

MATHI VANI

Look, in order to pluck a rose one has to put one's hand into the midst of thorns. But if the rose is a person's aim and he has a keen desire to pluck it, he will not refrain from doing so for fear of being pricked. Moreover the Great Mother arranges whatever is necessary for each one: She certainly knows the real need of every individual. If one has at least this much faith, there is no reason at all to feel distressed.

HE at all time lavishes His Grace on everyone. Only in order to acquire the capacity to understand this, one must tenaciously fix one's gaze at Him as Goal.

Who is 'Anandamayī Ma'? Who indeed is 'Anandamayī (permeated with Divine Joy)? HE is eternally enthroned in the hearts of all beings, verily HE dwells everywhere. Having seen Him, reached him everything is seen, everything attained; in other words one becomes fearless, certain, free from conflict, immutable, imperishable.

To live in a foreign country is in itself painful; but to be in one's own home together with one's near and dear ones is happiness. This is why there is the search for one's real Home, for one's true Beloved. How much longer will you remain in this alien land and suffer misery?

Do you imagine that you are liberated? In order to become actually liberated, that is to realize Him, one has to set apart a little time. If you live in the spirit of "He is engaging me in His service," there is no cause for bondage. But if this attitude of mind is absent the desire for praise and fame awakens. The serving is He, the server is also He and the one who is served is likewise He alone: there is none apart from the ONE.

Who is going wither and from whence does he come? For this body there is no going and no coming. That which existed before exists even now. What does it matter whether one dies or remains alive? Even after having died he still exists, so why worry?

Do you know why worry arises? Solely because God is thought to be far away. Unrighteousness also has the same cause. To remove God into the far distance is called unrighteousness also has the same cause. To remove God into the far distance is called unrighteousness: that is to say, the idea that God is far away is itself unrighteousness.

While working with your hands, His name should be repeated mentally. The work you do with your hands is the mudra. With this very mudra sustain the flow of His name. Nursing the sick — anything at all is His service. His work. Let this be your attitude of mind.

If one wants to go beyond belief and disbelief one has to believe in Him. Instead of doing so, you believe in all kinds of other things.

Just as there is a Veil or ignorance, there is also a door to Knowledge

Samsara (the world) means the abode of uncertainty and doubt. The clown who mistakes his role for reality — yet is only dressed up as a clown. This is why it is called Sang-sara. "

The whole of Manifestation is but a display of God's divine power — He Himself as vibhuti. The non-dualists speak of the one Self (Atma) again who manifests as duality? None but He -

the One. It is impossible that some realization or other should not occur while treading the spiritual path.

Forgetting that God is the one Beloved (Isha) men give their love to sense objects. To love anything that is not God means to divide one's devotion between two (do-lalita) and this makes one wicked (dushia)

Who is called a friend? He who makes you turn your mind towards the Beloved, he is your supreme friend. But a person who diverts your thoughts away from Him and tempts you to progress in the direction of death, he is your enemy, not your friend. Try to correct yourself. The man who makes no effort to improve himself is in fact committing suicide. The enjoyment of sense objects acts as a slow poison that opens out the path leading towards death. This is why, as a human being, it is man's duty to tread the path of immortality.

What does Atma darsana, the direct perception of the Self Mean? The seer, the seen and vision — where these three are realized as modifications created by the mind, superimposed on the one all-pervading Consciousness, this realization is called Brahmisthiti. Where there is no question of action, there is Atmatstithi (one is established in the Self). And for those who worship God with Form, Atmadarsana means to perceive Him everywhere. Just as it is said: "Wherever my glance falls there Krishna appears." If anything is perceived that is not Krishna, one cannot speak of true vision. In perfect all-embracing darsana the Beloved stands revealed.

Knowing the Mother means realizing Her, becoming the Mother. 'Ma' means Atma. Ma means 'maya' all permeating, Pervading Himself by Himself, reposing in Itself — this verily is THAT.

