asked the lady, "Well, will this name suit?" The lady did not approve of it. Ma laughed and said "So this name will also not be suitable; in case everybody has to call out "Gauranga" at all times (Everybody laughs). Somebody else suggested

“Narayana”. But even this name was not approved by the lady in question.

Ma laughingly said, “All those names will not do — there must be something which remains unfulfilled. A complete satisfaction will not do.”

Later I heard Ma saying, “Well does the name Joydeb satisfy you?” Perhaps this found satisfaction with the lady, because I did not hear any further discussion this subject.

How to sacrifice one's self and gain the highest glory?

At this juncture Mahitosh Babu said, “Ma, please give us some advice so that we can all become better. We are unable to sing the Lord's name”. Ma started laughing. In due course she said, “Even if you can not take the name, then do as I tell you. As soon as you get up from sleep in the morning, pray this to God, ‘Oh Lord, may we perform our actions as you ordained and may we also understand at the same time that we are doing what you would like us to do’. In actual fact whatever we do is exactly as God has ordained previously, but we fail to comprehend this. All our actions are as He would like us to do. So, we must pray to God that, “You must make us your tools, and let us understand that we are merely your tools.” Whether in bed or out of bed, each morning you must pray this to God. If you could not sit on your bed to do so, you can lie down and pray. Although if you pray lying down, your attention is rivetted more on us than on your prayers, still it is better to do this than nothing.

I am speaking of praying while lying down in this light. Again, when you go to bed at night, you should pray this again, "Oh Lord, even as sleep may be dedicated to you as your wish, so that we can be aware of this."

"In this way you must keep Him in mind during all your actions, which you must carry out as His wish. If you proceed along these lines, you will realize truly one day that there nothing exists in the world except Him."

Mahitosh Babu : My wife once beheld you in the figure of Devi Jagadhatri. Can she continue to serve you with that attitude? My wife is 12 years younger than me, but what does that matter? It is she who rules me, and exhorts me "Call Sri Ma, go to Sri Ma" (Everybody laughs).

Ma (laughing) : This difference of age is only in your own mentality. But your deliberations are not always the same. What you do today in your deliberation, in a day or two can be changed to something else. Just as when sometime ago you were considering it to be 9 a.m. later you denote this as 10 a.m.* So you see when the time was less previously, now it is more. Again whatever is more today, may become less tomorrow. Worldly competitions are just so. (Laughing, Ma continued), I maintain your wife is not younger than you, but, older ! (Everybody laughs).

Ma continues, "There was mention of worshipping this body as Jagadhatri, this body keeps on

* During the last war, the time was changed by the Britishers to Standard time.

reminding you that whatever you see in this world (Jagat) is all symbolised by Him. He alone is in existence. So how can I say this body is not one of His images ? Even if you worship wooden or stone images, God will reveal himself in it."

At this juncture one lady said, "Ma, my husband has had an idol of Narayana and is now worshipping it. If now we keep the idol and continue to worship it ourselves, shall we continue to do so ourselves or should we engage a Brahmin for the purpose ?"

Ma : You can enquire the rule from some Pandit.

The Lady : No, No, we wish to abide by your order.

Ma : I did give you my order — to enquire from a Pandit. (Laughing) It is not sufficient here just to give an order, it should conform to her wishes ! (Everybody laughs).

Is it appropriate to ask of a Worldly boon ?

Kshitish Babu : Ma, can we ask God for wealth, prestige, a rise in service etc. ? Or is such a prayer to be spurned ?

Ma : I maintain, if you wish to ask for a boon, why not do so from God Himself ? Confront Him with whatever you possess. He is ever merciful, and grants all boons. Whatever people ask of Him is granted to them. There is a story, which you may already know about. Somebody while walking along, took refuge under a Kalpa-brikshaw (a tree that grants all boons) but he was not aware

of the fact that the tree was Kalpa-brikshaw. He was tired after walking, so he thought, "Oh, if now I could get a cool breeze, I would be saved"! Immediately with the thought, a cold fresh breeze started blowing, and his weariness was abated. Then he wished for a bath and food. With the very thought, bathing water and food arrived. From where all these were coming was uncomprehensible to him, whatever it may be, after having his bath and food he wished to lie down, and at once he saw an exquisite bed complete with bedding had arrived. With great joy he lay down on the bed. Then he thought, well the bed with bedding is fine, but if there was a female slave to massage my feet and hands, then I would be really comfortable. Instant with the thought a Sevadasi arrived and started massaging his hands and feet. Seeing all this, he thought all this was very amusing, he was getting whatever he wished for! But now if a robber arrives, and takes away all my wealth after beating me, I will be put to great hardship. Instant with the thought a robber arrived and after beating him mercilessly, took all his wealth and went away.

The moral is that, if you wish to ask a boon from God, then you must ask for Him Himself because by getting Him, you will gain everything else. Supposing you wish for a son, and with the wish you want for God, and obtain His mercy, you will find that everybody's son is your son. Here, there will be no difference between your son or other people's sons. The same applies to wealth,

prestige and promotions, because all these are inherently contained in God. So by getting His Grace, you get everything. If you wish for wealth you will get wealth. But wealth is poison. Pain inevitably follows wealth. This also is God's mercy. By giving a person pain, He turns the person towards Him. Otherwise people would not believe in Him. Furthermore, if God is mixed up with pain or sorrow, these are never the causes of pain or sorrow. If you learn to look upon God as merciful in whatever condition you are, if you can think that "Oh God, whatever happiness I am getting is your gift, you are appearing in front of me in scarcity and plentitude, then you will realise that nothing in the world can afford your grief. You will then realise God in all His magnificence, and be immersed in peace and supreme bliss."

"It is the craze for wealth that binds people. To be in bondage means to destroy yourself. It is in still waters that insects are born. But if the same water is filtered, it can be drunk quite safely, because it is no longer contaminated with the faults of still water.

Even still water is water after all, so if it is purified its good qualities are revived. The relationship between Jeevatma and Paramatma is the same. The Paramatma has become a Jeevatma after entering bondage. When the bondage is removed, then the Paramatma and the Jeevatma merge with one another."

A gentleman : Can I offer now vegetarian food to God ?

Ma (laughing): One can offer God everything. There was somebody (I am not mentioning his name), who was used to eat chicken. He could neither relinquish it, nor could he offer it to this body! One day I went to his house and saw him sitting on a chair with a half-boiled egg in front of him, with his eyes shut.

Later on he became so ill that his doctor completely forbade him to eat eggs, meat etc.

Although I have said one can offer God everything, still you should offer Him only pure thing. Do people not talk of purified food? One should eat only those things that do not make the mind restless if one has to cultivate a religious life, then only purified food should be taken.

Saying this *Ma* got up from the Panchabati. It was time now to depart. A little later *Sri Ma* got into a bus. Two buses had been arranged to go to Narayangunge. After the buses left, we slowly returned home.

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

—Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

Ma Anandamayi as I saw Her

Sarla Jain

The repeated translations of many epochs and traditional authoritatively written books are the true guidelines we all have for ourselves, but the latest discovery and other channels which are coming in force due to relevant topics get ignored, so Anandamayi Ma was there to support the real people. Such as I saw her, I was stunned to relate what I felt within me. No words are sufficient to relate what exactly happened to me. I was much impressed whether or not I must confess as to the relationship I realised from her Divinity. My focus was not much of an authoritative devotee but in my real heart I know what comes after getting through and through. But relatively my line of action was much disturbed because of another way of getting the work done, which doer suffer. But on the whole my company of serious types was over, or I must say I want people to tell me all about good people more and more. My visions of conditioning of the Will I received from the people of heavenly abode which were rather keeping touch with me and I wrote and wrote so vastly that I do not know what to do with it.

But believe me all the bewildered people are not wasted but must always be considered as they all belong to the world of lovely people whom only

God can adore and love. This line is not accommodated all by myself, but by all the lovely doers who are only not complete person. They have to be given an ardent acceptancy to minimise the current doer's action and behaviour. Because the written Code of Conduct is to cultivate the soil which is so well put in and can become the real, virtual and almost the kind of sacrificing culminary part of the donor, as the sins I have done are much of a vaguary type and the visions have not distorted. The lovely path of justice and good behaviours have paved the way to God.

My speech and actions should remain just the real ones. But close touch of good company is rather the best way to acquire the best of everything. All the best company and the sound good words are two elderly friends one should never go without them. My softest of moments are being so immense that I can not think much of anything. Because I love loneliness sound preferences just automatic. Because lovely people are always good company. Again the cheerful people are suddenly gone away, but those who really suffer only become a burden on anyone who cares for them. Ma Anandamayi was a real good person and bestowed good company. As the people say they finished their things of vanity near her. This lovely God was given as a gift to us, and was so sweet and petite and a good soul that other gospels are just not wanted by one who have obtained the real company with Ma.

Suddenly I really feel ashamed, I could not find the opportunity to get in touch with her mighty

majestic touch and fragrance and the supernatural powers of Ma. But disheartenedly, she would give no account of how she treated me. But I really love her with all my heart. So I here console myself to be more patient, watch and see, what next come my way. I really would prefer to be with Ma Anandamayi.

Ma Anandamayi was one of the finest and attainable Divine ones whom people come to see and let others be also benefited by her. Others also calmly got the real kind sovereign powers of Ma's greatest kind gift of divine virtue, with all the best of her good grand attainments. All these factors are so much within the reach of this real Ma that nothing can stop anyone who is in search of divine pursuits. One feeble personalities do not come, otherwise the use of talents and wisdom do not boast anybody. Because the culture, creed and the customary codes are just the hindrances in the way of people, whom this divine gift is given with all gusto and freedom.

The frozen beauty of divine gestures are wonderful dreams and a supernatural scene of a beautiful Goddess. Just a fine and liberal kind of sweet little wonders which along with other type go side by side with much calm and peace of mind and harmony of thoughts. This little example is mentioned for the benefit for those who are really inclined to come near the fountain of peace, tranquility and all rather sweetest thought provoking sizeable things mastered and tailored for the real person. As such little guarantee is required and only

be gestured for the wonderments and other type of visionary typed, styled and being knitted formulas which only people of faith can have and get in times to come. All relative thoughts are just not visualized as it is against the rule of the rightiest God.

But do not be baffled and come to conclusions fast. Because do not you understand the real path to God is not so easy but it is highly tackled and seen by all who commands the rule of God. Nasty habits and bad temperaments can not be overcome by one are apt to put them in a real mess and garbage. But do not go in a thorny way. Mother Superior always guards you. Go to her and she will take care of you. Mother can not see her child to be in trouble but saves in the misery and in fortune. Right words and right deeds are always be done and nothing untoward will ever happen.

Superior judgements are always in their way but forcibly always put aside by the doer. This little fraction of indecisions and tumble down aptitudes are very dangerous and put in behind the barracks of pains and sorrows and calamity and the wish of devils persist and this good world going to what can not be expressed in so many words. All the people and the sages and sweet dear mother Anandamayi could have saved the race and this world but not because people do not listen to them.

Only the little tiny habits are to be changed and all the good can be have by all. Dear Ma! do something and help all of us. I could not restore to peace unless I got you and can get you.

Call of Ma*

Gopal

The First Matridarshan

Nepal Chakravorty (afterwards Swami Narayana-nanda), one of my colleagues, informed me one day, "I may be a bit late in attending the office for a few days of the next week. I could have taken official leave but I think, absents during the budget period, will be improper."

—"But I know, you are leading a trouble-free family life. What is the trouble you have to face now!"

—"No trouble! Ma Anandamayi of Dhaka is expected here (Benaras). Whenever she comes, she stays in a barge. I wish to finish marketing for the people of that barge, before starting for office."

—"All right! you can do that."

Just after two days in the slumber of dawn I dreamt of an incarnation of Divine mother. Her left big toe was shining. She was saying "*Baba*, is it not proper to come once to see your mother." My mind became somewhat diffused. I could not concentrate on my daily office work.

