

ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

*A quarterly presenting the divine life and teaching of
SRI ANANDAMAYI MA and various aspects of
Universal Dhrama*

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ANANDA VARTĀ welcomes contributions on the life and teachings of Ma and reflections and personal experiences of Ma's devotees and admirers. Articles on religious and philosophical subjects as well as on lives of saints and sages of all countries and all times are also invited. Articles should as far as practicable be typed with double spacing and on one side of the page.

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ANANDA VARTA

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

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नं० XXXXIII ● एप्रिल, १९९६ ● संख्या २

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Matri Vani

Everything is His doing. HE alone IS; your sole duty is to remember this at all times. So long as the sense of "I" and "mine" remains, there is bound to be sorrow and want in the life of the individual.



Man must aim at the Superhuman, at real greatness. The traveller on the Supreme Path may hope to attain to ultimate Bliss. This is man's main duty.



All the time you have the desire to find, the acute feeling of lacking something. Just Persist in your Sadhana and for the rest, He will make it complete. By perfect grace comes perfect illumination. In the measure as you exert yourself you will receive.



No matter what be anyone's line of approach at first there is torment any perplexity, One is unable to find. After that comes a state of suspense, of emptiness as it were; One cannot penetrate — within neither does one derive satisfaction from worldly enjoyment.



While living in the world you can with a calm spirit attend to spiritual practices. Then only will that which is to be given up, fall away. And that which can never be relinquished, which does not go, that indeed will remain.

You have been blessed with birth in a human body, which is so difficult to obtain. Let not a single moment be wasted. Plants, animals and birds also, after remaining in the world for some time and producing more plants and animals of their species, Leave this World. If you too do nothing more than this, what difference is there between you and them ? Everyone should make a strenuous effort not to have to leave this world with a 'return ticket'.



So long as one has not found God, sorrow will not depart. If He is to be realized, one has to practise the repetition of His praises — No other path 'O man's Supreme Welfare exists. The Company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth, religious gatherings and the study of scriptures are also helpful on this path. This body ever stresses one thing: Sense enjoyment is poison and gradually delivers one to death. Therefore, this body always emphasises : endeavour to be engrossed in Him as much as you possibly can.



Sai Ram Sahay

Part I

Saints

Saints are those who have realized God and come to the level of man in the world to uplift the devotee to their level and realize God.

Saints show the way to eternal bliss

Man, though caught in the tentacles of worldly activities, has been provided by God with methods to escape from their impact. God's concern is to help man, to get rid of bondage and reach Him soon. He has laid the path of wisdom and enlightenment before him and given guidance against yielding to the influence of the senses.

Saints have taken the task of spreading God's message and if man takes advantage of their company and guidance, he will get freed from the earthly pulls. One among the Saivaite apostles, Thirumoolar, in his monumental work "Thirumandiram" gives detailed instructions about the way to get released from the taints and fetters, which is helpful for one who displays eagerness to approach the divine kingdom.

STUDY OF GREAT LIVES

A study of the lives of saints overcomes all these difficulties. How the abstract principles of spirituality can be made operative in practical life becomes clear from a saint's life. His life is his greatest teaching. How he reacted to the different situations in life, how he dealt with the kind of problems that any of us may face any time, how he ordered and disciplined his life and overcame difficulties — all this and much more is learnt from the study. The purpose of learning this is, of course, to practise it. The characteristics of a saint, of an illumined soul, become the virtues to be cultivated by the unillumined. When this practice culminates in perfection,

the virtues you assiduously sought to inculcate become your own characteristics. This is the reason why the scriptures describe the characteristics of an illumined soul.

Take the life of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother. She gave no lectures. She wrote no books. Outwardly her life seems to be so ordinary, so commonplace. Yet, the world has perhaps not seen a more extraordinary person. Her life teaches us more than a library of books on philosophy can do. We are captivated by her simplicity, her extraordinary purity of body and mind, her dedication to the Ideal, her all-embracing love and self-surrender to the divine at every stage of her life — as a daughter in the village of Jayrambati, as a wife and disciple of Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar, as the elder sister and guardian of her three brothers and their families, and as the Mother of all her devotee-children. The nagging and constantly bickering relatives that surrounded her almost throughout her later life present a familiar picture to many and one is at once able to identify oneself with her life. Indeed, if an aspirant moulds his life on even a few lessons he gets from the Mother's life, he need do nothing more.