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The ONE who is the Eternal, the Atman,
His Himself is the traveller on the path of Immortality.
He is all In all, He alone is.

MATRI VANI

Repeat the name of the Great Mother, contemplate Her, try to see Her in everything. Aspire to become ever more permeated by Her.

One who serves God can never be helpless. The more ardently he seeks communion by engaging in Japa, His service and contemplation, the fuller will be His revelation.

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

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

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

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

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

Action is subject to one's own free will — and yet again it is not. What does "subject to one's own free will" signify ? His Will alone is Will. The will by which you carry out your work, this very same will must be applied to the contemplation of God. Then only will you discover the Great Will. What is needed is the Supreme Will that takes one beyond willing and not willing.

Having made contact with a great spiritual being (Mahapurush) there can be no more downfall. To go near fire without being affected by its heat is impossible. Those who cultivate the company of a Mahatma, do so in order to be liberated from the round of birth and death. The question of birth and death does not even arise anymore. If there is birth there will be death and if there is death there will be rebirth.





SRI SRI MA

It is beyond our common intelligence to comprehend what Mother stands for and what she is in reality. Though she always says : "I am only a crazy little daughter of yours", still in all her ways of life, in her ever delightful Lia amongst us, all the powers of the Divine find expression in tangible forms.

In Mother we find a perennial fountain of joy and sweetness, though she is surrounded day and night by the noise and bustle and a thousand entreaties of all classes of people. Her calm and serene looks, her gracious, ever smiling response to all queries, her exquisite sense of humour bring satisfaction and delight to every soul. Her ways of life are so universal and all-embracing that she may be called Motherly Live Incarnate.

Some say that she is the Supreme Goddess of the Universe in human form. Others again are of the opinion that she has reached perfection through spontaneous psychic evolution without any effort on her part. To us she appears to be whatever anybody may consider her to be. At the first sight of her, one becomes animated with a religious fervour, even if one happens to be almost impervious to spiritual ideas. In her presence thoughts of God and his glory flourish with all their brilliance in hearts as dry as dust and the vibrations of one universal, all-pervading life overpower one's heart, as it were, with endless surges like a vast ocean of bliss.

When at one time she was asked who her preceptor was, or from whom she has received initiation, she remarked : "In earlier years by parents were my guides; in household life, by husband; and now in every situation of life, all men and things of the world are my Guru. But one thing is certain, the one Supreme Being is the only Guide for all."

From the standpoint of worldly people Mother is an ideal daughter, wife and mother. To an aspirant after spiritual life, her words and behaviour have deep significance, indicating various modes of spiritual culture and yogic practices, as well as the basic truths of dualism, non dualism, dualistic monism and other philosophic doctrines. The physical changes that become manifest in her body lead one to the inference that she is a confirmed Valanava; in the Tantric worship of Shiva, Kali, Durga and other gods and goddesses or in the performance of Vedic religious sacrifice she has evoked admiration from eminent philosophers of the East and West. The only difference that we notice between Mother and the Great Masters who have reached perfection through bhakti yoga, jnana yoga or karma yoga in their special lines, lies in the fact in Mother all the paths of sadhana have reached a wonderful synthesis. It is through this harmony of the various modes of approach to the Divine that all types of people receive inspiration from her presence.

Her genial and sweet appearance, her uncommon patience and endurance, her spirit of sacrifice and simplicity, her ever joyful humorous ways of dealing with men, women and children, her unsullied, clear vision and good will for all living beings, her love for all men irrespective of caste, creed, community and nationality, her absolute freedom from pleasure, pain and the life make her a unique figure in modern times. One cannot say that she has attained perfection through self effort, for those who have watched her from infancy assert that she has been the same in her thoughts and actions all through her life. Nobody has yet seen her perform spiritual or religious exercise of any kind.

It is time for us to enquire as to what has brought about such a state of affairs. We have fallen into the narrow grooves of time-worn cults and prejudice. The ideas and ideals of olden times and those of the present age have met face to face and have produced a slack water in our social and religious life. Mother stands at the parting of ways.

