

# 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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Vol. XXXXIII ● APRIL, 1996 ● No. 2

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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





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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

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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

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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.

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# 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 alongwith 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



condition of my health”.

Ma — “Those who were standing there one of their relatives had died. So, Prayer - service was being held for the departed soul, something like “Shradha Ceremony” in our country. You had gone to such an important Church and behaved in this fashion ! It was very wrong on your part”.

I — “I did not realise it”. Ma remained quiet for a short time, gathered herself and said — “If you go to a church again, do so when you are in normal condition of health. Give offerings as they do; at least light a candle, bow down and then come back. If you even go to a Masjid then also do so. If you go to temples of other religious communities do whatever they do. There are certain systems in those places which should be respected. If you cannot do that do not go at all”.

Then Ma said — “Well Ma, after going to those places with your husband, why did you spend your time in listening to lectures in the symposiums ? On these occasions, adequate arrangements are made for the wives of the scientists to visit important places. Other attractive features are also organised. If you had stayed with them it would have been good for you, you would have liked it.”

I — “I do not go anywhere without my husband. Moreover, I do not keep in good health these days”.

Ma — “Those people make arrangement with proper sense of responsibility. You would not have faced any inconvenience. Your knowledge of English was sufficient to move with them. By talking to the ladies you would have known about their way of life. Your experience would have increased”.

I — “I wanted to find out how far my husband had progressed in the field of science. Also, whatever has not been possible for him, but was required in this life, if I could see that, then I could give appropriate advice to my son”.

Ma — “If you had accompanied the wives of scientists, there could have been an exchange of fortune. That would have been good for you. You went with your husband from one symposium to another. Your husband tries to explain to you his scientific work, but you really do not understand science. Scientists presented their papers, heard others doing so and had profitable exchange of ideas and fortune. You only saw their style and technique and got tired in the process. Unlike the scientists you did not have any benefit of exchange with them. You only exhausted your inner strength”.

Ma then enquired, — “Why did you go to Paris ?”

I — “There was no particular work for my husband there. He only wants to show me the city. But, there I fell ill, could not see much, travelled only a little.”

Ma — “Did you feel anything there ?”

I — “I dreamt that my younger daughter has been hurt and was crying and calling, ‘Ma-Ma’. After completion of my husband’s lecture-tour, we planned to visit Greece and Rome. I have read about these countries in history. But after I had that dream I become very impatient and as soon as his work was over we returned to Bombay. We did not go to Greece and Rome.

Ma — “I did not want you to visit these two countries. You have read about them in history and, therefore, had a natural desire to visit them. But these old historic places have been the scenes of violent political activities, intrigues etc. Also, there have been cruel, barbarous actions of the gladiators. I did not want you to go around these ruins; that would have adversely affected your inner spirit.

Ma further said — “It is good that you returned. Your younger daughter was feeling miserable.”

I — “My senior sister-in-law and brother-in-law were with them. They should not have any difficulty.”

Ma — “You yourself take care of them, never leave

them alone. Others cannot do that like you. Those who are a little older can understand and adjust. Your younger daughter was very small, she was in distress."

Ma kept silent for a moment and then said again — "Abroad, in your sister's place, you atleast did your "Jap" and "Prayer", why did you stop it after that? You were not performing your daily prayer at that time, whereas, to look after you abroad and your children in India was becoming difficult, quite difficult. You bath had an element of risk, — your younger daughter could have faced a mishap. Somehow, it was kept within the limit of a minor injury."

I — "After leaving my sister's place we were always staying in hotels, using their bed, table, chair, consuming food supplied by them. Proper purity and sanctity could not be maintained. Therefore, I stopped doing my "Prayer" and "Jap". I thought after returning home I shall resume again in proper manner".

Ma slowly and quietly explained to me that if such a situation arises in the future, how I should perform "Prayer" and "Jap". She further added — "You must not stop your daily "Prayer" and "Jap", — never stop it. You normally lead a pure and clean life and observe regular habits. Therefore, irregularity does not agree with you."

Ma — "Let us leave it here. Now you tell about your experience at the Nice Airport."