This is true of the life of every saint. A saintly life educates us about what spiritual life means, where it leads to, and how it has to be practised. It is an education that reveals to us both the way and the Goal.

Inspiration

A saint's life not only educates but also inspires. Inspiration is power and is as necessary in spiritual life as fuel is for an automobile. You may know the way but if your car's petrol tank is empty the car won't take you anywhere. This applies to spiritual life as well. Knowledge about the spiritual life as well. Knowledge about the spiritual path and goal is good and necessary, but in the

absence of a driving force prodding the aspirant to move forward this knowledge becomes only a useless burden. It is inspiration that generates this force and acts as the fuel for one's spiritual journey.

(SAINTS & MYSTICS)

Shirdi Sai Baba

He appeared in Shirdi with the marriage party of Chand Patel when he was twenty years old. Since then he stayed in Shirdi continuously for a period of sixty years, after which Baba took his Mahasamadhi in the year 1918.

Even after he left the body:

Dewan Bahadur G.S. Khaparde, Member of the Council of State said of him in a preface to a short English sketch of Baba, a few years ago: "Sri Sai Baba fulfilled my idea of God on earth". In fact, he and a host of men of learning, wealth and position vied with each other in serving at Baba's durbar, in carrying fans or other paraphernalia at the Aratis and procession at which Sai Baba was worshipped as an incarnation of God, or as God himself. And even now, though several years have rolled away since Sai Baba's body was placed in the tomb of Shirdi, the Aratis and processions continue and the eager throng of ladies and gentlemen, Hindus and Moslems, rich and poor, scholars and rustics still serve at the durbar of Sai and declare in the following words of Bedil, the Sufi of Sind, that Baba is really alive and that they have indubitable personal experience of their own of his kindly interest and intervention in their daily life.

"These men do never die,

They become the Praised Ones.

They shed mercy on the world with myriad hands;

They help the helpless.

They aid the depressed.

They leave not those that follow them when the
time of danger comes.

They are men only in name.

In reality, they are God Himself.

These solitary ones are marvellous”.

Personal Experiences:

The study of such a life, however difficult it may be, must certainly be very attractive to the lover of truth — more especially if he is anxious to turn his discoveries to practical account for the betterment of his own temporal and spiritual condition. To aid one in such a study is the aim of this writer or compiler of experiences, in this and the following articles. Many derive more pleasure and even benefit from chewing chopped sugarcane than by sipping the milled juice. And many desire to have the personal experiences of Sai's devotees with all the crispness, the colour and warmth that characterise their narration to a fellow-devotee or sympathetic listener; and these they would be loathe to exchange for the cold second-hand conclusions extracted therefrom in this writer's mental mill. Hence it is now proposed to introduce Sai Baba to the readers (especially the public outside the Bombay Presidency) through a series of striking yet credible and candid revelations of experience of several devotees whose credentials are beyond cavil.

(Sri Narasimha Swamiji)

Sai Baba also suffered for his devotee's sake.

Baba's All-pervasiveness and Mercy

In the year 1910 A.D., Baba was sitting near the Dhuni on Divali holiday and warming Himself. He was pushing firewood into the Dhuni, which was brightly burning. A little later, instead of pushing logs of wood, Baba pushed His arm into the Dhuni; the arm was scorched and burnt immediately. This was noticed by the



The love of God is alone desirable for a human being. The One, whose offspring you are, who is your Mother, Father, Friend, Beloved, Lord, who has brought you forth, has nourished you with the nearer of mother's milk—by whatever Name you invoke Him—that Word you should keep in mind at all times.

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Arise and delay not, follow after the pure life, Who follows virtue rests in bliss alike this World and the next.

Sri Walayat is the head of the entire Sufi sect.

Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath

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servant Madhava, and also by Madhavarao Deshpande (Shama). They at once ran to Baba and Madhavarao clasped Baba by His waist from behind and dragged Him forcibly backward and asked, "Deva, for what have you done this?" Then Baba came to His senses and replied, "The wife of a blacksmith at some distant place, was working the bellows of a furnace; her husband called her. Forgetting that her child was on her waist, she ran hastily and the child slipped into the furnace. I immediately thrust My hand into the furnace and saved the child. I do not mind My arm being burnt, but I am glad that the life of the child is saved."