We always find in Mother's life and in all her activities an ardent desire to secure the welfare of the world, throwing the burden of looking after her body upon others, and releasing herself completely from all cares for her own bodily comforts. She has thus made herself absolutely free to advance the cause of the helpless and oppressed, of the sick and destitute, as well as to help the rich and powerful whoever suffer from the various physical and mental maladies of their surfeited and pampered lives.

Her life is an eye opener to us all. She shows by her everyday activities how we link every minute detail of life to the infinit and how we can cultivate new spirit, a new outlook in our relations with men and make this world a place of new joy and hope and peace.

From the worldly standpoint she possess nothing to call her own. All places of the common man, temples, dharamsalas, public Ashrams and huts are now her only places of residence, places where all people from the highest to the lowest may flock freely to her without any obstruction. She has devoted wholly and completely to the good of the world. All living being are her own kith and kin. As mentioned previously she says : "I find the whole world to be one vast garden, you all are flowers blooming in this garden with your individual beauty and grace. I move about from one corner of it to another. What makes you feel so sad when I have you, only to be in the midst of your brothers over there ?

On another occasion she said : "I have no need of doing or saying anything; there never was any need neither is there now, nor will there ever be in future. What you found manifested in me in the past, what you see now and what will be observed in the future is only for the good of you all. If you think that there is something peculiarly my own, I must tell you that the whole world is my own."

The glories of the creative activities of the Universal Mother that we find revealed everywhere in this world, can be noticed in all her words and actions. In her social intercourse with all classes of people everywhere. To those who are devoted to her, she is like a little child demanding tokens of their love for her; to those who are distressed owing to disease or other worldly troubles, her motherly anxiety to give them relief takes shape in various acts of redress. All these attitudes proceed from a reservoir of a mighty spiritual power always working in the background.

She shows equal regard and reverence for all religions, for all types of education. This illustrates the great truth that every thing in this world is the embodiment of one Supreme Being. She says "All religious thoughts flow in one direction as all streams flow into one ocean; and we are all one". If anybody puts the question to her : "To what caste do you belong? Where is your home? Mother at once answers with a serene smile : "From your worldly standpoint this body belongs to East Bengal and is Brahmin by caste; but if you think apart from these artificial distinctions, you will understand that this body is a member of the one human family."

At times she has been heard to say : "Have faith in this body. Your wholehearted faith will open your eyes". She also says from time to time "I know nothing. I say what you pour into my ears" And then: "This body is but a toy-doll; just as you desire to play with it. so it goes on playing."

From these and other remarks it is evident that in her person the power that lies behind this phenomenal world has assumed shape. Her activities emanate from one fountain head and flow back into it. She has no sense of duality. She often says either : "Only Thou, art, and Thou alone" Or : "I Alone, am, and all is contained in Me".

On one occasion she said : "Is there any essential difference between myself and yourself? Only because He is, there are also I and you". If with staunch faith, strong devotion and a heart overflowing with life, anyone of you can exclaim : "Mother, come, come to me, Mother, I cannot pass my days without you, rest assured, the Universal Mother will spread out Her arms towards you and clasp you to Her bosom. Don't look up to Her only as a mysterious refuge in your hour of distress. Remember always She is very, very near you, guiding all the forces of your life. With that conviction proceed; She will take the brunt of all your responsibilities from your shoulders and give you strength to bear the cross.

The Second World War was going on. A devotee of Ma had written the following words to Ma in a letter : "Ma, we are getting mortified with the fear of the war. Now please stop this destructive *lila* of yours."