I — "That is a long story. It will take quite some time to narrate that."

Ma — "Let it be so; you tell me, tell about that Mother."

I — "We landed at the Nice Airport in the South of France. From there we went a place called Grasse by car. My husband was taken there by an Industrial Organisation manufacturing Perfumery Chemicals. We stayed for a few days. During our return trip, one of their scientists escorted us to the Nice Airport. Our luggages

were weighed, we checked in, after which he left. Both of us were waiting at the Airport for our place. For some unknown reason it way delayed. I was sitting in a place alongwith other ladies.”

At that time several Christian Mothers and Sisters came. They stood in front of me at some distance. It was of no use leaving my seat, when such a large group was there. Even then, I was feeling uncomfortable. They were standing in front of me. I could not continue sitting in my place. I left my seat, went to them and requested that one of them could occupy my place. They told me that normally one does not behave like that this side and told me that I could occupy my seat without feeling embarrassed. From my talk with them I realised that in the group there were several Mothers and many more Sisters. I told them that this is not the custom in our country. When the Mothers are standing I cannot keep sitting in their presence. I shall also keep standing. After that the Mothers discussed among themselves and entreated and persuaded one of the Mothers to occupy my seat. I felt that among the Mothers, in age and prestige, she was probably the most important. I stood at a slight distance from them.

One sister came and told me that the Mother was calling me. I went to her. She enquired about the place I came from, what my husband does, how many children I have etc. She further wanted to know my impression about the countries I have visited, my comparative opinion about the custom, culture and educational system prevailing in these courtries and ours. Then I left her and stood at some distance.

The time of departure of our plane was long overdue. Call for Mother's plane was there and she and others left in a group. Before she left, the Mother thanked me and blessed me profusely.

I returned to my old place and sat. After a short while,

one sister came and told me that the Mother was calling me; she also requested me to hurry up as their plane was going to leave in a short time. I accompanied her in a hurry.

From a distance alone, the Mother looked at me steadily, — our sight got stuck. Both of us were standing without movement. I felt as if something very powerful was flowing from the Mother's sight through me. I was thinking where I had similar experience, whom I had seen to do so. This look, this sight was known to me, but I failed to recollect. After a short while I realised, you alone sometimes look at me in this manner. I remembered you and your sight and started thinking of you. Then the Mother told me — "I am happy to meet you, be happy, may God bless you". After saying this the Mother left to catch her flight.

After a very short time, that Sister came again and told me — "The Mother has come back for you, please come quickly. I almost ran with the Sister. From the other side the Mother also came quickly and affectionately embraced me and said —

"I wish you a safe and happy journey my sweet child." Then they left hurriedly. A senior officer of the plane had accompanied the Mother. I realised that the Mother must be a famous and highly respected person. I had not met her before, but the touch from her created some kind of happy sensation within me which I have received from you and you alone."

Ma in a soft and affectionate voice told — "Then what happened after that ? Tell me slowly. You need not be in a hurry. Take your own time."

I — "I sat in my place for a short time. Some seats were vacated by that time. My husband sat beside me. I never expected that such an experience could happen in a foreign land. I was thinking about you and that Mother.

Our plane was further delayed. They took us to the



dining room for dinner. After finishing our dinner we came back and waited for the plane. Time passed. After long waiting the plane arrived. We boarded the plane and it took off.

We were tired of the day's labour. Normally in a plane they provide wet towel for cleaning the face, give fruit juice, tea or coffee and also some food. Nothing was done during this flight. The Air Hostesses were moving around with a grim face, The plane was rattling. Abroad we had travelled to many places but never had such experience in a plane. I was thinking of two of you. Why the Mother behaved with me and talked in the manner she did ! After that the plane entered an air-pocket. There was heavy storm and rains.