—"Ha, Nepal Babu, when are you expecting your Anandamayi Ma?"

*Translated from Bengali Ananda Varta, Vol. IX, pp. 139-147.

— “According to the letter that I have received, she is expected in the next week.”

— “No, I think, she will come within a couple of days. Please inform me as soon as she comes.”

— “I shall. But, perhaps she will not come so soon.” Next day Nepal Babu came panting and told, “Ma has already arrived last evening, — unexpectedly. Any how, how could you know that?”

— “Your mother has called me to see her? I will go today, when returning home, after finishing the duties. Are you to guide me there?”

— “Yes, certainly, you need not request even.” I went. Every man probably experiences certain events in life which is beyond all boundaries of time and space.

I went, dressed in coat and pant as a Pseudo-Westerner. Vanity of an imitation is more than that of a real Westerner. So, I expressed my “*namaskar*” merely with folded hands.

I found a veiled housewife seated still and having no work to do. Occasionally, a lady was found coming and going. Afterwards I knew her as ‘Didi’.

— “What is the name of the Baba ; where is the residence ? I replied. But I did not feel much interest. A storm was blowing in my mind. Is she that mother ? Is she my mother ? Did this Ma appear in my dream ? How can I be sure ? How can I understand, she is real or unreal ? All on a sudden Ma changed her sitting posture. My body shook as if by an electric shock. I saw her left big toe shining.

— What I am seeing ! It is the same picture which I saw in dream ! No ! I cannot stand this any further. My limbs are I feel as if paralysed. No more ! I must flee home now !

— “Let me now depart, Ma” — I expressed my *namaskar* with folded hands.

“Baba, no going, only coming.”

I was afraid, that I could do something which would not be fit for my official status. So I fled away as quickly as possible with a feeling of fear-mixed surprise. This was my first interview with Ma.

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“Dak Tar” to a Doctor

I was then residing at Ramnagar (where, it is said, if a person dies is reborn as an *ass*). But he who is already an *ass*, does not fear that. So, I was also carefree of the destination.

The rains had bidden fare-well, but left only slime and slime and slime. Ramnagar had no stone-built *ghat* to the Ganga. Malaviya bridge was not constructed at that time. Boats were the only means for coming to Varanasi.

Nepal Babu came to my house unexpectedly. “Ma has come, one of the joints of Her body is paining : Ma has asked me, “Call Baba and take him there”. Ma is staying in a *bazra* slightly apart from the landing stair of Ramnagar and close to rising sandy land. Would you please go once ?”

— “Yes, I shall, I must. But it may be in the dusk.”

— “O’ go ! Where are you going ? — The sky is cloudy. The driver is on leave. You will have to drive yourself. Better, you leave going today.”

— The wife remarked.

— “I will not go by motor car”. I will go on foot. Not far. Just near the landing stair of Ramnagar to a barge. Nepal Babu’s Ma is staying there. Nepal Babu hurried there very worried. Let me examine Her once.

“Is Nepal Babu’s mother here ? I heard only of one *pisima* (aunt — Father’s sister) living with him.”

— “Every one is not wretched like me. I availed no mother’s lap, only neglects instead ; offended feelings only accumulated in the mind of a baby.”

Instead of walking along the long main road, I selected a short cut through meadows, jungles and bushes. With the shoes in hand, I crossed the muddy water and sands to reach the barge. Afterwards Nepal Babu led me to his Ma. I found the mother seated with a face-full silent smile. I was thinking : Was it not an unnatural event ! I never found a patient smiling in pains. Didi was also present there. She went out for some work, probably to arrange cooking. Any how, with a serious dignified air, I began to examine the patient medically. I could not give up such an opportunity. I was asking questions after questions, both necessary and unnecessary to study her body critically. † found an amusing look in Her eyes which I felt to suggest that this large deception within my mind was completely revealed by a powerful torch

light. I was hitting on Her back to examine. Immediately Nepal Babu cried out of grief, "Doctor, please do not hit my mother with so much force."

I did not reply, as that was unnecessary. Iss ! as if Ma is a property of his ownself only.

At the time of departing of the Doctor, Didi exclaimed, "You have to face so much of troubles in coming and going back, I am sorry, my brother." — Ma laughed and commented, "Doctor means *dak tar* (God's call)."

I came back from the barge. The sound '*dak tar*' was still ringing in my ears.

"What is the condition of Nepal Babu's mother as you infer ?" My wife asked.

"It was not clear ; it appeared like a riddle."

"What do you mean ? 'Not clear', 'riddle' ? What is that ?"

"That is the question which is not clear to me. Two plus two is equal to four. But here I find something different."

— "What !" You yourself are speaking in an enigmatic language."

— "Correct ! I am in an enigma."

The two words "*Dak Tar*", was roaming in my head continuously. When I woke up in the morning it became clear to me. In the form of distressed people, afflicted people, poor people, He is calling me always, continuously. "I love you, I love you ! That is why I call you ! I call you for serving me, for your company, to see you loving me ! Oh Re, will you not listen to my call ? *Tar dak, Dak Tar* (Doctor) !

Don't be eaten up by edibles :

My wife used to grumble : "Why do you smoke so much ! You yourself often tell that according to Doctors, smoking much may cause cancer in the lungs."

"Doctors say many things which they themselves do not obey. None of the 'white' Doctors has given up smoking."

"But you are not white in colour, you are only dressed like whites. If you give up smoking, there may be some economy in expenditure."

"Do I spend much ? You see, I light a cigarette once in the morning and put out at night. By that I save many match sticks."

"All right, logician !"

Informations came to me that Ma's health was ill. She was in a barge on *Ganga*. A request was to see her, if possible.

I went to the barge, with a cigarette in hand. A shoulder bone of Ma was paining. I was hearing the symptoms of diseases attentively and was smoking intermittently.

— "Baba, do you smoke too much ?"

— "Yes, Ma, I do."

"Baba, can you not give it up ?"

"I cannot, Ma, I tried several times."

I was thinking of a suitable medicine and looking at Ma with a steadfast gaze. Unmindfully, I could not know when I started smoking again.

Ma laughed with affection and said, "Baba you may smoke cigarettes, if you like, but don't allow yourself to be smoked off by cigarettes."

I got a shock suddenly. I could not understand what it was. Something unknown happened to me. I was feeling almost suffocated. I came out quickly and forgot even to wish with folded hands.

When coming down stairs, I threw the burning cigarette to the Ganga. I walked straight to the car and was seated there. I asked the driver to drive quickly to the residence and informed that my health was not well. The driver commented that I had caught the hot wave. But a storm of another wave was going in my brain — whether I was using cigarettes or the cigarettes were using me up. My vanity was shocked.

“Why are you so late in returning — you had to come through hot wave. Even for a single day, can you not come early ?”

“Babuji has caught hot wave !” exclaimed the driver. Immediately the shoes were made off. The western dress was taken off. She ran for ice and began to apply. Lime juice came, burnt mango was ordered for.

“Will you take some food ? Have you exhausted all the cigarettes I put in your case. I have never seen you entering the house without a cigarette within your lips. Shall I bring a new packet ?”

“No, I have enough. But can you tell me one thing : I take the cigarettes, no doubt. Are the cigarettes also eating me up ?”

“I think it is correct. Cigarettes have eaten you up and you have become a servant of cigarettes, ...Who told you this ?

— “Ma.”

— “Ma ?”

A silent environment.

“I cannot tolerate this idea, that I am being eaten up by cigarettes. I will demonstrate before Ma, that I am not so much a weak man. You will continue to fill up my cigarette case and put a match box as you did regularly. I do not want to flee away from the tempting things. I will keep the tempting things with me but I will conquer the temptation. Ma Anandamayi has called me ‘father,’ and this ordinary cigarette will dominate on me” — The cigarette immersed in the Ganga, in presence of Anandamayi Ma, was the last cigarette of my life. Twelve years have passed, so there is nothing to fear.”

Ma knows, I have not allowed the cigarette any more to eat me up.

Let ‘I cannot’ be eradicated from your vocabulary. Time is gliding away swiftly : for a few days only lasts this reunion with friends and kinsmen. Gather up your possessions, brother, no one accompanies you on your final journey.

—Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

A touch of Ma's feet

Sachindra Nath Mukhopadhyay

The 39th 'Samyam Saptaha' — the week of continence — commenced at Kankhal on the Sixteenth of November, 1988. Pre-dawn Puja at the Mahasamadhi every day was followed by the chanting of Vedic mantras. This over, the doors of the spacious hall were closed, for an hour of mauna dhyana or meditation. Vratees (participating aspirants), brahmacharins and devotees sat in rows, on the floor, facing paintings and a large, well decorated portrait of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi.

On a raised seat running along the wall and in line with the portrait of Sri Sri Ma, sat a galaxy of Mahamandaleswaras and other spiritual luminaries. They sat facing us and joined in the mauna-dhyana every day. It was their practice to leave the hall at the end of the hour of dhyana. Those who were scheduled to address the Vratees, turned up later at the appointed hour.

One could well have expected, Swami Adhyatmananda of the Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, to take his seat among the spiritual celebrities on the raised seat in front of us. Instead he sat among us and had accepted all the disciplines enjoined on the Vratees.

Vratees also were called upon to address the assembly. Many of them gave fascinating accounts

of how they had been drawn to Ma and how their lives had been profoundly altered and influenced by Ma's grace. Swami Adhyatmananda was giving such a talk, as a Vratee. He talked about "dhyana".

Earlier in the week, Swami Shyam Sundar Das in his discoursé, had succinctly described 'meditation' as "concentration without tension". He had not elaborated. Now Swami Adhyatmananda was narrating what we had heard Ma say in reply to question on meditation. Many people had asked questions, when Swami Adhyatmananda happened also to be present. The Swami was now summing up those questions and the answers that Ma had given.

What was the proper time for meditation, some one had asked. Was there any particular hour? Whatever the time chosen, the aspirant should be regular and do it at the same time every day, Ma had replied. Was there any hour better than others? Yes, Brahma Bela, the hour before the day break, was the best time. That was the hour when Mahatmas — great souls — engaged themselves in meditation. This set up powerful vibrations. Any one meditating at that hour was helped also by those vibrations.

What was the second best hour? The juncture between the day and the night, as that between the two halves of the day and the night, were excellent. The hours around sunrise and sunset, mid-night and mid-day, were all very good for dhyana.

Was there any particular direction which one should face while meditating? Yes, Ma had said,

one should sit facing the north or the east. The planes of vibration were more helpful that way. It was like a portable transistor set performing better in a particular plane.

About the seat, Ma had said, it should be comfortable (not luxurious) and made up of non-conducting material. Rishis and Munis used to prefer tiger or deer-skin. They were against the killing of animals for the purpose though. A piece of woolen blanket would be eminently suitable. Synthetic cushions (foam) were not desirable.

Full of reminiscences and reverence, the Swami concluded his talk. It all reminded me of an interview that had been granted to us (my wife and me) some eight years ago at Vrindaban Ashram. "Did I tell you about dhyana". Ma had asked and had straightaway proceeded on to explain what we should meditate upon and how. While taking our leave at the end of the interview that day, I mentioned that Ma was scheduled to visit our home-town in a few weeks. So we looked forward to more darshan and more instructions. "Nothing could be said about that at the time" was the terse reply given by Ma. After a brief pause, she had added "Should any questions arise (in our minds) that would be seen (taken care of)."

I had misgivings in my mind and felt depressed as we left. A few years later, Ma withdrew from the human frame, in which she had manifested herself. We knew that Ma is there, pervading everywhere and every-when to the utmost limits of space and time. But wondered how would we now ask our

questions and how would she give us instructions and light. Some questions had arisen in the mind from time to time and I had wondered what Ma would have said. And here was Swami Adhyatmananda now mouthing some of the answers. It was an overpowering experience and I recalled what Bhaiji had recorded long ago, that none of Ma's utterances was ever to be in vain. I closed my eyes and bowed low, stretching my head mentally forward to touch the Lotus feet of Sri Sri Ma. I prayed, "Ma, hold me on ; lead me on to light."