Ma dictated the following in reply :

"Write to Baba", Ma said, "Lord, you have manifested yourself unto yourself in the form of prayer and wails. You yourself will stop your *lila* of destruction in your grief-stricken form fearing unknown death. Verily, everything is present with oneself. One has to realize just oneself. Say 'oneself.' or 'One's self'. One has to be released from the state of being bound within a particular boundary. Wherever you are, in whichever condition, you — each one of you — should concentrate on the lotus feet of your Guru. Only reliance. Just trying to carry out, uninterruptedly, the instructions given by the Guru. By making yourselves chicken-hearted, gripped by weakness, by drowning yourselves in such talks, by developing a weak heart, palpitation etc., giving up food and sleep, do not damage the power of your brain. Be heroic, and in whatever form He appears — It is a manifestation of Him alone — sustain this idea without a break, you should take shelter under the Mother *Maha Shakti*

On another occasion, Ma dictated the following in a letter : "Ma, only Ma exists in all forms — don't you know this ? All that is there is verily Her form."

A lady had written from a distant place ! "My husband is aged, almost unable to move. I myself am looking after him like a child."

Ma, in Her reply, dictated: "Ma, only service — only relying upon His Holy Feet. Tell Baba to devote his time only to the remembrance of God, taking refuge in His Name, studying holy scriptures, talking on noble subjects, meditating on the *Ishta*, doing *japa*, etc."

One day, Ma was heard singing a lyric composed and set to tune *extempore* by Herself. She was singing with a smile :

"Where else will you go ?
All is His — only His, in truth.
He is the Essence of all essence;
He alone takes all to the shore."

Ma in those days showed a great indulgence towards Mukti Baba ★, by calling him "Baba. Baba", ever now and then. Whatever Baba said, Ma would agree with it. She behaved as if She were a very obedient daughter to Baba.

* Mukti Baba — An aged *Sannyast* of Shree Ramakrishna Mission. Later on he came to stay permanently in Sri Sri Ma's Ashram.

One day, Mukti Baba and a few of us were sitting near Ma. Suddenly, Ma said to Mukti Baba, "Baba, today you alone were sitting as three persons."

Mukti Baba : "when"?

Ma : "Just at that time when you were sitting alone in this room. I saw three persons sitting in a row. Also in the past, Baba was a sadhu, he is not a sadhu for the first time in this birth. One of them had a loin cloth on, not saffron-red. Another wore saffron clothes, like the ones he wears now. That other form, clad in *gerua*, had a little child seated near him. The sadhu was fondling the child with great affection. Akhandanandaji was also sitting there."

Mukti Baba : "Who is that little child?"

Ma : "Myself. You know what the matter is? The affection you were showing to the child, that too was with an attitude of reverence. You were taking power from the child in that manner. In reality, it was not fondlings; you were actually taking power."

One day, Ma was talking about Her illness during Her stay in Dhaka. Referring to it, Ma said, "Look, someone had said that at that time this body would meet the end. And a rumour had also spread everywhere that Anandamayee Ma was about to quiet Her Body. For they had seen that I had been taken out from the room and lam in the verandah. I myself had said, "Take me to the verandah : After that, I told them to set my body and limbs in different postures, I was making them adjust my body in the form of various *asanas*, sometimes I asked them to twist the hands and feet in such a way that the body took a ball-like shape. And you know what I saw happening ? The middle of the head * was splitting open under the skin like a door. After such kriyas, there was a change in the state. This body, too, somehow stayed on."

Mauni Ma was a saint of a quite high spiritual level. She had Ma's visions in various forms. Once when a devotee queried Ma about a particular yogic kriya, Ma said, "Go to Mauni Ma. If you go to Mauni Ma, it will be like coming to me. Is Ma apart from this body ?"

*The middle joint of the skull, called *Brahma-randhra*, is said to be the door through which the soul of a realized person escapes at the time of death.

Words of Sri Anandamayee Ma

(As translated and compiled by Atmananda)

Meditation should be practised every day of one's life: Look, what is there in this world? Absolutely nothing that is lasting; therefore direct your longing towards the Eternal. Pray that the work done through you. His instrument may be pure. In every action remember Him. The purer your thinking, the finer will be your work. In this world you get a thing, and by tomorrow it may be gone. This is why your life should be spent in a spirit of service: feel that the Lord is accepting services from you in whatever you do. If you desire peace you must cherish the thought of Him.