The pane was rocking from side to side. It was suddenly going upto a great height and then coming down. It appeared as if it was going to disintegrate into pieces. Initially I was a little afraid. I then started remembering you. I was praying that whatever may happen, I must not forget you and afraid. After quite some time the plane came outside the air-pocket and around midnight it landed with us at the Milan Airport in Italy, whereas, we were to go to Zurich in Switzerland. After getting down we found that there was hardly anyone at the Airport, no one at the Visa-counter. Finally we learnt that a few hours ago there had been a major Air-crash at the Airport. No one survived. Consequently, there was complete combusion all around. There was no arrangement for a flight to Zurich. At midnight or early next morning, if a plane could be arranged we will be contacted by telephone in our hotel. We were advised to keep alert and ready. After that we were taken to hotel in Airport's bus.

In the early morning hours conveyance came to take us to the Airport.

Ma asked — "Did you see the Milan Cathedral ?"

I — “I was very keen to see it. We have read so much about this famous Cathedral in history during our school and college days. But we had no time. We were going to Zurich but because of compelling reasons had come to Milan. It was not possible for us to halt. When travelling in the bus, in the early morning light we could see the Cathedral from a distance. How beautiful ! But alas, it was not possible for us to go inside !

After that we reached Zurich at about mid-day, which was a Saturday. That morning my husband was to deliver a lecture which did not materialise”.

Ma — “Then — ?”

I — “In Zurich we put up with one of his students at his special request. After that we went to Jeneva. There he was to deliver lectures in a major Industrial House. During his lecture several Nobel Laureates were present, I mean —

Ma said in a quiet voice — “Tell me. I shall be able to follow.”

I — “There were several Nobel Laureates. Many other distinguished Scientists were also present. They worked in the same area and were well acquainted with the work of my husband. They were saying that because my husband was staying in India he was not receiving adequate recognition. They requested him to work atleast for two years in an advanced country in the West. Similar suggestions have been given by scientists in other countries too. He has been invited to go and work in their laboratories. It appeared to me, that if leaving the country is necessary for getting recognition, Then we need not worry about it. If he works in another country, the credit for that work will go to that country. Whatever work he does in India and publishes a paper in the process, that will be considered as the publication of an Indian Scientist. My husband also holds the same opinion. We have decided not to leave the country. That my husband will

become a famous scientist, I no longer have that fascination. Even then, I could feel and see that as a scientist he has left a mark and earned national and international reputation. I do not want anything more now."

Ma — "Your husband had always opportunities to go abroad and work, and has now as well. Why did not you go earlier and also not going now?"

I — "I have told him, if he goes I shall accompany him with the children. But if you ask me, I do not want to go."

Ma — "Why?"

I — "He will be busy with his work but what shall I do there? People in those countries have different kind of education, culture, social system and mode of thinking. It is possible to stay with them for a short period, — I would not like that for a long time. It will also not be possible to bring up the children the way we like. And beside that —"

Ma — "Beside that, what?"

I — "If I stay abroad, I shall not be able to meet you and be near you. When I think of that I would not like to leave the country".

Ma smiled and said — "If you had gone abroad, I would have been there with you. You would have faced no difficulty".

I — "No, I do not want to leave the country".

Ma laughed and looked at me, as if measuring me.

After that Ma said — "While abroad, you talked to the scientists with ease".

I smiled embarrassingly.

Ma — "What else happened in Jeneva?"

I — "Nothing else happened. From there we took a straight flight and came to Bombay".

Ma with amusement — "What happened in the Jeneva bus stand?"

I was somewhat astonished and also delighted and with some embarrassment said — "Both of us were standing at the bus stand. From the bus stand on the

other side, an unknown lady of that country came to me and told that she has read many books written by Swami Vivekananda. From that she developed a great desire to see an Indian lady. That desire has been fulfilled after seeing me.

I told that there were many Indian ladies, even some bengali ladies in Switzerland”.

She said, “Yes, they are there, — but I was not satisfied with that. The impression which she had gathered about India and Indian ladies after reading Swami Vivekananda’s books has been fulfilled after seeing me.”

Whereas, while abroad, I was usually wearing silk or synthetic sarees. I also used light “make up” and occasionally lipstick as well. I was somewhat astonished when that lady said so much.

Ma — “State of one’s mind and character is reflected on the face. It is not covered by light “makeup”; the lady was right.”