(Sai Satcharita Chap VII)

Sadhu Vaswani rejoiced in the Company of the "little ones", — the poor in Spirit. Not unoften he was asked by admiring friends to address big meetings and conferences. His invariable answer was:— "Let the cobbler cobble his shoes!" In answer to an invitation to take part in a "World Congress of Philosophers", he wrote:— "I know nothing. An humbler task is the call to me of life."

"What is your ambition?" he was asked by a press-correspondent.

He answered:— "I have no ambition. Every ambition is a chain which binds us to the earth. I but aspire to become a little one!"

He taught by precept and example that greatness was a malady to be shunned. God asks not for great things, — he said. Little things are precious to the Lord. In an age intoxicated with ambition and the mad rush for bigness, his life rang with the message :—

"Sow little seeds of love and you will reap a rich destiny. Be a little one : and through you He will reflect His Light, — the Light of Eternity!"

(East & West)

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Vol. VI

(Translated by Tarakini)

(Continued from Previous issue)

April 5 Tuesday

Tonight as Ma spoke to me she suddenly came up with, "Look, the sport is done. Do you know what happened? A place; the place is frightening and terrible, as if it is going down; there is nothing to hold on to. In that place are some bundle-like objects. In the sport this body has gone there to hide. The body is about to fall. Standing there it says, 'How shall I come?' Hearing this people at different levels present themselves; they animatedly clear the way so that this body may go near them. This body holds the bundles one by one and they slip and fall. This body gradually moves towards those people. Their aim is to get to this body and therefore they do not notice the bundles that are falling. The main person leading the others is bent on taking this body and has cleared the path for this body with great reverence. Indicating that person in particular this body said, 'You are my greatest friend. I bless you, you will attain bless.' The one who gave the blessings was this body." Saying this Ma pointed towards her own body and continued, "They were waiting reverently for that with which this could go to them."

I asked, "Ma, what was the purpose of this sport?" Ma replied, "It is but the game of hide and seek between the *Atma* and the *Paramatma*. The bundles are bonds of desires and *Vasanas*. The mind and intellect help in making the way. The one who gave the blessings is the *jivatma*. 'Entry' — it is but a game of hide and seek played by the *Paramatma* with himself, what else?"

April 6 Wednesday

Today while speaking to me Ma said, "The example

that we talked about the other day — if your hand is held you will say 'I', if your leg is held you will still say 'I', and even if your finger is held you say 'I'. Do you know what it is all about? If anything is put into fire it is the nature of fire to turn that object into its own form. Similarly once you reach your own nature, only what you are exists. There is nothing other than One, everything dissolves into the One. It is not correct to call it One, nor does Two manifest the *svarup* (own form), which is why that is unmanifest (*avyakta*). Then again do you know something? Creation, existence and dissolution are not facts at all." Saying this Ma laughed.

Again Ma said, "Look, unless all this is experienced by actions prompted by one's own nature one will not be able to understand this correctly. It will seem fictitious." I said, "If creation and existence are infinite then what is One-ness?" Ma replied, "That is *svabhava* (one's own nature) and *svayamprakasha* (self effulgent). Just as it is your *svabhava* to yearn for unbroken bliss. He claps His own hands together, He sings and He experiences sound, form, taste, smell and feels satiated." Laughing, she continued, "Look, Khukuni, what a beautiful frolic it is! You yourself over eat, then while swimming with great delight you bathe too long — then you yourself suffer a stomach ache and a cold and a fever and then you wonder, 'How long will it take for these illnesses to end? How shall I get back to what I was?' You brood thus and feel disturbed. Well, don't you find all this beautifully entertaining? This is why I say, just take as much as you need. If that is done then what is, reveals as it is. In that state you will observe that even when your body is not keeping well you still have a constant feeling of health within yourself. This is the reason I stress, it is your nature (*svabhava*) to want *ananda* (bliss) even at that time, that is, you ask for what you really are."

"Then the different qualities (*gunas*) take on different

forms and result in the formation of figures. In this variety arise auspicious figures as well as inauspicious figures. From this variety to reach the One-ness it is necessary to take refuge in the auspicious figures. In this arise good qualities (*saguna*), a state beyond qualities (*nirguna*) and so on. This is the sport of Siva, is it not? Then by the special effulgence of all qualities and forms the crores of *jivas* (creatures), crores of *ishvaras* (gods) which you all speak about, are manifested. You were complete and healthy when you went into actions related to your *svabhava*, so you are now again complete, healthy and at peace. Just see how wonderful this game is. Where will you all go if you do not call it a game? The child of the house remains in the house!"