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If you say you have no faith, you should try to establish yourself in the conviction that you have no faith. Where 'No' is, 'yes' is potentially there as well. Who can claim to be beyond negation and affirmation? To have faith is imperative. The natural impulse to have faith in something, which is deep rooted in man, develops into faith in God. This why human birth is such a great boon. It cannot be said that no one has faith. Everyone surely believes in something or other.

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The word 'manush' (man) is derived from 'man' (mind) and 'hush' (conscious), which denotes the mind's awareness and vigilance. This shows that man's natural calling is to attain to Self-knowledge. When children learn to read and write, they have no accept rebuke and censure. God, too, now and again administers to man a mild beating — this is but a token of His Mercy. From the worldly standpoint such blows are considered extremely painful, but actually they bring about a change of heart, and lead to Peace: by disturbing worldly happiness they induce man to seek the path to Supreme Bliss.

It is of course true that the human body lives by breathing, and hence there is suffering. There are two kinds of pilgrims on life's journey: the one like a tourist is keen on sight-seeing, wandering from place to place, flitting from one experience to another for the fun of it — the other treads the path that is consistent with man's true being and leads to his real home, to Self-Knowledge. Sorrow will of a certainly be encountered on the journey undertaken for the sake of sight seeing and enjoyment. So long as one's real home has not been found, suffering is inevitable. The sense of separateness is the root cause of misery, because it is founded on error, on the conception of duality. This is why the world is called 'du-niya' (based on duality).

A man's belief is greatly influenced by his environment, therefore he should choose the company of the Holy and Wise. Belief means to believe in one's Self, disbelief to mistake the non-Self for one's Self.

Man thinks he is the doer of his actions, while actually everything is managed from 'There', the connection is 'There', as well as the power-house — yet people say: 'I do'. How wonderful it is! When in spite of all efforts one fails to catch a train, does this not make it clear from where all one's movements are being directed? Whatever is to happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time, is all fixed by Him. His arrangements are perfect.

An eternal relationship exists between God and man. But in His Play it is sometimes there and sometimes severed, or rather appears to be severed: it is not really so, for the relationship is eternal. Again seen from another side, there is no such thing as relationship. Someone, who came to meet this body, said, "I am a newcomer to you", he got the reply: "Ever new and ever old indeed."

The light of the world comes and goes, it is unstable. The Light that is eternal can never be extinguished. By this Light you behold the outer light and everything in the universe; it is only because it shines ever within you, that you can perceive the outer light. Whatever appears to you in the universe is due solely to that great Light within you, and only because the Supreme Knowledge of the essence of things lies hidden in the depths of your being is it possible for you to acquire knowledge of any kind.

You obtain a coveted object, but still you are dissatisfied; and if you fail to get, you are also disappointed. The disillusionment you experience at the fulfilment of your wish is wholesome; but the torment of the unfulfilled hankering after the things you could not secure, drives you towards that which is of death, towards misery.

There are two kinds of currents in human life: the one pertaining to the world in which want follows upon want: the other of one's true Being. It is characteristic of the former that it can never end in fulfilment — on the contrary, the sense of want is perpetually stimulated anew. Whereas by entering the latter man will become established in his true nature and bring to completion the striving which is its expression. Thus, if he endeavours to fulfil himself by entering this current, it will eventually bring him to the perfect poise of his own true Being.