Ma was silently watching me. I was looking at her somewhat uneasily. She was looking at me, as if in a different way. I felt love and affection was being showered all over me.

After that Ma left a deep breath and said — “Listen, long long time, — ages ago, at one time I was in that country. At that time, this Mother and others used to be around me. This time I have come; She has also come at the same time, but in different countries. However, we have contact even now.

That day when you were waiting at the Nice Airport for your plane, your behaviour to the Mother was very right. That is how one should behave with them. You did it beautifully with sincerity and respect. When going away, the Mother blessed you; that was natural, the way they normally do. She was satisfied with your behaviour, specially thanked you and prayed for God’s blessings.

This side, it occurred to me that there was a major

accident at the Milan Airport and air services in the area had completely broken down. This side, you had no stock of 'Prayer' and 'Jap', and your normal life had been upset due to irregular movements and food taken outside. There was more consumption of inner strength than you could afford. Then I sent message to the Mother to help you. That is why she came back and gave you adequate amount of strength through sight. Then it was seen that due to the turmoil in that area, the plane which had been allotted for you in a hurry had not been tested properly and it will enter an airpocket. Immediately that message was also conveyed. The Mother hurriedly returned for the second time and blessed you for a safe and happy journey".

Wonderstruck, I was looking at the face of Shree Shree Ma. Words failed me, — it was beyond my comprehension to understand what Ma was saying, — what was she trying to convey !

Ma in a low tone, easy voice and with a sweet smile, lightly said these few words — "As these days you have your telegraph, telephone, wireless — and many other things, we have also similar arrangements. As your problems had not come to my attention earlier, it became necessary to take help from that Mother. That's all". Ma was at ease and smiled sweetly.

Astonished and wonder-struck, I kept gaping at the face of Ma.

Jai Ma

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# Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee As I Have Seen Her Known Her

Sasanka Chandra Bhattacharyya\*

Ma Anandamayee, — is She Omniscient knows what is there in one's mind ? After She left her body, — what we normally call death, — is She there ? Probably yes, — why probably, certainly so. Otherwise, I was not expected to write this article. A few days ago, one of the Senior Executives of the Publication Division at Matrimandir told me that when performing his "Prayer and Meditation", it occurred to him that I might as well be asked to write something about the Great Mother. This is like a line in the Bengali version of "Lord Krishna's Hundred Names", — the name Krishna occurred to "Ganga" during meditation. The Executive further told me that the reason for requesting me was that for about 45 years, I have seen Ma, known Her and heard Her speaking. Therefore, I was a qualified person for the job.

To occur my name to someone during meditation is somewhat surprising, but not quite so. Because, for sometime it has come to my mind that I may write something about Ma. I shall do so if the authorities request me.

Simultaneously, I realised that I have no real right for the task. Why should they ask me ? I am not an initiated 'Devotee' of the Ashram. I have reservation against ritualistic religion and also "Sadhus and Sants". This is known to them.

After that the unexpected happened, what should not have come materialised. A request came for an article. Instruction from Ma, — what else can I call it ? It only

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\*This is the English translation of the corresponding article in Bengali written by the same author.

means that Ma is Omniscient and has found the secret desire of my mind. My reservation about religion, Sadhus and Sants remains, but I have great fascination and admiration for Ma Anandamayee. I have not seen another like Her.

After this also, a little introduction is necessary. I came in contact with Ma Anandamayee through my wife, Srimati Gita Bhattacharyya. In her early childhood, when she was only 6-7 years old, during 1936-1937, she came to know Shree Shree Gurupriya Devi and Ma Anandamayee and had very intimate association with them. She has received immesurable benediction, kindness and affection from Ma.

I married Gita Devi in 1950. Happenings of the earlier 20 years I have heard from her and others. For the next 45 years I stand as the direct visual evidence. Her dedication to Ma is so instinctive and deep that nothing more is possible. That is how I think. It almost borders insanity. But I have heard and read that truly dedicated "Bhaktas" are like that. It is not an easy job to manage this tribe. She has written a book —

শ্রী শ্রী আনন্দময়ী মায়ের পদপ্রান্তে — At the feet of Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma". It has received appreciation from the devotees.