Ma continued, "Look, why have such matters been discussed? Shall I tell you why? I am living in a house beside the Ganga. I observe that many people bathe and swim in the Ganga then get fever and cough. Some others eat with great satisfaction, some have fever, some a cold, some others suffer from stomach ailments; now I am in a doctor's house and he gives medicines whenever necessary. Seeing all this, such topics came up for discussion, now how can I help this, tell me?" Laughingly Ma said all this.

It is surprising that Ma never says anything of her own accord or with any ordinary intent. When speech emanates from her she speaks continuously regardless of whether anyone listens or does not listen. Today she spoke in that strain and discussed a couple of matters. Didima and I were present and Ma was lying down. Surprisingly, though Didima and I heard Ma's words, the very next moment we forgot all that she had said. I also could not remember much of what Ma had said. When she was told about this Ma laughed and said "Only what is necessary will happen anyway." I asked Didima but she could not recall anything. Ma laughed saying, "You al-

ways complain that you cannot write anything sitting noxt to Ma, Ma never says anything. Now see, by a coincidence the same statement has been uttered by you. You are also feeling sorry about it, how beautiful !”

Ma said all this at night, lying down. In spite of shutting the door Ma does not always quieten down. Yet she does not listen to useless conversation from our side, nor does she let us speak; she speaks out whatever emanates from her in her own *bhava*. Tonight she spoke late into the night. I stopped her and said, “What are you saying Ma? to which she replied, “What shall I do, I speak whatever emerges from my mouth.”

Today Vinay Babu and Jnan Babu came from Maimansingh. The doctor's house is full. Bholanath sang *kirtan* with everybody else with great delight. An immense *bhava* of bliss seems to pervade him from within. Outside, in Haridwar, a fair of joy is in progress, all around.

April 7 Thursday

Early this morning Girin Babu arrived and sang an *arati* song. Then Bholanath and others sang *kirtan* and went across to the other side. After singing *kirtan* for a long time they all returned slowly. Even after their return Bholanath led the *kirtan* for a long time. What great bliss!

In the course of conversation, when I asked Ma about her condition, she said, “Look, for some time it so happened that the *asana* of gods and goddesses occurred within this body. So much so that when the *bhava* of gods who had four arms, played within this body, the manner of standing and holding up the hands seemed to portray the existence of two more arms. The *bhavas* which blossomed within this body were exactly those which characterized those gods. When I was the daughter-in-law of the house, once the door of the room was shut and I got down

to doing the domestic chores, such *bhavas* occurred. Is it not but a sport ? Everything is just a game !”

In the afternoon two or three people arrived and draped a *dhoti* and shawl on Ma. A boy put his Gandhi cap on Ma and she laughed. Everyone gazed at Ma's face. She then took her own shawl and wrapped it around the boy. Seeing Ma with a cap, a *dhoti* and a shawl everyone bent down to do *pranama*. Ma walked wearing the costume from room to room, joking and laughing. She went on thus for some time and then she took off the costume, got into her own *dhoti* and sat on her bedding.

An ache has developed in Ma's hands. On the request of the doctor and other devotees she has agreed to wear a *kurta*. Everyday there arises some ailment or the other in her body. Whenever the doctor enquires, “Ma, how are you today ?” She tells him about some discomfort or the other. Then she whispers laughingly in our ears, “The doctor had started the treatment, he is dispensing with the disease very carefully. By becoming a patient and speaking incessantly as one, I have to put him in a tight spot.” So saying she laughed.

April 8 Friday

Today Ma travelled in Sanjaya Devi's daughter's car to the other shore of the Ganga at the invitation of Achalananda Brahmachari (disciple of Kuladananda Brahmachari), to attend a *yajna*. Kiranchand Darvesh took Ma from there to his tent. After bowing at Ma's feet he held her hand and said, “Ma, Ma, please place your hand on my head.” Ma smiled and said, “Do you say such a thing to your daughter ?” But Darvesh did not relent. At which Ma said, “Then sit up.” When he sat up Ma stroked his head and all his limbs saying, “It is not sufficient to touch only the head, therefore I have touched all the limbs as well.” Filled with gratitude he gazed at Ma with tear filled eyes.

After spending some time there we returned. As usual many people gathered for Ma's *darshan* at four p.m. Ma was made to sit on the terrace. After sunset she was brought down for a drink of water. At ten p.m. the doors were shut.