Asato ma Sad gamaya,
 Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
 Mritryur ma amritam gamaya
 Abirabeerma-yedhi.

Jai Ma. Jai Ma.

No evil can ever overcome him who cleaves to God's name. What one suffers is in exact keeping with the nature of one's actions. If the flow of God's name is sustained, all work will beget the good.

—Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

A Sweet Incident

Smt. Saroma Mookerjee

As far as I remember in the winter of 1975 Sri Ma was in Delhi Ashram for a few days. One evening I went to have her darshan. She was then sitting in the hall and Sandhya Kirtan had just started in a quiet and serene atmosphere. As there was a manageable crowd, I was fortunate enough to sit near Ma. After some time kirtan was over and when most of the people had left for home and I was also about to go, Sri Ma looked at me and slowly uttered — “there would be lunar eclipse from midnight throughout the night and would continue till 4 a.m.” She desired that we should perform kirtan during that period. My position became very embarrassing because I was accompanied by my eldest son who came from Calcutta and was to start for Bombay that night. I was also in a hurry to go home to cook food for my son. Moreover, at the dead of night I was unable to come back to the Ashram on my own. But I would be failing in my duty if I could not fulfil her desire. I asked Sri Ma as to why she did not tell this earlier when all the people were there? Moreover, I wanted to narrate my awkward situation but Sri Ma at once changed her position and did not answer. After a while she left for her room and I also got up with a heavy heart, not knowing what to do. Looking at my face my son whispered while going, “Ma, don’t worry, you will again come here

to-night and in fact I am also coming with you. Let us go home and find out what can be done. I am not going to Bombay to-night." We went home and my son went out and returned home after about two hours with two brothers and two other ladies. We all reached the Ashram at about 11.30 p.m.

I saw some people there who had not gone home after hearing the news of kirtan and a few who came to see Ma afterwards. With the blessings of Sri Ma my son could also manage to get a few bright garlands, one special for Sri Ma, some sweets and 4/5 packets of Dhup sticks also at this odd hour. Just at quarter to 12 gracious Mother came to the hall and gave us a beautiful smile. I put sandal paste on Mother's forehead and garlanded her with the distinctive garland. She then called us one by one and garlanded us. We started kirtan and Ma sat for a while. At about 3 a.m. she came again and her presence gave us a new impetus. We became exalted and having been absorbed in divine intoxication we continued our kirtan with heart and soul. Around 4 a.m. Sri Ma sprinkled Ganges water on us. We stopped kirtan and bowed down before her. The Divine Mother gave us prasad and said that kirtan was excellent.

When everything was over smoothly, we were wondering how Mother's desire could perform miracles. We returned home with great joy having Mother's spontaneous compassion and grace. That night is no doubt a memorable night for us.

Ma Touches us : I. in diversity

Dr. P. C. Datta

1. Ma stands as "No speciality" at the centre of all specialities

After meeting Sri Anandamayi Ma, many people, quite naturally asked me, "What is her teaching? What advice does she give? What type of solace she can give to the common suffering people? To such questions, I usually replied, "Mataji preaches no particular doctrine. Her speciality is that she has no special teaching". Then, failing to search out any good way of explaining the feeling that I had in my mind, I would suggest: "Please try yourself to hear her words. What your ears will perceive may be different from that perceived by my senses or mind. Try to hear her words expressed by human language as well as by communication through some unknown finer means."

During the early period of my visit to Ashrams, erected by her devotees, in order to have a *darshan* of Ma, my eyes were also attracted to the persons who have tuned up their life-tone to the sound of her lotus feet. Some were Sannyasis, and some house-holders; some wore *tulasi* wood beads round their necks, and some *rudrakshas*. In one man's hand I saw a trident (*trishul*) and in another's hand a *danda* (a staff) and a begging bowl, and some

Sannyasis had nothing like these symbols. One was absorbed in reciting Sanskrit hymns, another was an aspirant on the path of enquiry, a third melting away in deep emotion with tears of divine love glistening in his eyes. In getting to know them closer, I discovered that one person was a Sannyasi of the *Tirtha* line, another of *Saraswati* line, a third was that of *Giri*, a fourth *Puri*. One was *Vaisnava*, another a *Saivite*, and yet another *Shakta*. Some *Jain*, some *Sikh*, some were *Parshi*, some were *Muslims* or *Christians*. All said, Ma was guiding them all according to their requirement.

After having met Ma, some young men and women left their homes for living an ascetic life. On the other hand, Mataji also advised some people already living in the Ashram or wanting to live in the Ashram, to get married, telling them : Remember, wherever you may be, this little child will always be with you.

At centre of these diversities, stands Ma, directing the currents of all these variegated streams. We observe that Ma is fostering all the diverse religious lines of approach. Just like all the worldly mothers who nurture their offsprings, Ma is also engaged in fostering all the multifarious currents of religious aspiration of the world. How can we then discover any special doctrine in Ma ?

“As many are human being, so many are ways”, declares Ma. “Infinite are the *Sadhanas*, infinite are the *sthitis* (spiritual attainments), infinite is manifestation, and yet He is unmanifest” says Ma Anandamayi (Words of A. Ma, p. 9).

Ma explains the term *Infinite* by putting a Biological example, "The leaves of a tree are infinite in number, and although they are infinite all are of the same general pattern, yet there are countless variations within that pattern. Viewed from this angle also diversity is infinite. Finally when the Enlightenment occurs, this will be the end, and at that very instant He will be in the midst of endless variety. The seed itself remain what it is, and so do the boughs and branches ; yet there is infinity in each of them. Similarly in the field of Sadhana also, everything is infinite." (Words of A. Ma. p. 99).

2. Ma touches us in all movements and rests

Ma further says that not only the ways are infinite, revelations and stages (*sthitis*) also. "Infinite is the diversity of creation, infinite are its modes of being, its changing movements and static states revealed at every single instant." (Ma, Words of A. Ma. pp. 108-9). Are the *sthitis* also innumerable ? Ma replies very definitely, "Certainly". But there is something beyond that, where these questions of *gati* or *sthiti* does not arise, and there is *gati* in *sthiti* and *sthiti* in *gati*. But, what does it mean ? The questioner wants to understand intellectually. Ma explains by smiles, "Each stage of a growing tree represents a *sthiti*, yet it is also a passing one (*gati*). The tree potentially contains fruits, so it will yield fruit ; This "will" means "does contain". (No simile is perfect in all respects) (Words of A. Ma. p. 130).

Furthermore, "It is quite certain that the Truth is beyond speech and thought. Only that which can be expressed in words is being said. But what cannot be put in language is indeed *That which Is (Yaa Taa)*."

3. Why should we aspire for Ma's touch ?

Because we have lost the Self, we are in want of our real Nature. "To want is the nature. Actually, one wants the true form of the Self-Knowledge and Bliss. To go back home after the play is over, is nature. The play ground also belongs to Him. The play is also Himself. Friends of the play, ground are also His ones. But none want everything ; that is, none wants ignorance, all want to know. Does anybody want death ? Everybody wants *Amrita*. Worldly movement is from ignorance to knowledge. In this world also, one can find, when somebody constructs a house, he desires that it should remain for a long time ; he wants permanent existence and Truth. If you speak a lie accidentally, you do not feel well. Every one wants that there should be no want. This is your real nature. When you come to look upon a thing, you enquire what it is. This is your nature. When you buy a cloth, you want that it exists for a long time, it should not end soon. Your nature is to want the endless (*Anantam*). Actually, your nature is to want a revelation of what you are, That Eternity, That Reality, That endless knowledge. Your mind does not like ephemeral, unreal things, ignorance, that ends soon. Your nature is to uncover what you are" (Ananda Varta, Bengali, II).

Ma further emphasizes : "At all times, under all circumstances, you must keep yourself in readiness to tread the path to the Supreme. Who can tell at which moment, your *charity, service, obeisance* will become an act of consecration to the One" (Words A. Ma. p. 88).

4. Ma touches through so many ways of Sadhana :

If we look at this creation, this world, we find production of endless varieties is the characteristic feature of the creation. Development is a biological phenomenon which has two integral parts : Growth and Differentiation. Growth without differentiation is a dangerous phenomenon. Because it means formation of cancer cells, which can grow only destroying the organs and organisms. Growth without differentiation is anti-developmental. God is manifested through Grace by the process of differentiation (being different), in the universal creation. Let us remind Ma's words : "Infinite are the *sadhanas*, infinite are the spiritual expressions, infinite is the manifestation and yet He is unmanifest. (Words A. Ma. p. 99).

"As many are men, so many are ways to Truth or beyond"—declares Ma Anandamayi, very often. This is the mystery of the Universe, observed by Darwin. No two organisms are totally identical, physically or mentally. *Sadhanas* therefore, must be different for different men according to their *samskara*. Ma says, "What is *samskara* ? Take for instance, the *samskara* of a Temple. This is to say, what had already existed (as inherent system),

becomes revealed. Then again whatever you do, consciously or unconsciously leaves an impression on your mind, whether you are aware of or not. This is styled as *samskara* (Words A. Ma. p. 151).

5. Religious sects are touches of Ma :

Mother knows what the *samskaras* of each of her children are. Her grace works accordingly and she touches us with affection to purify us by removing the bondage of *samskara*. Ma explains nicely : "God appears in the guise of countless shapes and modes, each one of them being Gods *Chinmaya Vighraha* (spiritual forms). Depending on ones own avenue of approach, prominence is given to one particular form. Why should there be so many religious sects and sub-sects (*Sampradaya* and *Upa-sampradaya*) ? Through every one *sampradaya* (Sam = completely ; *pradana* = gift), God offers Himself totally to Himself, so that every person can proceed according to his uniqueness (based on Words A. Ma. p. 176).

Ma further says : "Attend every religious ceremonies or systems of all *sampradayas* and pray to *Ista* (The God), or *Guru* (the eternal Guide). Oh my *Ista*, Oh my *Guru*, make me feel, make me understand, how beautifully you are manifested here also". (1975 Souvenir, Calcutta).

6. Philosophies and Sciences are also Ma's total touches :

Realization of Truth, though depends upon the development of a *Supra-intellectual* consciousness,

intellectual exercises in Science and Philosophy do help that consciousness to dawn. In other words, Ma comes down or appears as touching us to awaken the superior consciousness. "This body respects whatever anyone may say, because each person's point of view depends on the particular stairway by which he ascends. Everything is right on one's own plane. Yet, beyond words and all expressions — where there is both manifestation and non-manifestation, duration and non-duration, space and spacelessness — there nothing holds good (Words A. Ma. p. 58).

This body declares that whatever theory any one may hold is based on reasoning. Beyond reasons, beyond points of view, there is a state where none of these can be. In that there is no room for words, language, or discrimination of any kind. Language (*Bhasha*) remains floating (*Bhese thake*). From, what has been told, you will have to take what can be grasped by the intellect (Words A. Ma. p. 60-61).

The Yoga Yatra of Shri Aurobindo from Baroda to Pondicherry

“Ghosh Saheb, a Sannyasi has come and says that he knows Yoga-Vidya”.

“Yes ?”

“Yes, and through this Yoga-Vidya he can cure any incurable disease.”

“Then can he cure Barin’s fever ?”

“What is wrong in trying ? Perhaps, the fever may go down.”

“All right then, bring him in.”

Shri Aurobindo’s younger brother Barin had come to Shri Aurobindo at Baroda at that time. He wished to establish a Bhabani temple to help create brave revolutionaries. So he had gone to Vindhya to look for a location for the temple and there had contacted some poisonous fever which would not come down, and so Shri Aurobindo was worried. Hence the Sannyasi was called in. The Sannyasi belonged to the Naga Baba Sect. He told Shri Aurobindo that because of his knowledge of Yoga, Barin’s fever would definitely come down. He asked for a glass of water and a knife. Keeping the glass in his hand, he recited a mantra. Then he made the sign of X on the water with the knife, and gave Barin the water to drink. On drinking this water Barin’s fever went down shortly.