I have been born in a "highclass" Brahmin family. My forefathers, many of them were eminent scholars in Sanskrit Literature and Scriptures. They were knowledgeable and learned persons. Brahmins in general have made immense contribution to religion, philosophy, arts, literature and culture. Simultaneously, I have seen that they have kept all the Non-Brahmins as untouchables or almost so. Consequently, even during my teen-age, I started developing reservation against ritualistic Brahminical culture. This increased further, as I developed association with a group of moralist young people. They again did not have faith in non-violent nationalistic

movement. Let us leave it at that.

After passing the preliminary examinations, I joined the Dacca University in 1938 for Post-Graduate studies. I was a resident of the Dacca Hall. The spacious ground of 'Ramna' was near the Hall. One day I went there with several friends. There was a small beautiful temple there — Ma Anandamayee's Ashram. There was a photo of Ma Anandamayee hanging on the wall. She was standing with the flat of her feet dipped in water. I heard later that this photo had been taken in the sea-beach of Coxbazar. We have a copy of that photo in our house. It is a beautiful photo beautiful in all respects. By count of number Ma was 44 years old in 1938. The photo had been taken earlier. Ma had a beautiful and pleasant appearance. You like it when you see it, you feel happy about it.

Another 12 years passed in India and abroad in acquiring education at different levels. Beginning had been there earlier, but by that time I had become deeply associated with socialistic ideas. Reading/studying had become a profession, addition and, in due course, almost a passion.

In 1950, after completing my studies abroad. I returned and in the month of May that year got married to Gita Devi in Calcutta. There was a large, beautiful photo hanging above our head on the wall of the bridal room. I was informed by Gita Devi that the photo was that of Ma Anandamayee. Two of us discussed about many matters. I informed her about my reservations about religion, Sadhus and Sants. Even then, after our discussion, one day, early in the morning, we went to meet Ma. At that time Ma Anandamayee was in Calcutta.

It was too early, the door of Ma's room was closed. Initially, Gurupriya Devi came out and talked to us. She then escorted us to Ma's room. Ma was sitting on the bed. She talked about many matters with both of us. She explained to us the meaning of my name Sasanka. Sasanka



means moon and it decorates the forehead of Shiva. She told Gita Devi — “You have got a husband like Shiva”. For obvious reason, I was feeling uneasy. At that time I did not attach so much importance to Ma’s statement, but now, after a gap of a long period, it appears to me that, perhaps, She saw something in me. She was not the person who will make a “so so” general statement.

At that time alone, I felt that Ma had very special affection for Gita Devi. Ma gave me a new Dhuti and asked me to wear it. Initially, after entering the room I made “Namashkar” to Ma with folded hands and did so again when returning and came out of the room. At that time alone, a destitute-looking lady entered Ma’s room with her sick child in her arms. She prayed for Ma’s blessings for the recovery of her child. Ma looked at the child but said nothing. The incident stuck to my leftist mind as preferential treatment, indicating favouritism to us.

After our marriage, we went to Bangalore, my place of work. We talked a great deal. After sometime my wife came to Calcutta and went to meet Ma at the “Ekdalia Ashram”. I learnt later that after their meeting and talk that day, Ma told my wife — “Ma, you should not come here again. Your husband is a believer in ‘Communist Principles’ to some extent and does not have so much faith in religion-religious activities, Sadhus and Sants. One has to maintain peace in the Family”. My wife came out of the room, shattered and baffled. Such a situation was unthinkable for her.

After lapse of a period, we shifted from Bangalore to Pune. I joined the National Chemical Laboratory there. After some time, Ma came to Pune. A colleague of mine in the Laboratory was a “Bhakta” of Ma Anandamayee. Ma conveyed through him that I should take Gita to Her. The instruction was specially meant for me. Gita Devi, initially did not want to go. But, I explained to her that

the restriction imposed by Ma has been removed by Ma herself. She has instructed me to take you to Her. Now there is no restriction for you to go and meet Ma.