The Lord Buddha is Himself the essence of Enlightenment. All partial manifestations of wisdom that come in the course of sadhana culminate in Supreme Enlightenment (Bodha Svarupa). In a similar way, Supreme Knowledge (Jnana Svarupa) or Supreme Love (Bhava Svarupa) may be attained. As there is a state of Supreme Self-knowledge, likewise is there a state of perfection at the zenith of the path of love. There one finds the nectar of Perfect Love identical with Supreme Knowledge. In this state there is no room for emotional excitement; indeed, that would make it impossible for Supreme Love (Mahabhava) to shine forth. Be mindful of one thing: if, when following a particular line of approach, one does not attain to that which is the consummation of all sadhana, namely the final Goal, it means that one has not really entered that line. At the supreme summit of Love — which is Mahabhava exuberance, excessive emotion and the like cannot possibly occur. Emotional excitement and Supreme Love are in no wise to be compared; they are totally different from one another.

While absorbed in meditation, whether one is conscious of the body or not, whether there be a sense of identification with the physical or not — under all circumstances, it is imperative to remain wise awake; unconsciousness must be strictly avoided. Some genuine perceptivity must be retained, whether one contemplates the Self as such, or any particular form. What is the outcome of such meditation? It opens up one's being to the Light, to that which is eternal. Suppose the body had been suffering from some pain or stiffness — lo and behold, after meditation it feels perfectly hale and hearty, with not a trace of fatigue or debility. It is as if a long period of time had elapsed in between, as if there had never been a question of any discomfort. This would be a good sign. But if tempted at the first touch of Bliss to allow oneself to be drowned in it, and



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later to declare : "Where I was, I cannot say, I do not know," — this is not desirable. As one becomes capable of real meditation, and to the extent that one contacts Reality, one discovers the ineffable joy that lies hidden even in all outer objects.

If on the other hand one loses oneself as it were, lapsing into a kind of stupor while engaged in meditation, and afterwards claims to have been steeped in intense bliss, this sort of bliss is a hindrance. If the life-force seems to have been in abeyance — just as one has a sense of great happiness after sound sleep — it indicates stagnation. It is a sign of attachment, and this attachment stands in the way of true meditation, since one will be apt to revert to this state again and again, although from the standpoint of the world, which is altogether different, it would seem a source of profound inward joy and therefore certainly an indication of spiritual progress. To be held up at any stage is an obstacle to further progress — it simply means one has stopped advancing.

While engaging in meditation, one should think of oneself as a purely spiritual being (Chinmayi), as Self-luminous poised in the Bliss of the Self (Atmarame), and in accordance with the Guru's instructions, try to concentrate on one's ishta. The young man previously mentioned (the one who used to have visions) was intelligent, and therefore, able to understand this sort of reasoning. As a result, the spectacular experience ceased, and he now attends to his meditation and other spiritual exercises in a very quiet, unobtrusive manner.

The desire for God-realization is obviously not a desire in the ordinary sense. "I am Thy instrument; design to work through this, Thy instrument". By regarding all manifestation as the Supreme Being, one attains to communion that leads to liberation. Whatever work is undertaken, let it be done with one's whole being and in the spirit : "Thou alone workest," so that there may be no opportunity for affliction, distress or sorrow to creep in.

Another point : If the attitude, "though my shortcomings the work has not been done well enough, I should have taken still greater pains over this service," is not persisted in, the work must be considered to have been done carelessly. Therefore, as far as it lies in your power there should be no neglect. Beyond that, feel that whatever happens is in His hands, you are but the tool. Because of this, put your body, mind and heart into any service you may do, and for the rest take it that what comes about was destined to be — "Thou hast manifested Thyself in this way as was ordained, and so has it been wrought."

Holy Reminiscences

Swarni Joyananda Giri

(Continued from the last issue)

3. First Private and a Darshan of Grace*

After my second darshan of Ma on March 9, 1958, an account of which appeared in the last issue of this journal, I began to long for opportunities to have more darshans. With this end in view, I started keeping myself well-posted with details of Ma's movements and was delighted to learn that She was again expected in New Delhi on March 20, when She would be spending the night in the new house of a devotee in Kailash Colony. ** Quite a big crowd had naturally gathered there that evening and I was one of them. With me had also come a good sadhaka, my friend Sri Harbanslal, who retired as Deputy Director General, Indian Standard Institution, New Delhi. This was his first darshan of Ma, and after that he began looking upon Ma as his Guru and since then has been receiving from Her guidance in his sadhana.