April 9 Saturday

Tonight Ma began talking about her state — "Look, I did not even know the names of such things as *mudras*, yet do you know what I saw ? Each god was offered a *pranama* with a particular *mudra*." Then referring to the ritualistic touching of the body and the hands (*anganyasa*, *karanyasa*), Ma said, "Just as you see in pictures there are so many gods in the body of a cow, similarly so many *bija mantras* are packed in this body, each *bija* being accompanied by its presiding deity. When *kriya* was performed, the hand touched each one of those spots. It was all clearly visible. These levels of a spiritual seeker manifested in this body. Earlier I have told you about the time when no other person could be touched. During that period even if I were lying down with my eyes shut and a person walked past soundlessly, I could still make out his presence." I asked, "How did you know Ma?" Ma replied, "Do you want to know how ? A ray like the sun's rays always emanated from this body. Therefore though there was no bodily contact, the moment anything entered within the ray, it made contact with this body. Therefore even without physical contact, another person's presence was discernible. But that was also a level."

April 10 Sunday

Today Vilas's thread ceremony was performed. She looked beautiful in the garb of a *brahmacharini*. Bholanath was her *acharya* (*guru*). Today Jyotish Guha, his mother and his daughter and Prankumar Babu and his family arrived from Calcutta. Since Ma's health is indifferent the

doors to her room are kept shut most of the time. But the devotees are very eager for her *darshan*. Therefore as soon as the doors are opened a huge crowd collects in the room.

Today I asked Ma, "Well Ma, how can another person's thoughts be known?" Ma replied, "Do you know how it is done? May be you have not seen a curry being cooked, but by tasting it you can say whether the salt, chilli and spices are too little or too much. Understand it to be something like that. Then again it may so happen that you do not see the food being cooked but by its aroma you can make out what is being cooked. In the same way even without seeing, or without hearing the name, the innermost thoughts in a person's mind can be divided. It is visible as clearly as an image is seen in a mirror. All facts have not been disclosed, only whatever you have made me say has been spoken."

Thoughts about Ma's life arose in my mind. Once Ma's body was bedecked with jewelry. One ornament fell off in the train. Ma noticed it but said nothing. When we alighted from the train and noted that the ornament was missing ma laughed and said, "It fell off in the train but just look, there was no inclination to tell you about it and therefore I was unable to do so. So many things keep lying around anyway!" And with that she laughed sweetly.

In the afternoon Ma sat down to eat. Ramratan Babu and Sanjna Devi sat near her and obtained a little *prasada* Ramratan Babu cracked a joke at which Ma laughed and said, "You are a big devil (*shaitan*)." When all laughed at this Ma asked, "Do you know what *shaitan* means? He who has put *tan* (fast moving note patterns) into *sva* (Self), is called a *shaitan*." This interpretation delighted Ramratan Babu immensely. I commented, "Ma has devised a new meaning. Now the word *shaitan* will be one of praise rather than one of derogation."

From many days Ma's right arm has been aching

badly. The glands are swollen, and in the left arm she has a different kind of pain. Ma is hardly aware of it. As a figure of complete bliss (*anandamayi*) she converses with everyone, but we have been observing the deterioration in her physical condition. She is troubled by one ailment or the other. Dr. Pant said, "Ma, please get well of your own accord, for what can we do ? For five days we shall say nothing, please set this right through your own *bhava*." Ma replied, "Now that medicine has been administered to this body, let us see what result emerges, how much medicine can you people give, after all ?" So saying she laughed.

Inauguration of Matri-Mandir at Sitarampur

Mita Bose

It was about forty years back, Shree Shree MA Anandamayee stepped in Belrui — a village under Sitarampur Railway Station. The seed of holiness which SHE sowed there at that auspicious moment became a large well branched tree by the lapse of time and finally took the shape of Matri-Mandir.

On 22nd February, 1988 amongst tremendous enthusiasm and gaiety, Matri-Mandir was inaugurated at that unknown village in the 300 year old house of Sri Mihir Roy and Smt. Puspita Roy. The peak of the Mandir was decorated with jar and flags. On the Marble altar, a beautiful life size (6' X 4') portrait of MA was installed.