This was Shri Aurobindo's first experience of the practical usefulness of the power of Yoga.

Shri Aurobindo had no earlier experience of this kind. He knew nothing of India's religion, philosophy, or culture, because he was sent to England by his father, when he was only seven years old. Shri Aurobindo's father, Dr. Krishnan Ghosh was a very keen follower of Western thought. He had sent all his three sons to England so that they should get a thorough Western education, and he brought up in that atmosphere. Thus Shri Aurobindo went to England at the young age of seven, and studied there till he was twenty-one. In deference to his father's wishes, he appeared for the I.C.S. in England, but he deliberately remained absent for the horse-riding test, as he did not wish to serve as an officer in India under the British. When Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda met Shri Aurobindo, he was deeply impressed by his personality and appointed him as Professor of English at the Baroda College, and also as his personal Secretary. Thus Shri Aurobindo came from England straight to Baroda. When he came to Baroda he had no knowledge of God, Yoga, God-realization etc. He has himself said in this matter "That time I had no knowledge of Yoga. I had no idea what God is."

When he realised that power could be obtained through Yoga, he thought, "Why not obtain power by practising Yoga, and then use that power for achieving independence for the country". With regard to this, he has said, "These were the times

when the slogan was : "The country is first and mankind is second" — then where was the room for other matters? But from the back of my consciousness, something made my mind accept the idea of Sadhana. Thus I had entered spiritual life by the back door. I wished to bring freedom to my country and when I knew that the power of Yoga could be used in the field of action (Karma), I seriously thought of doing Sadhana."

Then Shri Aurobindo started the practice of Pranayam. He learnt Pranayam from a pupil of Swami Brahmananda of Chandod. He started doing Pranayama for 5-6 hours daily. Later he spoke to his Shishyas about his experiences regarding the practice of Pranayama. "My experience of Pranayama is that the intelligence and the mind are enlightened by Pranayama. In Baroda I used to practise Pranayama for six to seven hours. Because of this I felt that the mind was full of light and strength. I used to write poetry at that time. Before doing Pranayama, I could write five or six lines daily and two hundred lines a month, but after Pranayama, I could write two hundred lines in only half an hour. I felt that there was a circle of electric power around my head. As a result of Pranayama, I obtained the strength to work without rest and my body became healthy.

As a result of practising Pranayama Shri Aurobindo obtained limitless strength and he used it for achieving India's independence. He started feeling that merely due to Pranayama, if the mind, body and life-force could obtain so much strength,

then what a great transformation could come about from the systematic study of Yoga-Sadhana and what a great power could be achieved ! He realised that India's freedom could definitely be achieved sooner through this enormous power. He started a search for a proper teacher for practising systematic Yoga-Sadhana, and he came into contact with Vishnu Bhasker Lele.

Seeing Shri Aurobindo's keen desire for Yoga-Sadhana, Lele told him, "If you wish to have a solid experience of Sadhana, you will have to stop all political activities."

Shri Aurobindo wished for a solid experience of Sadhana to be used for the speedier advancement of political activity, so how could political activity be stopped ? Also at that time Shri Aurobindo was deeply involved in the activities of the Indian National Congress. Still he said to Lele :

"Let us try the experiment first. I will stop all political activities for a few days". Shri Aurobindo suddenly disappeared from the political scene. Except for a few close friends nobody knew Shri Aurobindo's whereabouts. He stayed in total seclusion with Lele for three days. The place was Baroda and the house was the secluded higher floor of Sardar Majumdar's Vada.

"Make your mind totally free of thought. Immediately remove any thought that enters your mind. Thus your mind will become quiet and free of all vibrations" Lele said. Shri Aurobindo rigidly followed this suggestion. Regarding this experience

of his, he has said, "I could achieve this in three days. The result was that my heart became quiet and peaceful. In those three days I unexpectedly experienced Salvation निर्वाण. This experience remained constantly within me for a long time. Afterwards I could not be free of it, even if I wanted to. Even during my other activities, this experience remained constantly at the back of my mind."

After this realization, Shri Aurobindo had to go to Bombay for a meeting of the Congress Working Committee. Now his mind had become totally blank. No thoughts arose in his mind. He was wondering what he could achieve by going to Bombay in this state of mind and so he requested Lele to go to Bombay with him. Both came to Bombay. The realization of निख ब्रह्म was even deeper in Bombay. All the activities going on in Bombay, the rows of buildings, people endlessly moving about, all this seemed to him like objects only on the surface. Nothing seemed real. This experience of ब्रह्म was constant, and in the midst of this, he was invited to speak for the National Party. What could be done now? When there were no thoughts in his mind, how could he speak? As this was work for the country, he could not refuse. He spoke to Lele about his problem and asked him what he should do.

"Accept the invitation and go to the meeting. Think of the meeting in the form of Narayan and do namaskar. Pray, and whatever you have to say will come to you from above.

Shri Aurobindo accepted the invitation. At the appointed time he was going towards the meeting place by horse-carriage. On the way somebody gave him the newspaper to read : He saw by chance a heading which said : "Judgement of ages, the printer guilty, two years jail". He put away the paper. On arrival, he left the carriage and walked with Lele to the meeting place. Again, he said to Lele, "What will I speak ? My mind is totally blank. There is not a single idea what shall I do ?"

Encouraging him again, Lele said, "Do as I said. I will pray. Speech will come to you from above". Shri Aurobindo got up to speak. He bowed to the Assembly in the form of Narayan ; and prayed. Words came to him from beyond the emptiness of his mind, and he spoke. The subject was, "The present political situation". He started his talk from the newspaper headline which he had seen by chance. The entire speech came from above, in the noiseless, blank-state of mind. Then he understood the truth of the practical nature of Yoga, as well as its creative aspect. After this not only in Bombay but in Calcutta and elsewhere, he spoke in this blank and quiet state of mind.

Shri Aurobindo remarked that he learnt three things from Lele in the spiritual path. One, the capacity to make the mind peaceful that is realisation of "निख ब्रह्म चेतना" and this experience continued for ever. After this Shri Aurobindo has never been in the ordinary state of mind. Secondly, the ability to speak and write without the use of

the gross mind, and the practice of keeping his self under the guidance of the higher power. These three things gave a totally different turn to Shri Aurobindo's life. These matters played a very important part in Shri Aurobindo's advance from politics into Yoga.

“What should I do in future? How should I practice Sadhana? Give me some instructions in this matter”. Shri Aurobindo asked Lele at the time of separation from him.

Lele gave him instructions as to how he should practice Sadhana. He was instructing him regarding Yoga Kriya etc. but he suddenly stopped and asked, “Do you obtain any guidance from your heart? Can you hear any sounds from your heart?”

“Yes, I do get guidance from my heart. See, I have obtained this mantra from my heart. Saying this he recited the mantra which he had obtained from within.

“Can you completely depend on the One who has awakened this mantra in you? Can you follow totally this voice of your heart?”

“Yes, Definitely.”

“Then I don't need to give you any further instructions”. Saying this Lele was quiet and he did not give Shri Aurobindo any instructions regarding Sadhana.

Now all Shri Aurobindo's actions followed his inner voice. After some time, Lele met Shri Aurobindo in Calcutta and asked, “Is Dhyana-Sadhana going on according to the system I showed?”

“No, I don't do Dhyān that way.”

Hearing this Lele was hurt. He felt that some powerful demonic power had taken charge of Shri Aurobindo and Shri Aurobindo had to be drawn out of it”. So he started giving Shri Aurobindo various instructions. Regarding this Shri Aurobindo has said, “I heard all his instructions, but I did not follow them, because I received a clear command from within, that I did not need any human Guru. And my Dhyān was going on twenty-four hours.”

It seemed as though Lele's only job was to lead Shri Aurobindo into the Yoga Marga. After that the God in Shri Aurobindo's heart took over the work. The peaceful state of Dhyān in his mind went on continuously. He used to write articles for “Vande Mataram” and “Karma Yogin” and later in the “Arya” monthly he used to write chapters for six books at one time — all this was written in this vibrationless, peaceful state of mind. Later, Shri Aurobindo spoke to his Shishyas regarding this, “When I used to start writing, I did not have to think. The words just followed on : Shri Aurobindo developed this power fully, but never made use of it later. Regarding this also he said later, “I merely proved the experiment to be correct but now I do not make use of it. I developed the system perfectly, but then discarded it.”

Shri Aurobindo entered the Yoga-Marga for obtaining the strength to work for Mother India's freedom, and then that Yoga-Marga was his one aim in life. At that time the fire of love for the

country was burning fiercely and Bengal was the centre. Shri Aurobindo wished to live in Bengal and direct the youth of Bengal. At that time The National College was established in Calcutta. Shri Aurobindo joined as the Principal. Living in Calcutta, he fired the desire for the country's independence throughout India, through his writings in "Vande-Mataram."

A bomb was burst in Muzzafarpur on 30th April, 1908. The bomb was meant for Magistrate Kingsford but by mistake two British ladies were killed. As a result, all revolutionaries were arrested on 1st May, 1908. Shri Aurobindo was taken to Alipore Jail. The account of his life in Jail was extra-ordinary. At first all political prisoners were kept together, and hence there was a lot of noise all around. In the midst of all this uproar. Shri Aurobindo tried to meditate, and spent most of his time reading the Gita and Upanishads. Regarding this he has written :

"I was training how to continue my Sadhana in the midst of the uproar. The people around only knew that I was a Sadhak. They had no idea what my Sadhana was."

At that time, an incident occurred. A revolutionary who had acted as Govt. witness was murdered in the Jail. As a result, all prisoners were kept in solitary confinement. Thus Shri Aurobindo had complete privacy in a solitary cell. The noise and disturbance were gone and instead his Sadhana got a good opportunity for advancement. He was continuously in a state of

Dhyan in his Cell. Seeing him in this state, all the time, the Assistant Superintendent of the Jail, Mr. Dali was very worried. He secured permission for Shri Aurobindo to stroll about in the jail courtyard morning and evening from the Jail Superintendent. He told Shri Aurobindo, "You are sitting about all day in Dhyan in this dark Cell. This will impair the health of both your mind and body. Now you can move around freely in the Jail court-yard morning and evening. I have obtained special permission for you."

Regarding this Shri Aurobindo had said, "I don't know why Mr. Dali had sympathy and kindness for me, but then I had permission to walk around, and I walked about for two hours". From that time Shri Aurobindo formed the habit of doing Dhyan while walking, and this continued, and in Pondicherry he used to walk around in two rooms and practise Dhyan continuously.

He has described his Jail experiences in his Uttarpada discourses : when he was taken to Jail, he used to await the voice of God day and night. He wondered : Why did God bring me to Jail ? What is the purpose behind it ? What is it that God wants from me ? He called to God desperately and longingly from his heart. At last God spoke to him, "Had not I, told you to leave aside all your activities and go into solitude ?"

"Watch your heart, and you will be able to remain in close contact with me." About a month before his arrest, Aurobindo heard this voice and these words in his heart clearly, but he felt at

that time, that if he went into solitude at that juncture, the Independence Movement would be slowed down, and there would come an ebb "in its force". Thinking that it was not wise to leave all activities and go into solitude at such a time, he continued his political activities. But this was not in accordance with God's wishes and so God sent him to a solitary Cell in Jail, and in this Cell, God said to him, "You did not have the strength to break the bonds of Karma (action). So I have broken them for you. I do not wish you to continue being bound down with those hindrances. I want you to do some other work, and I have brought you to this Jail in order to prepare you for that work."