My First Private with Ma

It was on Friday, the 21st of March 1958, the New Year's Day of Vikram Samvat 2015, when Ma had shifted to the New Delhi Ashram, I had my first private meeting with Ma in Her room. I had gone very early to the Ashram to seek such a meeting and was blessed with an opportunity for it in the morning itself. The few points on which I had sought Ma's guidance and Her replies, as I recollect them, were as follows :

Myself : What is the aim of life ?

Ma : Atma-Labha (Self-realization)

Myself : How to go about it, Ma ?

Ma : Do you do any japa ?

Myself : Yes, Ma.

Ma : Then do it all the time : while sitting, walking, or doing anything, and everywhere. Secondly, look upon every happening as the will of the Lord and, therefore, conducive to your spiritual betterment. Thirdly, read the Ramayana every day and when the first reading is over, start a second reading. Do this ten times without a break.

This was in 1958 and Ma's first two directives have continued to guide me all these years through the many trials and tribulations I have had to go through in life. As for the third directives, I began reading Tulsiidas Ramayana regularly from Sunday the 23rd of March — two days after my 'private' and completed the ten readings on April 21st 1964.

* See Ananda Varta (E), Vol. xxi No.2 (April 1975) Pp.75-81.

** See Ananda Varta (E), Vol. vi, No.1, p. 73

Karunamayī's Kṛpā for a Devotee

When the 'private' was nearly over, Swamiji (Swami Paramanandaji Maharaj) brought Sri S. N. Aga, an old and well-known devotee of Ma, the father of the girl who was to be engaged to my cousin Jitendranath and who had also been responsible for my second darshan of Ma.* That day (March 21, 1958) known as Navroz (literally New Day) among the Kashmiri Pandit Community, is considered a most auspicious day by us and so it had been arranged that the boy's horoscope would be given to Sri Aga on that day.

Ma was due to leave for Dehradun the same day and Sri Aga had come to the Ashram to request Ma to grace his residence with Her Presence so that he might place the horoscope, which he would be receiving soon, at Her lotus feet. "You need not even get out of the car Ma, but please do come for a while on your way to Dehradun", he had pleaded. Swamiji pointed out that Sri Aga's residence (Pachkhujin Road in Connaught Place) was not on the way from the Ashram to Dehradun, but Bhagwan cannot say 'No' to a bhakta's entreaties, and so Ma agreed to the detour and visited his place as desired by him. But Her immediate reply was a directive to Sri Aga that he should go to Calcutta during Her birthday celebrations, due to be held there some seven weeks later from May 2nd onwards, and also to bring along his would-be son-in-law to get blessings from Sri Hari Babaji and other great Mahatmas who would be assembling there on that occasion. Thereupon Sri Aga commented, while pointing towards me, that taking Jitendraji to Calcutta was in my hands. On this Ma remarked, "He is of course listening".

Ma's Khelaya Sends me to Calcutta

Mother's every expressed khelaya (divine impulse) is a command for me, and so I interpreted Her remark to mean that I should make certain that Jitendraji went to Calcutta for the celebrations. Also, an implied intention in the khelaya was, that I too should go there. Accordingly, I applied for leave for a couple of weeks and first went to Alwar. Jitendraji was still working there as a lecturer in English, as that year's I.A.S. batch had not till then been called for training. However, I failed to persuade him to go to Calcutta to comply with Ma's directive. I was naturally greatly disappointed and began to waver a bit even about my own trip to Calcutta. Just then two most unexpected developments took place which showed once again that nothing could come in the way of the course of events projected by Ma's khelaya.