The incidence may apparantly be an ordinary one, but it had a tremendous significance. Normally, riches never want to spend massive money for religious purposes. But, in this instance, through the young boy couple were not very rich, they with total dedication stepped ahead for this noble cause. To say the least, their only asset was the Blessings of Shree Shree MA. For a long time the work of the mandir remained suspended. The couple had no idea about when the work would resume. Still it was a mystery to them as to where from the money had come and the work moved on.

The inauguration of the Mandir was the secondary manifestation of their devotion. The most significant display of their devotion was the institution of daily Puja and Vog with meticulous accuracy.

Smt. Roy had spontaneously taken over the duty of performing the daily Puja on herself. It appeared that only to acknowledge their ardent prayers and to accept their worship Shree Shree MA had appeared in their

house with HER RAJ RAJESWARY form.

Mrs. Roy (Puspita Roy) had a long cherished desire to install a large portrait of MA in their house. But such an unique job, always deserve a competent painter. Mrs. Roy had not much contacts. So, she had been in difficulties to get the right painter. By some strange way she came across the painter and also got his consent to work for the portrait. The well-known painter Sri Dipak Mitra made several sketches but none of them abled to satisfy her thirst. After long rehersal, the desired picture of MA appeared on the Canvas. But when the painting was almost at its finishing stage, Mrs. Roy got a divine message to include HER feet in the portrait which inflicted re-structuring of the picture. Finally, at the cost of deep devotion and concentration for one and a half year the painter abled to cage MA within the frames of the portrait. What an animated portrait it was ! It seemed that MA with all Her divine love and affection was calling all to come closer to HER.

After completion difficulty arose as to how, such a large portrait, be carried to Sitapur. Comparing the merits of all reasonable alternatives, Dipak Mitra, Mihir Basu and others decided to carry the portrait from painter's house at Southern Avenue, Calcutta to Howrah Station by two porters and therefrom by train in a first class coach. Accordingly, two porters were appointed and on the scheduled day they got prepared at 3 A.M. and waited for the porters. But the porters failed to reach there, even at 5 A.M. The train was scheduled to leave the station at 6 A.M. It appeared to be impossible to reach the station within 6 A.M. Carrying the painting on foot. So, with a desperate attempt, they reached the station by taxi and returned with two new porters to carry the painting. It was a divine mystery that the train was late and it was placed in the platform only when the porters reached the platform, carrying the painting of MA. Then a new

difficulty came up as it appeared to be impossible to place the portrait into the first class coop. All were in a fix and were hopelessly running from one coach to another. To see their disturbed faces, the driver of the train came — forward to know about their problem. On hearing the same he proposed to carry the portrait with him in his driver's cabin. He happened to be a devotee of Shree Shree MA. So, when all conceded to his proposal, he purified his cabin by scattering the water of the ganges and then the portrait was placed into it.

At Sitarampur station, the scheduled stoppage of the train was only three minutes. But by the grace of MA the portrait smoothly carried out of the train and among holy sounds of conches and bells it reached the home of HER disciple at Belrui.

Now the question arose, about who would conduct the pujas. MA HERSELF solved the same. Swami Nirmalanandaji came from the Ashram at Ranchi. He was a scholar of Sanskrit and was well versed with religious rites and above all he was brought up at MA's Ashram from the very childhood.

Again an anxiety appeared as to who would cook MA's Voga. Those who usually performed such jobs were all absent due to one or the other reason. In fact no one knew that MA had selected HER most affectionate devotee Kumari Chhabi Banerjee to cook HER Voga. So, under the divine desire, Chhabidi and Bishuddhadi arrived and Shree Radha Gobindaji also entered into the Mandir along with Shre Shre MA.

In the midst of chanting of hymns from Vedas the portrait of MA was installed. On the day of installation, from very dawn, Nam-Kirtan started. At 8 A.M., under the guidance of Swami Nirmalanandaji, a large procession started with the portrait of Shree Shree MA, chanting Mahanam to circle around the locality. After the procession returned to Matri-Mandir, Special Puja of

Shree Shree MA and Shree Shree Radha Gobindaji were performed with all austerity. Then Bhog prepared by Chhabidi was offered to the deities.

At noon, prasad was distributed among the devotees attended the function. It was surprising that the arrangement for distribution of Prasad was made only for 300 hands but actually 900 devotees were entertained with prasad. Apart from Chhabidi and Bishuddhadi, Ranjitda, Bhabanidi, Tulsidi, Mita Bose and others attended the function.