God Himself explained to him the intricacies of Gita and the Upanishads every day. The substance of Hinduism was unravelled before him. He understood the Secrets of Hinduism. Not only this; God made him realise that the entire universe is Vasudev only. Regarding this experience, he has said, "I saw that the high walls of my prison were no walls. These were only Lord Vasudev surrounding me. The tree standing in the courtyard of my Cell was no tree, but Vasudev Himself. Shri Krishna Himself was standing there and giving me shade. I sighted the bars of my Cell, the grill of the door, and even there I saw Vasudev, Narayan protecting me, guarding me. When I slept on the rough blanket given to me, I experienced that the arms of my beloved and my friend Shri Krishna were around me. I saw the prisoners, thieves, and

murderers of the Jail and in them I saw Lord Vasudeva.

When I went to the lower court, God said to me, "When you were jailed, your faith had sagged and you had called to me and said, 'Where is your protection' isn't it? Now, look at that Magistrate, and at that Govt. Lawyer". When I looked, I found my beloved friend Shri Krishna sitting, smilingly gently. He said to me, "A case has been made out against you. Leave that to me : The purpose of bringing you here is something quite different. This case will prove to be a help, a stepping stone in My work."

After this, the case against Shri Aurobindo was transferred to the higher Court. Surprisingly, all arrangements for his defence underwent a change. Sacrificing his enormously lucrative practice of lakhs of rupees, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das took up the defence of Shri Aurobindo. Day and night he was occupied in preparing his defence case papers. He neglected his health even in pursuit of this work. He collected evidence item by item for the defence, and prepared the brief. Shri Aurobindo felt that if he gave him certain written suggestions, they might help in preparing the defence case. So he started writing these suggestions. He then heard God's voice again :

"This man will save you from the net that is spread around you. Leave aside trying to help him. There is no need for you to give him suggestions. I will do that". After this Shri Aurobindo gave no suggestions regarding his case. Chittaranjan Das

was himself surprised at the words coming out of his mouth effortlessly when he stood up to fight the case. He won the case ; and he proved Shri Aurobindo innocent !

However, a year's jail completely changed Shri Aurobindo's life. His view of life changed totally due to his realization of the deepest truths of life during his stay in the Solitary Cell of the Jail. He had said in his discourses at Uttarpada, "I am not allowed to disclose all that happened in Jail. I can only say that God made me understand His amazing Secrets, and the deep Truths of the Hindu religion. I was brought up in the occidental atmosphere of England. I was full of doubts and agnosticism. At one time I believed that many aspects of Hinduism were pure imagination, — not true, but false conceptions. However, in Jail, daily I had a realisation of the truths of Hinduism in my mind and heart. These truths became live experiences for me. I experienced things, that defied all explanation through worldly knowledge."

The fact that Shri Aurobindo could walk above the earth in Jail due to Yoga Sadhana, had spread all over India. To his pupils who later asked him about it, he said, "This incident did take place once in Jail. At that time my Sadhana was on the ऋण level. I was doing Dhyān and the question came to my mind whether supernatural powers (physical), like rising up (being without support of the ground) were possible. In a short while I saw my body being lifted up. I could not have lifted myself up as a result of my own muscular power. My knee

was touching the ground a little, and the rest of the body was lifted up against the wall. Normally, even had I wished, I could not have balanced my body thus. My body was thus hanging without any effort on my part.

I had unusual experiences in Jail. These experiences were perhaps due to the fact that I was doing Pran Sadhana and once those experiences disappeared, they never came back.

Also Swami Vivekananda's voice was giving Shri Aurobindo guidance for fifteen days in Jail. He explained to Shri Aurobindo the difference between thought arising from intelligence and natural wisdom (प्रज्ञा). That voice also stopped as soon as it had done its work.

A year's solitary imprisonment for Shri Aurobindo passed away in no time — in close contact with God, and in a series of divine experiences of Sadhana. What an amazing place God selected, wherein to impart knowledge to Shri Aurobindo — keeping him totally aloof from the world outside ! In that prison Cell, God uncovered the deepest secrets of Yoga for Aurobindo, and also indicated to him that he had to perform God's hitherto unattempted work on earth. Shri Aurobindo who came out of Jail was totally dedicated to the feet of God.

Even when he came out of Jail, his love for his country was unabated. He restarted the battle for independence. One day Shri Aurobindo was sitting in the office of "Karma Yogin" where he received the news of his imminent arrest. The British

Government was about to imprison him again, and a warrant was to be issued for his arrest. As soon as he got the news, he sat down for Dhyān. He concentrated in his heart so as to be able to receive God's command. The command came, —

“Leave British India at once”. He immediately obeyed the command. He reached the banks of the Ganges straight from office in ten minutes' time. He boarded the steamer for the French Settlement of Chandanagar. After spending a few days in Chandanagar he departed for Pondicherry.

In 1910, when the sun of his political career was at its zenith, obeying his inner voice and God's command, he retired from the political sphere, and reached Pondicherry in order to perform God's great mission. He left his mortal body in 1950, and till then, he lived in Pondicherry and practised deep and difficult Sadhana for the sake of the mission entrusted to him by God: The mission was, “To Confer divinity on mankind, to establish God's rule on earth, and to activate the Supramental state in the Universe”. So far no one had achieved anything like this on earth, and God had selected Shri Aurobindo for this mission. It was for this that God, through various devices, brought him from England to Baroda, and from Baroda to Pondicherry.

Thus Shri Aurobindo's coming to Pondicherry from Baroda meant coming from the political scene to Yoga Bhoomi, arising from the mental to the supramental (beyond the mind), rising from man's ordinary consciousness to God's divine

consciousness and crossing all limits and achieving a human completeness and fullness, that was divine.

Shri Aurobindo lived in Pondicherry and for forty years practised deep penance and a lonely Sadhana, and as a result, the possibility of the creation of a World wherein divine love, joy, knowledge, and light would be manifest became evident.

Mankind will be grateful to Shri Aurobindo for ages for his stupendous achievement.

Of all creatures the human being alone has the capacity to create an atmosphere, an environment that is conducive to the revelation of Truth. With this faith one should endeavour to adhere steadily and without wavering to the practices meant to awaken one's true nature.

—Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

What God does, is for best

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(Translated by Smt. Swati Bhattacharya)

That I was blessed with the love and affection of Sri Anandamayi Ma was not owing to any virtue of mine at all, but entirely due to her endless grace that heeded no reason. This I consider my greatest fortune in a million lives. As a matter of fact, I did not and do not possess any merit which could reach me to her lotus-feet. But Mother is known to favour the unable and the unworthy even more. My case was perhaps no different.

It was in my darkest hours of misery that such good fortune dawned upon me. Dr. Jatindra Bimal Chowdhury, my dearest husband's sudden demise had thrown me into an unspeakable state of mind. I was even rued it more to think that it was I who had made him go to the University Institute for that fateful lecture. I was then in Punjab rehearsing for a new Sanskrit drama composed by my own humble pen. It was I who was supposed to give that lecture as the Chairperson. The organisers were crest-fallen to learn that I would be unable to attend. There was no other choice but to press the ever-polite Dr. Jatindra Bimal to preside over the meeting. Well over

an hour, he talked on 'Matri-Bandana' — the topic so dear to him. His talk ranged from the woman-saints of Rig-Veda to Ma Saradamani and Ma Anandamayi of recent days. Just afterwards, he fell senseless and passed away. Hermits and Swamijis present there all agreed that it was as if Ma Saradamani and Ma Anandamayi had themselves come in compassion to take their dearest son. So it must have been.

But think of my plight. 'Why am I left behind' — I constantly brooded. But no — Sri Ma Anandamayi was yet in this very world. She immediately called me to her. I washed her feet with my unbridled tears. Mother, the compassionate drew me to her breast, dried my eyes with her own hands. "Ma Roma", she said lovingly, "You must be knowing that the soul is immortal. Only the body dies, never the soul. Tell me once again that glorious mantra of the Upanishads. It will console you as well."

'The Soul is neither born nor perishable,
It is ever-present, it does not die with the
body'.

Sri Sri Ma told me again affectionately, "Listen to me, though you know already what I am saying. What God does, is for the best. Just as a physician cures a Carbuncle by cleaning it of the poisonous pus, so also God cleanses the soul with sorrow to bring the votary to Himself. He gives sorrows and pains to the devotee to intensify his craving for God. He accepts the offerings that are washed with the tears of a devotee."

My mind at once calmed down. The truth that was so long hidden from my sight by the mist of tears became clear again by the tranquil voice of Mother. Time and again she said, 'He is the remover of all woes, think of Him all the time, pray to Him, make obeisance to Him. He is Goodness, He is Peace, He is Happiness. He is the heart of the heart, He is the soul.'

Lastly Mother, the Supreme Merciful, gave me the greatest assurance — "Ma Roma, look around, my dearest son Jatindra Bimal is not lost. He is always with you. You will feel him every-where, every moment. This I say with all certainty. My words are never belied."

Of course, Mother, never were your words untrue. Even after a long lapse of 25 years, I still can feel Jatindra Bimal in every moment with my mind and heart. Such was my Mother — Ma Anandamayi, the Mother of the Universe, the peerless.

On each holy occasion she would kindly present us articles like sari, towel, bed-linen — all of saffron hue. But for me, there would always be two sets — 'One for you, Ma Roma, and the other for my son Jatindra Bimal.' What incomparable affection! I had lost my own mother. It was as if I got her back again in the Divine form of Ma Anandamayi. I can not but repeat — what great fortune amidst such misfortunes.

I was asked to write of my intimate experiences with Ma Anandamayi. This reminiscence I offer as a blossom for her feet. May she accept it from

her Supreme Abode. Let me conclude with that soul-inspiring song by Jyotirindra Nath Tagore :

That you are good I know —

Whether you keep me in

Joy and Woe

Let thy will be fulfilled

Whatever comes to me

I fear not, for I know

My best shall it be.

Keep your mind ever surrendered at the Guru's lotus feet. The quest after Truth and to be truthful is man's duty. Do your utmost to remain anchored in truth and spend much time in the contemplation of the Lord in a quiet secluded place.

—Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

The Ideal Women of India

M. Rama Rao

India is well known for the ideal of perfected womanhood. In ancient India a woman was considered as a Goddess. "Matri Devo Bhava", "Mother is God".

In one of his devotional hymns Sankaracharya, the exponent of Adwaita says: "I do not know charity or Dhyanyoga. I am ignorant of Tantra, hymns or mantras. Neither I am familiar with Puja and Nyasayoga. O Mother Bhavani Thou art my only refuge."

See how, that great Acharya exhibits his humility towards the mother aspect of God. Having a great regard to this mother aspect he established his Math at Sringeri and named it Saradapith, name of goddess of learning.

The conception of the ideal of women subsequently changed to the ideal of pativratya (Chastity). Just as every Hindu man is expected to remember every day the seven sages (Sapta Rishi) so every Hindu woman is expected to remember every day the seven chaste women (Sapta kanyah). They are Ahalya, Draupadi, Sita, Tara, Mandodari, Savitri and Anusuya.

Why were these women chosen as ideals? Because they had passed the test of truth by maintaining the sanctity of the vow of Pativratiya (Chastity) even under the most difficult circumstances.

In India, generally, the worth of a man is judged by his intrinsic qualities, by the degree of self-realization he has attained. This is true of a woman also. She is judged not by her social position and living conditions, but by the degree of spiritual perfection, she has attained. We see the eminent politicians bend their heads at the feet of the realized woman for example Anandamayi Ma who passed away on August 28, 1982 at her Kankhal ashram. Thousands of devotees had gathered to pay their respects. Mourners continued hour after hour to pranam or bow, in front of Ma's body, many weeping profusely. Among them was the late Indira Gandhi, who had flown in by helicopter and who considered Ma a spiritual mother. There are a number of ideal women in India but I mention few of them. Smt. Sarada Devi, the Holy mother was the Divine consort and first disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and an integral part of his spiritual self. She was born in a poor but cultured Brahman family. She had absolutely no schooling but she had in later days such high natural endowments that she could educate in philosophy. The strange marriage of Sri Ramakrishna of 23 years of age with Sarada Devi of five was part of divine dispensation. She had no marital relationship as she was fully trained by Sri Ramakrishna in both spiritual and secular matters. He helped her to make a true sahadharmini a fellow seeker in the quest for the higher values of life.