First of all, on my return to Delhi, I was told by my office (Indian Standards Institution, ISI), where I was working as the Chief Editor, that I had to proceed to Calcutta to take over the temporary charge of our Calcutta Branch Office, as the Officer-in-Charge, Sri S. K. Sen, the present Director General, ISI, had fallen ill. Secondly, I was inspired to write a letter to Jitendraji, and, among other points, I wrote to the effect that I failed to understand how anyone could be so unfortunate and so pitifully thoughtless as to refuse to respond to the call of Divinity itself. And lo and behold! This sentence worked a miracle and he decided to abide by Ma's wishes and went to Calcutta.

As for me, I had to go even some ten days or so before the celebrations began and returned only after they were over. After I had taken charge of the Branch Office, I visited the Ashram

*See Ananda Varta, Vol. XXII, No. 1, p.23.

that had then been newly acquired at Agarpara and where the birthday function was due to take place I met Swamiji there and learnt from him that Ma was staying at the residence of Sri Chakravarty in Ballygunge where a 'Bhagavata Saptah' was being held."

Since he was also to go there soon, I waited for some time and then accompanied him to Ballygunge where I got the reward of a wonderful darshan of Ma in Her own room.

I Take Flowers for Ma

The next day I contacted my nephew who is a horticulturist and he arranged to let me have a few lovely sweet-smelling flowers with long stems. I was delighted and went to Ballygunge to present them to Ma and have Her darshan. It was evening time and Ma was in a park, full of people attending a function. It was, therefore, unable to reach Her unaided, and being a new devotee, I did not know people who could take me to Ma.

However, after some time, I noticed that Ma had got up and was leaving the park for the multi-storeyed building across the road where She was staying. I tried to meet Her to offer the flowers, but found it impossible to cross the usual wall of emotional devotees on both sides of the route She was taking. After Ma had gone upstairs to Her room, I began loitering hither and thither terribly disappointed and frustrated, but thinking of Ma all the time. The whole place was full of people the staircase and the entire area between the building and the park.

After a few minutes, just when I was wondering what should be my next step, I found devotees leaving the building. Those who had been crowding the staircase were seen descending hurriedly and I heard voices to the effect that Ma was coming down.

While all this commotion was on and the movement of people had become uni-directional, I found myself being gently but firmly drawn in the opposite direction. So, obeying an unconscious impulse, I proceeded, first, towards the bottom of the staircase and then towards its top.

Ma Gives Darshan of Grace

As I went up step by step, no one else did the same. This was certainly most remarkable. So, alone I ascended, and when I was nearing the first turn on the staircase, I noticed a tall, slim person in gurus coming down. I believe it was Swami Chaitanyanandji whom I did not know then. Seeing me, he stepped aside, wanting me, I believe, to do the same and also perhaps said or made a sign to show that Ma was coming. Preoccupied with my thoughts of Ma, I was then unable to follow what he was saying, and as I was going up not with any deliberate will of my own, but more or less mechanically and in silent obedience to the pull of an invisible power, I could not take much notice of him. He too did not stop me, perhaps because he saw flowers, in my hand.

The result of all this was that I went past him, and as I turned the corner and before I could see Ma I found a garland round my neck and Ma near me. I was flabbergasted and did not know what to do. So I just stood there speechless and transfixed, and kept on looking at Ma drenching me with an incomprehensible and indescribably sweet smile, the like of which I have not been blessed with again during the last seventeen years.

* See Ananda Varta, Vol. VI, No. 2, p. 153

The one-pointed longing of the child to present a few flowers had found a graciously loving response in the heart of the Divine Mother, and Her infinite *karuna* (compassion) had arranged, in that impossible situation, a 'private' in the middle of a staircase with no previous appointment. Even today, the memory of the quality of that darshan, which was GRACE in visible form, makes me forget everything else and my mind longs for a similar darshan again.

I remember that it was not before I had stood there for perhaps half a minute or more, lost in the bewitching Divine Presence, that I thought of the flowers in my hand, and then too, was able to offer them only slowly and timidly. Ma took them and moved away, leaving me with an inexhaustible prasada of a rare darshan to be treasured for ever as a divine souvenir of Her eternal GRACE

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