From then onwards, with Gita Devi, and later on with our children, we had Ma's "Darshan", many times in many places, — Pune, Bombay, Calcutta, Benaras, Kankhal etc. It was necessary to go, for if I had not taken, it would not have been possible for Gita Devi to meet Ma. To take them to Ma, — the responsibility naturally fell on me. I have observed that to the best of my ability.

My allergy towards ritualistic religion remained as before, but my feelings about Ma started gradually changing. Initially, I did "Namashkar" to her with folded hands, then started bending down and finally did so by touching her feet. You may say, there was an evolutionary change.

During the early sixties, Ma once came to Pune and stayed at the residence of one of her "Bhakta", — Shree Bhuta. The place was near our colony. Ma occasionally visited the gardens of the National Chemical Laboratory in a car. On one occasion she visited our house and stayed for quite sometime.

After a few days, we went to Shree Bhuta's place to meet Ma in the afternoon. In spite of her many engagements, Ma found sometime, took me aside and discussed with me about the performance of religious activities. She advised me to observe a few of these practices. I did not agree to do anything. Ma, on her own, withdrew her advices and asked me to do as I feel like. My wife was sitting by my side, badly shaken and afraid. To disobey the advice of Ma, — no easy matter, but I did it. It was only natural that she was shaken and scared.

Ma was not happy with my behaviour but I could not also say that she was annoyed or angry. After that also we have gone many times to many places to have "Darshan" of Ma. I always received affection from her.

The behaviour of the arrogant immodest, wayward son was accepted by Her easily. No difference was noticed in the attitude.

Ma had special affection for our family. May be, it was a little more for Gita Devi, — but we others also received much from her. She protected us from danger. My son and myself were saved from certain death by Her. This is how we feel in the family.

My wife Gita Devi is a dedicated disciple who has taken full shelter at the feet of Ma. She cannot ask for anything from Ma. May be, she has received much and, therefore, it does not occur to her to ask for more. Even then, because of the persistant advice of the Mother, probably in a moment of weakness, she suddrely told — “Let my husband become a great scientist”.

Ma said — “Yes, it will be so”.

After that who could stop me ? I advanced quickly, advanced for very far. Those who know me will be able to tell. It was necessary to go a little more, I had that desire. I went upto the entrance door and had to stop there. Ma could have shown me that small consideration ! Alas, that did not happen. May be, I lacked the necessary competence. What can be done ! Helpless, as I was, I remained blocked there. In my mind I am harbouring serious grievance. I shall not be able to forget that easily. There are ways and means to manage worldly matters but Ma is beyond these. My ambition remained unrealised.

My wife, Gita Devi, initially took “Deeksha” from Gurupriya Devi in 1936-1937, when she was only 6-7 years old. This must have happened at the instance of the Mother. This was at Bindhyachal. Subsequently, in 1972, she again took “Deeksha” from Ma Anandamayee at Bhaiya’s place (Shree B.K. Shah) in Bombay. I created no obstacle, helped her in all possible ways. At that time Gurupriya Devi came out and wanted to know from me whether I shall take “Deeksha” along with my wife. I did



not agree to do so. Again disobeying the Mother ! But, there is something after that also !

Extra serious "Bhaktas" like Gita Devi have many problems. One does not know when these will appear and in what form. Many a time, Ma has told her, — "If you have difficulties, consult your husband, follow his advice. You should know that he is more intellegent than you". "Bhaktas" may try to understand. It appears, Ma had confidence in the obstinate, arrogant, wayword son. Is not it ? What do you say !

After "Deeksha" Gita Devi was somewhat baffled for sometime. I took her to Benaras to meet Ma. We were there for a few days. During the day Gita Devi spent most of her time at the 'Ashram', — often in the company of Ma. The day came when we were to return to Bombay. The night before, I had a dream, — Ma herself was arranging and organising my suit case. Was it only a dream or there was something else ! What Ma was trying to convey ? I know the answer but won't tell you.