She spent her time in meditation and japa early in the morning. During the day much of her time

was taken up with cooking for her husband (the Master) and devotees. The sahadharmini of a spiritually oriented personage like Sri Ramakrishna must necessarily be one with that same outlook. This was fully satisfied by the Mother Sarada Devi. The Master passed away from his earthly sojourn on 16th Aug. 1886. With the passing of the Master, this phase of the Mother's life came to a close but a new life began. It was to spread the message of Ramakrishna and help his young Sannyasi disciples for the same. After leading a strenuous life she passed away on 20th July, 1920. A few days before her demise, she became entirely free from her strong bond of affection.

Her message was :

“Always do your duty to others but love you must give to God alone. Worldly love always brings in its wake untold misery”. The world-renowned Swami Vivekananda was her spiritual son.

2. Sri Anandamayi Ma was born on April 30, 1886. Ma was the second child of devout Hindu parents. She was fully enlightened from birth. She was named Nirmala Sundari. Because of her family's meagre income Nirmala attended only two years of school. But she soon drew the attention of scholars and mahatmas who were drawn to her to discuss spiritual matters.

At the age of 12 Nirmala was married to Ramani Mohan Chakravarti (Bholanath) and went to live with her husbands's family ; she was remembered as the model daughter-in-law. The year 1914 marked

the beginning of a remarkable relationship Ma related the story of Bholanath's approaching her for the first time with desire and being suddenly repelled, as if hit by an electric shock. From that day, said Ma, her husband took a solemn vow to be her spiritual disciple, her celibate follower, begging her forgiveness for "not knowing that within your bodily temple dwelt not my wife but the Divine Mother". They lived as celibate playing the role of the master and disciple to teach other. They lived 30 years and Bholanath predeceased her but his death never weighed down her.

She lived a complete mystic and spiritual life. She attracted devotees as increasing number of well educated, professional seekers, ministers, officials, poor and rich. Serving and enlightening the humanity she established 33 spiritual institutes and ashrams at different places. She left this world on 28-8-1982 playing divine play for 86 years.

Ma asked her devotees not to renounce the world but to renounce their misconceptions. She asked people only to remember who they really are. She said "God is where you are you don't have to go anywhere. God is not outside the world and the world is not outside God."

3. Mother Krishnabai who helped Swami Ramadas to found the well-known Anandashram at Kasargud in Kerala, practised spirituality by chanting Rama Nam "Om Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram" day and night and serving humanity with heart and soul.

She met her Guru in papa Ramdas in 1928' and from then on her life was dedicated to the service of her spiritual preceptor. After the passing away of her Guru, the mantle of the Guru fell on her and she had to look after the affairs of the ashram and the spiritual welfare of thousands of devotees. This she did with great equanimity though she was assailed by various physical ailments especially the intense pain in all parts of her body. She served herself as a labourer, a girl belonging to low caste, suffering from the ulcer, and a working woman of the ashram who could not go out to answer the calls of nature, as her own children.

She passed away on 12-2-1982 serving the ashram for 60 years.

Mother's words are —

- (a) "If I see littleness in others,
I feel the same littleness in myself."
- (b) "Sannyasa and Tyaga are one and the same."

4. Late Kasturba Gandhi of our time is well-known model of Indian womanhood. Mahatma Gandhi, her husband used to go to her samadhi daily and recite the 12th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita — "The yoga of devotion." In that Chapter Sri Krishna Bhagavan, in verse 19, says :

He who takes praise and reproach alike, who is given to contemplation and content with whatever comes unasked for without attachment to home fixed in mind and full of devotion to Ma, that man is dear to me.

This is very apt to Bai's life.

5. Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi — she has not only a divine voice but a heart of gold. She has offered at the feet of His Holiness the paramacharya of Kanchi the entire award of Rs. One lakh received by her as Kalidas Sanman at Ujjaini recently for the common weal.

6. Mata Amritanandamayi, God-intoxicated soul of Kerala and Rani Rasmoni of Calcutta are also ideal women of India — some more unknown ideal women might have been left out by me, I ask them to pardon me for my little knowledge.

The modern society is changing rapidly and modern women are in search of a new ideal which will guide them in facing the new challenges. May God give them the strength to find out a way by blending the ancient bearing of India and modern scientific principles.

A man can be recognized as a human being by his worthy character. A human being is in fact a traveller towards the realization of the superman. Each one should advance with his gaze fixed in this direction. A spiritual atmosphere and *satsang* will be helpful in this pursuit.

—Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

Miracles

Sachinath Chakraborty

At times one hears of strange miracles associated, of course, with saints. And there are also people who do not believe in miracles — people whose thoughts are enmeshed in the material sciences. On the other hand, credulity is not lacking in people either. Those born with the credulous streak in their character hardly bother about the cause and effect nexus behind phenomena. A handful of persons with divine wisdom, may be, are able to delve deep into the mysteries of the spiritual realm, but the skeptical are full of myriad questions and they indulge in polemics.

However debatable miraculous phenomena may be, certain questions always remain unanswered. Divine power, or sakti, expresses itself through miracles, and this is the most natural premise on which theism rests. No doubt, almost irrefutable logic is their against it also. Is it at all possible that something happens and does not lend itself to scrutiny by ordinary intelligence? Are these all mere coincidences? Or just exaggeration?

It is not easy to satisfy the skeptic, is it?

The casuistry of a person with a religious bent once made me rack my brains a good deal. His attack was straightforward: "How far can your 'ordinary intelligence' go, Sir? Do you think

truth will become untruth because every Tom, Dick and Harry say so? Could your ordinary intelligence even guess that man would ever set foot on the moon?"

His next step was a more desperate attempt at simplification and persuasion: "Your common people still find the technology behind moon-landing much above their head. You need 'special knowledge' to understand all that, and it is to be found only in the scientists' store of specialised knowledge. These Toms and Dicks and Harries come forward to solve the mystery of divine power without any cultivation, without so much as a lesson. Imagine! What is this but madness, Sir?"

That day, I did not venture to open my lips before his fusillade of logic. But following his example I also risked some thinking in different directions later on. That never produced any qualitative results in this ordinary brain of mine. Just like any other ordinary man, I also understand an easy mathematical problem. But a difficult one beats me. The difficult and the complex, nevertheless, set me cudgelling my brains for a solution, and it is at least making the best of a bad bargain! Or so said that very religious person. "Don't pass insincere comments on what goes over your head", he said, "You should not forget that subjects unknown to you may in fact prove to be beyond your grasp."

Like a very obedient child, I learnt a lesson from him: It is wrong to dub anything untrue if I do not know it thoroughly enough.

Sailen-da threw me into another set of complexities. The story he treated me to has always remained to me an enigma, impossible to gauge by my intelligence. It is a miracle, and the origin of this miracle is none but our universally-worshipped Anandamayi Ma.

It all happened in Sailen-da's own life and he himself told me all.

I do not exactly remember the year — 1975 or 1975. After leaving my office, I thought I would pay a visit to Sailen-da, that is, Shri Sailendra Sinha Roy, an old acquaintance. I had not seen him for several years, and only at intervals news reached me of his illness. For quite a few years he had been laid up with paralysis.

Whenever I had thought of calling on Sailen-da before, something or other always stood in the way. But that day I really had time on hand and therefore decided to go.

Sailen-da did not live far away from the crossing of Bowbazar Street and Central Avenue. I went up straight to the second floor and stopped at the door of his bedroom, rather surprised. I had heard that he was an invalid from head to foot incapable of movement. But what I saw was a different Sailen-da, reclining in a couch beside the bed, quite hail and hearty. I was so happy to see him like that.

“Wow ! So nice to see you've got up and you are able to sit, Sailen-da. But I heard ... ”

Sailen-da waved to me and said in a muffled voice, “Come in. Come in.”

I entered the room and sat down in a chair. "So, how are you now?" I asked.

Sailen-da turned towards the nearby wall and said with great effusion, "Look at Ma, there — it's her grace that has made me well. Far better than before." I followed Sailen-da's eyes until my own rested on a life-size, huge, beautifully framed picture on the wall beside the door. In it stood Ma Anandamayi, in spotless white, a smile indicative of an infinite broadness of heart pervading her illuminated face. The eyes emitted an astonishing look of tenderness and affection, full of the exuberance of life. I felt that it was that look which bathed my whole person in her unceasing flow of kindness and compassion.

I could hardly take my eyes off the picture.

I came to myself at Sailen-da's words.

"I have been suffering for about five years now. Doctors, Kavirajas and even the Hakims and all our traditional quacks and faith-healers — all have failed. The disease aggravated and it ended up in paralysis. I could not move, my speech became indistinct. And all these different treatments robbed me of nearly 40,000 rupees. Fear and anxiety led me to use even talisman and charms. I have followed every advice given by almost everyone. Someone told me of a pond in some village in Bankura where a dip could cure all diseases. I ran there with my people. All in vain. All hoax."

He stopped for a little while to catch his breath and started again, "Can you imagine, for full three

years I had been confined to bed. Deep despair had crushed me. But then it was only this body. The mind was all active with all its thoughts. That one thought began to eat into my vitals — that I was only inching my way towards death, that I would never have a cure. Sheer despair engulfed me. I shed only tears and tears in bed. I had exhausted all my money. What would happen to my wife and children? With my death I would leave the whole family in rack and ruin.”

As he spoke, his face had an agony writ large upon his face. He kept silent for a few moments as if reminiscing a nightmare. Then he said, “Then I obtained Ma’s grace. And that led to my cure.”

Instantly curiosity got the better of me. ‘How?’ I asked.

“Yes, I am telling you how. Earlier, you know, I hardly bothered about gods, goddess or godman. But this long confinement in bed and a broken heart made me think that divine grace alone could cure me. It became a conviction yet I was skeptical about its efficacy. I remembered Dr. Ghosh, a Dental Surgeon of Ranchi. That Ghosh and I were students in the same College in Calcutta and lived in the same mess. Ghosh became a doctor and set up practice at Ranchi. The war brought him name and fame and he settled at Ranchi permanently. As I remembered Ghosh, I began to feel inside me the stirrings of a strange power. You will be astounded to hear what happened to Ghosh a few years ago. He gave up

his immense practice, his house and his family and now he”

What I heard from Sailen-da was really flabbergasting. In short, it is this. Ghosh had always had the habit of morning walk out of doors, however short its duration. He had the habit also at Ranchi. One day he was returning from his morning walk when a neighbour virtually dragged him along to his house. It was Ghosh's first ever entry in the house. As he was looking around, seated in the drawing room, a picture on one of the walls made his eyes stop. The picture of an unknown woman well in her middle years exuding love and endless reassurance ...

Who was this white-clad embodiment of pity ?

Ghosh kept on looking at the picture as if spell-bound. He had lost his mother at a very early age. He found his own mother as it were framed on the wall. Ghosh suddenly felt the shudders of ecstasy one feels at the touch of untamable maternal love. Ghosh asked his neighbour, “Who is she ?”

His neighbour said, “You don't know her ? She is Anandamayi Ma. My wife is her disciple. Shall I call her ?”

Ghosh heard everything about Anandamayi Ma from her with great avidity. “Where is she now ?”

He made up his mind directly when he heard that Anandamayi Ma was in Kashi then. He felt like rushing to her immediately. And really, he did not let the grass grow under his feet. He went straight to Kashi, and was carried off his feet as he

entered her Ashram. As he was going up the stairs, he looked up and his eyes rested on her. She was standing there on the upper-storey balcony with a beaming face and with her hands resting on the railings. As she saw him, she said, "Come, come, my son."