In the evening, religious discourses by Swami Nirmalanandaji and Devotional Songs sung by Chhabidi charmed all, influcting a deep religious feeling into all. After that silence was observed for 15 minutes.

Next morning, recitation of Gita, Chandi were performed. Then Special Puja, Arati and Voga were offered. Then all were entertained with Prasad. As the sun began to follow the decending track, the participants started to return home with a holy sublime memory with them.

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Sweet Sweet You Are

Gita Bhattacharyya

I am now going to write* about a difficult matter which is very important as well. I do not know whether my thought and language will be adequate for expressing. I am only trying after seeking the blessings of the Holy Mother.

In June, 1966, we left Pune and shifted to IIT, Bombay. My husband joined the Chemistry Department there as a Senior Professor. In July - August, 1968, on invitation he went to London to deliver a lecture at the IUPAC Symposium. From there he went to Münster in Germany and a few other places in the Continent. This was a lecture-tour for him for about six weeks in different places. He took me along with to show me the continent and also to get me acquainted with the scientific community abroad. I am writing at some length as, after that, when I met Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, She discussed many matters including important issues about Christian Missioneries and, more than that, revealed her identity.

After we returned from abroad, several months passed. We then went to Mahabaleswar with our children for a visit. From there we were returning to Bombay via Pune, where we decided to stay for a few days in the National Chemical Laboratory (NCL). While going there we found that Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram had been beautifully decorated. There was a big pandal. Flower vendors at the gate were selling garlands and flowers. There was a large crowd. We realised that Shree Shree

*This is the English translation of the corresponding original article written in Bengali by the authoress. Translation by S. C. Bhattacharyya.

Ma was there.

In the afternoon, we went to the Ashram to pay our homage to Ma. She enquired about our welfare and asked us to come to the Ashram next day and have "Prasad". She further asked me to come a little early.

Next morning we went to the Ashram and found Ma sitting in the Pandal; holy scriptures were being read.

We sat down there. After some time Ma went to her room. A lady of the Ashram came and took me to Ma's room. I bowed down to Ma. She said — "Ma, take your seat".

I sat down.

Ma said on her own — "Ma, recently you have returned from abroad with your husband. You tell me about your experiences — what are the places you visited, what did you see, how did you feel, your new experiences etc."

I — "In such matters my husband will be able to give better information, I do not understand so much. I may not be able to convey properly. Moreover what can I tell, you know everything".

Ma — "Even then one has to tell, otherwise one cannot have a dialogue, cannot know if nothing be told. You tell me, I want to hear from you".

I — "In the month of July, we went from Bombay to London. He had been invited to present a paper. Many scientists delivered lectures there. Arrangements had been made for our stay in a hotel. But my younger sister stays in London, so we put up with them. The symposium lasted for a week. The next symposium was in Münster in Germany. There was a gap of seven days between the two. We stayed with my sister during the period and then left for Münster.

Ma — "When you were in London did you go to visit the Canterbury Church?"

I — "One day we went out for sight seeing. When we were returning in a bus, the conductor was calling —

“Canterbury Church — Conterbury Church —.” I wanted to know from my husband whether this is the same Church about which I have read in history.

He said ‘yes’. I wanted to get down and see the church. Both of us got down from the bus, crossed the road and stood in front of a door of the Church and were seeing from there. After some time we come away”.

Ma — “What did you see”?

I — “Inside the big hall, some women and men and also some children were standing. One father in front of them was saying something in the form of a prayer which was being repeated by the congregation. We were seeing the Church from outside. A Father came and requested us to go in and join the prayer-group. We then did not wait and came away.”

Ma — “You went to the Church, a Father come and called you, you did not go in but came away ! Was it not insulting to him ?”

I — “I was not well, not in a condition to go inside”.

Ma — “Then why did you go to the Church?”

I — “It was on the way, that is why we did so. I did not know that the Canterbury Church was so near London. I have read about it in British History, — I was keen to see it. Since we were passing by the Church I got down to see it without much thought. I did not realise the implications involved”.

Ma in somewhat annoyed tone said — “you have read about the quarrel between the Kings of Britain and the Bishops of the Church. That is true. But this old, culturally so prestigious Church, which is still considered to be a sacred temple; you went there without thought and just pepped and then came away ! When the Father called you, you could have told him about the kind of difficulties you had. They do not observe such restrictions as we do, he would have taken you inside.”

I — “I would not have liked to go inside in that