Once I tested the capacity of Ma. She passed the test effortlessly. Ma had come to 'Bhaiya's place in Bombay. People in thousands were coming to have 'Darshan' of Ma. I had an impression that since I go with my wife Gita Devi, Ma is able to recognise me; otherwise, she may be unable to do so. One day, alone, I got mixed up with the crowd and stood in the line. In due course I stood in front of Ma. She correctly recognised me and started gossiping with me. That there was a long line of people behind me, she was least concerned about it. I learnt my lesson.

Now I am coming to the end of the story. Earlier, in one place, I have written — "I have not met one like Her". This needs a little elaboration.

If one analyses the history of the past three or four hundred years, no one in Northern India during his or her life time enjoyed the status and prestige comparable to that of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee people have loved

and respected her, as if with their life. The Bengali Community almost used to go mad. Shree Ramkrishna Paramhansa Dev also enjoyed lot of respect during his life-time but actual elaboration took place after his death through the efforts of Swami Vivekananda and others. Ma Sharada Devi also enjoyed unlimited respect.

The Indian "Sadhu-Community" is exclusively male-dominated. It is very difficult for a "Sanyasini-a Lady" to find a place. In the case of Ma Anandamayee this impossible factor became possible. I have seen at Kankhal, Sadhujis, — Heads of Ashrams, Organisations; communities bowing down and paying homage to Ma. They were seemingly in a melted state.

And Ma's style of speaking was incomparable ! She never lectured standing before a mike. Her discourses were in the form of dialogue. On occasions she started on her own, or the devotees asked questions and she answered and discussed. Language was easy, simple and blowing; selection of words always appropriate. Her style of expression was superb. Nothing can be better than that. I had the opportunities to listen to many talented persons, both in India and abroad, I have not seen or heard one like Her; it just does not happen. You have only to accept that God is there and He is merciful. After that you will understand everything. Warning, — avoid the scholars. They themselves do not understand anything, how will they explain to others ? In the language of Shree Ramkrishna Paramhansa Dev, they have not the official stamp, licence from the almighty to speak. On the top of that, if the speaker has the vanity of learning then you are gone.

We are coming back to Ma. A girl from a small village in the easternmost part of East-Bengal. She studied a little in the Village Primary School. That she was a good student is recorded in more than one book.

But a girl who had studied in a village primary school,

how could she acquire so much competence, wherefrom it came ? I have heard Mother speaking many times, only as a listener, never asked questions. Ma was equally at ease in both the languages, — Bengali and Hindi. Words were coming out like a flowing spring.

A poem in Bengali read ages ago comes to my mind (A somewhat poor English rendering is given below. Readers, I hope will excuse me).

You are a talkative girl of the hills with quick-silver complexion. Spring, you move from stone to stone jumping. Your graceful rhythm and beauty are like that of a fairy. You seen through the pebbles in enchanting glory. The giant hills lie prostrate at your feet.

Ma Anandamayee's mode of speaking was like that of a flowing spring, — full of poetic beauty. Ma's laughter was also like that, — the ripples of a spring, — ecstatic, unusual, like sweet music. Have you heard it ? If you have, when Ma was in her earthly form, then you have been fortunate. If you have not, there is a tape available. Purchase it. When you hear it you will be enchanted, relieved from bondage. No small matter. What else can one want ?

Then, Ma Anandamayee's identity. Don't try to know it, understand it. "Impossible" cannot be brought within reach. Known Ma as Ma, Call her as Ma. This presentation of Her is most beautiful and sweet. You need not do anything else. You will directly receive your results. Finally, protect yourself from learned scholars.

There is a little more. It is desirable to have an biography of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee. One who will write it should be a "Bhakta" as well as a man of literature. Professor Bireswar Gangapadhaya is the right person. If the devotees make a joint appeal to him he may agree. Books written by Shree Shree Gurupriya Devi and Bhaiji will be good source-material.

With Ma as the central figure, several Ashrams and

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Organisations have come up in different parts of India. The 'Bhaktas' desire that the Sadhu's and Sanyasinis of the Ashram will take it upon themselves to run these organisations efficiently.

Jai Ma

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