There was nectar in her voice. Ghosh was overwhelmed. It seemed to him that she was accosting someone long known to her. It seemed she was speaking to her own son with all the urgency on earth. The next second she said, "Why are you so late?"

Ghosh lost his power of speech. He went up the flight of stairs as if under a spell. As soon as he touched her feet, she placed her hand on his head.

Ghosh was emotionally so stirred that his eyes welled up with tears. "Come, my son, come," she said and took him to her room. She made him sit down with the greatest care and served him food with her own hands, after the usual questions as to one's well-being. It seemed as though she was looking after her own child.

He could hardly feel that he had spent so many days with Ma. Anandamayi Ma herself took care of his meals, talked to him and gave him advice — it was as though he had found himself all of a sudden in some different but intimately familiar shelter where he could hardly afford to have any cares. It never occurred to him for a moment that he would have to leave the place some day.

One day, Ma said, with affection in her voice, "It's time you had returned, my son."

Ghosh was startled, "But I have been thinking I won't return any more, Ma."

"No that can't be, my son. Now you must go back home." But she assured, "You will come again when it's time. It is me who will give you the call."

With a heavy heart, Ghosh obeyed Ma that time.

But then he did not have to lead a material life for long. Within a few years he gave up all and went to live with Ma for good. Now he is a well-known devotee at Ma's ashram.

Speaking at a stretch for so long, Sailen-da felt out of breath. There was a covered glass of water on a table nearby. He reached out for the glass of water, took a sip and put it back. In a muffled voice he said, "I thought Ghosh could help me out. Then I was too weak even to speak. With great difficulty, I somehow communicated my thoughts to my wife by moving my lips. She wrote to Ghosh, to see that I could have Ma's blessings."

A reply came some days later. It was a brief one: Chant Ma's name always. Pray to God. Don't worry. You'll certainly heal some day.

Sailen-da looked at the picture of Anandamayi Ma and in a voice heavy with devotion said, "What should I say, you know, I felt like a ship-wrecked person who has spotted land. During my waking hours, whether day or night, I began to meditate on Ma's image and chant her name. If grieved, I would imagine myself at Ma's feet and shed

tears. I clung to Ma, just as a drowning man catches at a straw with all his might. Ghosh wrote to me again a few month's later. He had told Ma about me, and Ma had given me her blessings. She had also said that I should think of God who is the eternal fountainhead of goodness. God will surely do me good.

I was elated. I followed Ma's advice to the letter. It seemed that the mental agony I suffered lessened gradually. I got back my confidence that I would get completely cured some day or other. Then one day something almost incredible took place."

I listened silently to the tale of Sailen-da's strange experiences. He was not yet quite facile with his voice and speech. But I could get the hang of all what he said as I had by now got used to his manner of speaking.

Tea came. But I was engrossed in Sailen-da's words.

It was really incredible.

One day, at dead of night, Sailen-da saw quite clearly that his room was flooded with a strange light. By his bedside stood Anandamayi Ma herself. She looked at Sailen-da and said, "Why are you lying, my son? Why don't you sit up?"

Sailen-da was surprised. "What do you say, Ma? I cannot even so much as move my body. How can I sit up?"

"You can, my son. Try, won't you?"

"No, no, I can't. It's impossible," Sailen-da said in an agonised voice. But as he looked at

Ma's face, he thought twice. That face was reassurance itself. She said, "I say, my son, try once and see."

She came a couple of steps forward.

Sailen-da had no more words on his lips. He seemed to have lost even his ability to think. He only tried to sit up with all his might as if under a spell.

The nerves about his neck seemed to break !

Instantly, he woke up. He discovered himself in a queer position. He was trying to lever his body up on his two elbows, with his neck desperately upright. He was in fact trying to sit up !

But where was Ma Anandamayi ?

All around it was nothing but impregnable darkness. The dead stillness of the night was the only thing one could feel. Automatically his head came down on to the pillow. Before he could realise what had occurred, a stifled pent-up cry sought to express itself violently from inside and he began to tremble violently under its impact. He wept and wept until he was almost out of breath. Still the sobs did not seem to stop.

Sailen-da could not realise why he wept such a flood of tears that day, but the sweet memory of that strange dream gave him a fresh lease of life. He felt some kind of a change in the unknown recesses of his body also. He seemed to feel the stirrings of a new energy in his hands and feet. He could raise his head a little as well.

Through constant efforts, one day he could really sit up and erect.

The onward march had begun within a few days of his beginning to sit on the edge of the bed hanging his feet, he was able to stand on his feet by clutching at the wall.

What joy !

He said, "You see, don't you, that I'm quite snugly seated in the easy-chair ? I can talk quite fast and with clarity. Besides, I can also go up to the latrine, across the verandah, by holding on to the wall. It's all Ma's grace !"

Suddenly he became silent. He appeared to be engrossed in thought. His left hand was moving about on his right-hand wrist.

He looked up after a while. With deep contentment evident in his voice, he said, "Then, six months or so later, I saw Ma with my own eyes. Just as I saw her in that dream that night. That same dress, that same figure. Even then, I could not think of getting out of doors. I got a letter from Ghosh — Ma Anandamayi was coming to a disciple's place at Behala. He had given the date and time and asked me to go and see her if possible. We would be with her also. The letter put me on tenterhooks. Such an opportunity could not be missed. I had a friend informed and his car and an escort were also arranged for. It was all through Ma's wish, you know. I got downstairs on my feet, holding on to the railing. At Behala, Ma was there in a second-floor room. I talked to Ghosh and went straight to the second floor, on my own feet and across all the flights of stairs. As I entered the room and sat before Ma,

I underwent a strange transformation. I could hardly speak a word, but tears streamed down ceaselessly. I began to weep like a child. I don't know why. I was able to say only a word or two. Ma ran her hand affectionately on my head and back and said, "Don't you weep, my child, everything will be all right. Pray to God ... "

Sailen-da took a sip from the glass of water once again, and then went on. "There was a big crowd there. I bowed before Ma some time later and then got up. Ma said, 'First have some *prasada* and then go, my child.'

Sailen-da paused a little, and said, like an aside, "Ah ! What I saw in her that day !"

I sat still and quiet, turning over in my mind what Sailen-da had told. Does not all this fall in the domain of miracles ? Did this man whom disease and fear of death had reduced to and invalid, cook up this strange story ? No. I would not even dream of this. I am not at all prepared to be so foolish as to think that all on earth tell lies. Everybody in their lives must have at least a couple of people who cannot be made victims of incredulity. I just could not afford to believe that this man, who had suffered myriad trials and tribulations to become an invalid, could tell me a chain of lies in such inspired language.

I remembered Dr. B. K. Roy Choudhury. This old, calm and quiet gentleman loves me very much. After I had made his acquaintance I used to call at his flat at Ballygunge. One day I heard that he was a disciple of Ma Anandamayi. He would rush

to Ma at the very first opportunity. The other day I had a very long talk with Dr. Roy Choudhury on Anandamayi Ma. I heard a lot about her from him, and thought about getting a photograph of her. I made up my mind to look for one in the picture-framer's shops along Harrison Road.

But even within the next few days I could not find time to go about it.

A week later, Dr. Roy Choudhury himself called on me. He handed out to me a small white envelope and said with a smile, "A present for you."

I was struck dumb as I opened the envelope. A picture — Ma Anandamayi seated, the aura of her blooming smile pervading all around. Dr Roy Choudhury said, "My son had meanwhile been to Ma's ashram at Kankhal. He took it. And I thought ..."

Why did Dr. Roy Choudhury at all wish to give me the photograph ?

I don't know yet. But the small incident left on my mind a very deep impression indeed.

Doctor's Visit Given by Ma

Dr. Baren Guha Roy, Lt. Col. AMC (Retd.)

(Continued from previous issue)

Synopsis

(Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Naimisharanya, Nov-Dec. 1984. I went as an escort to my mother who went there to attend 15 days Bhagavat Discourse by Swami Akhandanandaji and opening of Vedavyas Mandir.

In Naimisharanya, a minor operation was done by me on the right palm of Ma Anandamayi, and she gave me visit as DIKSHA followed by mysterious dream which became true.)

(18.)

On return to our room, I told my mother everything in detail, "On Thursday, the day-after tomorrow, on full moon day, in the morning Ma Anandamayi would give me "DIKSHA", you have to accompany me."

My mother was astonished ; she asked me, "What is the matter ? There was no talk or intention earlier. Moreover, your wife Chchanda is not here and without informing her will it be justified to take "DIKSHA ?" In various ways and talks my mother objected strongly against my DIKSHA. I was utterly surprised. My mother, who always hankers after Ma Anandamayi for her sight,

company and blessings, now saying, "What is the need of your taking DIKSHA at this early age?"

As my mother objected, I was depressed. Well, let me meet a few known person and take their opinion. I met Sri Anil Ganguly and Sri Ranjit Banerjee, who earlier allowed me to sit next to their seats daily during the discourse of Bhagavat. On hearing in detail they told me not to ~~hesitate even~~ for a moment. Such a wonderful opportunity hardly comes in one's life time. My maternal uncle and a long associate of Ma Anandamayi, also remarked the same. Still in the evening as I got a chance, I entered in the room of Swami Paramanandaji.

"Well Doctor, with what intention you have come to day?" Swamiji asked. I told in detail all to Swamiji. I had asked for operation fees to Ma Anandamayi and now this 'DIKSHA' affair, I am going to have my fee."

Swamiji laughed and said, "Doctor, this type of fee you will never get in your life-time again. You will be able to encash this fee upto the last date. Your fortune is ahead." I told Swamiji regarding my mother's objection for the 'DIKSHA'.

"Go to your room. You will see by this time your mother has changed her opinion. Quote me," Swamiji replied.

Really that was what happened. As soon as I entered the room at night my mother said, "I think, you should take the DIKSHA as Ma Anandamayi herself suggested. Chchanda may take later on if she wishes to."

(19)

On Thursday, the full-moon day at 7 a.m. inside the room of Ma Anandamayi, we four were only present— Didima, Ma Anandamayi, my mother and myself. I had my DIKSHA. (Ma Anandamayi said that no outsider should come to know the procedure adopted). After DIKSHA as I proceeded to do the 'pranam' to Ma Anandamayi, she directed me, first to do pranam to my mother, then to Didima and then to her. She presented a Bhagavat book to me. After accepting that I requested her "Ma, please sign your name in the book. This will remain as a Memoir."

Ma Anandamayi took the pen from my hand and put a 'DOT' on the first page and told, "This is my Signature. You will get the "Sindhu" within this "Bindu" (DOT).

Then we had a short talk. Before leaving Naimisharanya, Ma asked me to visit the Ashram of Narayan Swami and Dhadhichi Muni including the place of death of Dhadhichi Muni.

The same night of DIKSHA, I dreamt an unexpected uncommon hair-raising dream. One of my classmate doctor friend's life picture of the past, present and future. During my studies in the Medical College, Calcutta, Dr. Bhabesh Lahiri and I studied together. (Later on he became Director and Professor of Gynaecology in the Medical College and a renowned doctor of India). We stayed in the same hostel "Khemka House." It was then 10 to 12 years we have not met each other.

I dreamt Ma Anandamayi laughing just before the sleep was over. She said, "Well, one day you wanted to know your future from me? If one knows his future, he cannot have peace. Do you see that?"

(20)

Quickly I had my bath and went to Ma's room by 7 a.m. Ma also then came out and sat on the wooden platform. She smiled and asked me, "Well Doctor! Why so early in the morning you had to come. My hand has dried up."

I came out with my dream of last night and dawn.

Ma listened all carefully. Then I asked Ma, "Now tell me whether all of the unbelievable dream will be true?"

"How can I tell you? — All is HIS wish." Ma replied.

"All I understand Ma — but what is your opinion. You have heard all. After so many years torture and separation will the wife get her husband back? Will my friend come back to his parents?"

Now Ma laughed and said, "You will remain alive. See whether it becomes true?"

Immediately I asked, "Will you not remain alive till then?"

Ma did not reply. She laughed and said, "You told me earlier that you are going back to Pathankot from here and will go on to Calcutta with your wife and children. Meet your friend and his wife at

Calcutta and see all with your own eyes — what you saw in your dream.”

Then Ma got up. I was more confused hearing the puzzling remark of Ma. I decided to solve the mystery on reaching Calcutta. I felt a strong attraction to see the real fact of the past, the present and the future of my friend.

(21)

The Ashram of Dhadichi Muni was located about 4 to 5 miles away from Ma Anandamayee Ashram. I was thinking how to go such a long distance with my old mother. To my good luck, the shop owner of the village of Naimisharanya, whom I treated earlier, arranged a motor car. In that car 3 more person of the Ashram accompanied us. We saw thoroughly the Dhadichi Muni's Ashram and his death location. Lord Indra came here and begged for the bones of Dhadichi Muni, to make the “Bajra” to kill the Demon king. These are the stories of the Puran — whether to believe or not to believe rests with the individual.

On our way back we visited the Ashram of Narayan Swami. It was located near the Anandamayee Ashram. Swamiji was glad to know that Ma Anandamayi had asked me to visit his Ashram. Swamiji conveyed his regards to Ma Anandamayi. That very night once I went to Ma's room to tell her. Ma was very pleased to hear about Narayan Swami. Ma enquired about my talk with Swamiji. I repeated this to Ma in detail.

When I wanted blessings from Narayan Swami by touching his feet with one hand, Swamiji showed me how to take blessings in two hands separately, right hand to touch inner side of right feet and the left hand to touch inner side of left feet. It seemed to me a little uncommon. I have never seen anybody to take blessings in that way.

Suddenly Ma put forward her both feet in front of me, and told, "Show me the procedure." I did the pranam as Narayan Swamiji taught. Ma laughed and said "This is the correct procedure of pranam. Now-a-days, mostly all touch one feet in one hand in doing the pranam."

(To be continued)

When the mind centres on what gives peace and one's gaze dwells on what promotes it, when one's ears listen to what fills the heart with peace and at all times there is a response from Him Who is peace itself, then only can there be promise of peace.

—Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

Revised Rules on "Diksha"

The newly constituted Ascetic Members Committee appointed by the Sangha, held its first meeting on 6th April, 1989 to adopt the following resolutions unanimously. The said resolutions/proposals were duly considered by the Executive Council and then finally by the Governing Body of the Sangha which met during Sri Ma's Janmatsab held in last May at Kankhal and approved the same.

The relevant resolution pertaining to Diksha are being printed in our quarterly Ananda Vartas in all the 3 languages for the perusal and benefit of the aspirants and devotees in general.

1. The procedure of giving *diksha* to sincere seekers as propounded by Ma, and also followed scrupulously not only by Didima but also by others concerned, during Ma's physical presence, shall have to be maintained very faithfully.

2. *Diksha* shall be given at Ma's Mahasamadhi at Kankhal, and in cases of special need at Ma's Ashrams where exists any temple consecrated through Ma's own hands, and in her divine presence, and nowhere else.

Special Consideration.

Regarding the place of receiving *diksha*, a special consideration will be made in the case of devotees in the State of Gujrat, as there is only one Ashram of Ma there, i.e., at Bhimpura. Though no temple was consecrated at Bhimpura during her physical

presence, a Hanuman Temple has been built there later according to Ma's *kheyala*. So, for the benefit of the devotees of Gujrat, *diksha* will be allowed to be given in this temple at Bhīmpura Ashram.

3. *Diksha* shall be given on behalf of the organization only by anyone from a selected group, of Sadhus and Brahmacharis forming a panel, who will act simply as Acharya *but never as individual Guru. Anyone violating this rule and declaring himself as Guru will forfeit his Acharyaship for giving diksha.*

4. The names of such Acharyas shall henceforth be decided by the Ascetic Members Committee.

5. *Diksha* at other Ashrams of Ma, besides the Mahasamadhi, on the request of any devotee or groups of devotees, shall be given only by a Sadhu or Brahmachari specially authorized for the same. The name of the Acharya who will be empowered to give *diksha* in this manner will be decided by this Committee from among those on the panel and for a period of 12 months. In case there is any special preference by a devotee to take *diksha* from a particular Acharya whose name is not on the approved list for the year, then he or she shall have to wait till the turn comes of that particular Acharya. In case that devotee can afford to come to Kankhal, he can have the Acharya desired for his/her *diksha*. The day for giving *diksha* may be fixed or suitably altered as the need may be, which will be announced beforehand by the local Secretary or the Monk-in-Charge so that the intending devotees for receiving *diksha* may be present at

the appointed time. The Acharya will furnish a list of devotees, with their addresses and other necessary details, who have thus been initiated by him to this Committee which will afterwards be forwarded to the Sangha H.O. at Kankhal.

6. At Mahasamadhi, any Acharya on the panel who may be present will be authorized to give *diksha* at any auspicious time he decides. Every Acharya shall furnish the list of devotees initiated by him as above.

7. It is necessary that the above rules should not only be respected but also strictly followed by all Sadhus and Brahmacharis of the Ashram.

8. As regards the proper utilization of offerings made to an Acharya at the time of *diksha* in cash or kind, the Acharya should never accept them as personal offerings, but look upon them as offerings made to Ma herself. The offerings in cash shall be deposited in the Donation box of the respective Ashram and the offerings in kind suitably distributed by the Acharya himself among the devotees.

9. The following panel of Acharyas was formed :

1. Swami Bhaskarananda
2. Swami Chinmayananda
3. Br. Nirvanananda
4. Swami Prakashananda
5. Br. Shivananda

For giving Sannyas Diksha

1. Swami Giridhar Narain Puri
 2. Swami Satchidananda
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Ashram News

Kankhal :

On Tuesday, the 18th July (2nd Sravan), Guru Purnima was celebrated at Kankhal by pujas at Sri Sri Ma's Samadhi, at Swami 1008 Muktananda Giriji's Samadhi and worship of Sri Padmanabhaji, Sri Vyasdev and Adi Jagat Guru Bhagavan Sankaracharya with great pomp and ceremony. The recitation of Stotras and Kirtans preceded a huge Bhandara. From all over India the devotees came and were blessed with the opportunity of worshipping their Guru and being highly satisfied enjoyed a delicious Bhog.

On 8th August (23rd Sravan), the Tirodhan Tithi of Sri 1008 Muktananda Giri Maharaj was celebrated by combining meditation with a special puja, Abhiseka and Sadhu Bhandara.

From the 13th August to 17th August (Ekadashi to Purnima), Sri Krishna Jhulan festival was performed beautifully. Like previous years, at the midnight of the full moon Sri Sri Ma's Diksha Leela was celebrated with dhyan, japa and kirtan. In the morning of "Rakhi Purnima" devotees offered "Rakhi" at Sri Sri Ma's Samadhi.

On "Jhulan Dwadashi Tithi" Swami 1008 Maunanda Parbat (Bhaiji) Maharaj, had left this world. The day was celebrated with special puja for Bhaiji and followed by Sadhu Bhandra.

The 24th August (7th Bhadra), Thursday, was Janmastami. At midnight 12 p.m., all the Gopalji's were specially worshipped, along with Abhiseka, Bhog and Kirtan. The next day, Nandotsab was celebrated with great pomp.

The 8th September (22nd Bhadra), Friday, was Sri Sri Radha Ashtami which was celebrated with a Special puja of Sri Sri Ma.

Ranchi

On 18th July (2nd Sravan), Tuesday, since early morning, the Ashram organised Bhajan, Kirtan and Matri Sangeet followed by Mauna, Dhyan, and Matri Puja. The surrounding was very beautiful and this was enhanced with the discourse of Gita and Chandi. Sri Sri Ma's and Swami 1008 Mukta-nanda Giriji's framed picture were decorated gracefully. At the end of Puja, more than 300 devotees were fed in a Bhandara.

On 17th August, Thursday — the day of Rakhi Purnima, innumerable devotees came to celebrate the Jhulan Festival. The Janmastami was duly celebrated with great devotion on Thursday, the 24th August (7th Bhadra). The Gopal was beautifully decorated. Since evening, the Ashram was crowded with devotees to see the special puja at midnight followed by prasad to all.

Bangalore

At the Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Bhagavath Bhavan, in the evening at 6.30 p.m., Satsang and Bhajan were performed in continuation of daily

practice during the months of July, August and September. Moreover at 6 p.m. on every Thursday "Lord Vishnu's Sahashranam" and on every Friday "Lalita Sahashranam" classes were arranged. Beside these, Smt. Ramamoni, Dr. Ramakrishna Rao, Sri Ramchandra Bhatt and Sri Dhar Hedge gave discourses on Gita and held Sanskrit classes every Saturday and Sunday at 3 p.m.

Almora

On the occasion of the Tirodhan Tithi of Swami 1008 Maunananda Parbat (Bhaiji) Maharaj, discourse on "Ramkatha" was arranged with great pleasure and satisfaction from 8th August to 14th August.

Swami Asheshanandji Saraswati of the Divine Life Society gave the talk on "Ramcharit Manas" which was extremely appealing to the devotees. Though the Ashram is situated 2 Km. away from Almora City, innumerable devotees attended the function daily.

On 9th August, the occasion of the birthday of Tulsidasji, Sri Gangadhar Tewariji (a beloved devotee of Ma) gave an attractive discourse on the love and devotion of Tulsidasji.

Subsequently, Sri Tewariji gave a talk on the life of Hari Baba and Oriya Baba, which was highly appreciated by the devotees of Ma.

Such an arrangement of Ramkatha and Sat-sang was appreciated by the people of Almora.

Other Ashrams

In Vrindaban, Delhi, Dehradun, Varanasi, Agarpara, Poona and other Ashrams, Guru Purnima, Jhulan and Janmastami were duly celebrated as in other years with great devotion.

Obituary

1. Srimati Uma Indu

On 16th February 1989, Smt. Uma Indu, a loyal devotee of Ma and Life Member of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha merged in the lotus feet of Ma at her residence in Jamshedpur.

2. Sri Purnendu Narayan Singhadev

Sri Sri Ma's devoted Bhakta, always intent on serving Ma's devotees, Purnendu Narayan Singhadev of Ranchi, after suffering from a brief illness has left his mortal soul on 17th February 1989 and is absorbed in Ma's bosom in permanent rest.

3. Sri Kshitish Chandra Bandopadhyay**Smt. Surabala Devi**

Sri Sri Ma's very old devotees, Sri Kshitish Chandra Bandopadhyay and his wife Smt. Subarna

Bala Devi, died on 18th February, 1989 and 18th March, 1989 in Delhi. They were related to Br. Nirvananandaji and resident of Delhi and Simla.

4. **Br. Basudev Bhattacharyya**

An old student of Sri Sri Anandamayee Vidya-pith and a relative of Baba Bholanath, Br. Basudev Bhattacharyya died on 15th July, 1989 at Varanasi. He was an honest and silent worker. At his untimely passing away, everybody of the Ashram has suffered a loss which can never be filled. One day earlier to his death, he prayed to Ma, "Ma, no longer I can bear to suffer. When you are going to take me?" Ma responded.

5. **Srijukta Basanti Devi**

Sri Sri Ma's special loyal devotee, wife of late Amulya Datta Gupta (the author of "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Prasanga") and mother of Kumari Sati Brahmacharini, ex-principal of the Kanyapeeth, Basanti Devi died in the evening of 26th August, 1989, left her mortal soul fully conscious, entered the feet of Baba Vishwanath and the lotus feet of Sri Ma. She had suffered from a long illness but she was always smiling which one cannot forget. Her 'Lila' with Sri Ma in good old days at Dhaka remains undisclosed to us.

We send our deep condolences to her relatives and hope the departed soul is now resting peacefully in her cherished abode.
