

ANANDA VARTA

*

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

Vol. XXXIV ● OCTOBER, 1997 ● No. 4

CONTENTS

1.	Matri-Vani	...	1-2
2.	Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi—Tarakini	...	3-9
3.	A Tribute to Joy Ma—Sm. Ruby Ghatak		11-13
4.	Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma —Nigam Kumar Chacraverti	...	15-21
5.	Sai Ram Sahay—M. Rama Rao	...	22-24
6.	In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee — Sri Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta	...	25-29
7.	Mother Anandamayi	...	30
8.	Toward an understanding of Mataji's Teaching	...	31-40

आनन्द वार्ता

Vol. XXXIV ● OCTOBER, 1997 ● No. 4

: सूची :

१.	मातृवाणी	...	४१-४२
२.	श्रीश्रीमां आनन्दमयी प्रसंग	...	४३-५३
३.	मातृ-सत्संग--स्वामी भागवतानन्द गिरि	...	५४-७३

Truth itself will assist in every way him who has gone forth in Search of Truth.

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

There is no sin born out of any deed, word or thought which is not destroyed by the power of Nama.

Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath

By courtesy of :

M/s. Universal Consortium of Engineers Pvt. Ltd.

266, Russa Road (South), Calcutta-700 033

Phone No. 473-6907, 473-6070, 473-6170, 473-5555



Yes, if you can observe silence and be in harmony with everyone all round, it will be excellent. Try to remain without the help of signs and gestures as long as possible.

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Nama is the best Bhakti (devotion) Nama is the best ending Nama is the best Japa, Nama is the best Prayer.

Sri Sri Sitaramdas Onkarnath

By Courtesy of :

M/s. New York Mica Products, INC

258, Longstreet Avenue, Bronx

NY 10465,

U.S.A.

MATRI-VANI

He who is your Guru is the Guru of the whole world and the One who is the Guru of the whole world is your Guru. Strictly avoid the company of those who awaken doubt in your own Guru.



In times of adversity and distress as well as in times of well-being and good fortune try to seek refuge in the One alone. Keep in mind that whatever He, the all-beneficent, the Fountain of Goodness, does, is wholly for the best.



It is man's duty to try and cultivate faith and devotion. Blows are characteristic of life in the world; thus man is taught to understand what the world is, and then detachment from pleasure and enjoyment ensues.



God is the support of the helpless. Time cannot pass in one way only. Abide in patience. Just as when having tumbled down, one rises up again by supporting oneself on the very ground to which one has fallen, even so never remain without Him. Pray to your Ista for His revelation.

When asking for worldly goods, happiness and comforts, one will be disappointed time and again; this only creates distrust in one's Ista and in God. But to pray to God for His own sake and to the Ista

for His revelation, leads to peace and faith.



He who would find Immortality must at every moment try to look upon all things as manifestations of the Supreme Being. The search after Truth is indeed man's duty, so that he may attain to THAT which is immortal.



The empire of the mind is enclosed by the body. Even though you may desire to turn the mind inward, will it voluntarily renounce its empire? To divide, to wander backwards and forwards again and again constitutes its natural movement. But your sole duty is to realize; Thou alone art within and without, in want and emptiness, in fact in all circumstances whatever. In order to destroy the undersirable (anista) one must focus one's mind on the invocation of the Beloved, the one desired (Ista)



The faithful devotee, the ardent lover of God, the ascetic, the great yogi—all are pilgrims on the path to the Supreme; The revelation of their forgotten SELF, of His touch, their common goal.



Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Vol-VI

Translated by U. Tara Kini

May 8, Sunday

There was no news today. My mind was filled with anxiety about what Ma was doing, where she would go, what she would do and many other such doubts.

We had to reach Dhaka before Ma's birthday; this was Ma's order. Therefore we could not tarry much longer here. The festivities had begun on May 2 and were supposed to go on for eighteen days. On the last day, after the worship is performed on the Krishna Chaturthi morning, the sanctum sanctorum of Sri Kali Ma's temple is opened. The public is allowed to enter for *darshan*. After sunset the temple is closed to the public, cleaned and oblations and worship offered to the idol. This arrangement had been initiated by Ma. At three a.m., the hour of Ma's birth, worship commences. At the end of the *puja a yajna* (sacrificial fire) is performed at dawn. The *tithi puja* is also performed on the next day followed by *Kali puja* and then the sanctum sanctorum is closed - this has been the schedule.

This evening I received a letter from Yogesh Dada which he had written the day after we left. The letter said, "Didi, on the night after you left, Bholanath called for you. The next morning again he enquired about you and finally Ma told him, 'I have sent Khukuni to some place.'" Ma then asked Ma for Didima, 'where is your mother?' Ma replied, 'I have sent her also to same place. For your welfare.' That night when Bholanath asked for avataru, Ma said, 'Ma received a letter from his home asking him to come. I have sent him away. Did I not do well?' In reply Bholanath said, 'You did well.' "

In the letter he also wrote, "Now Bholanath calls out to Ma as 'Ma, Ma!' all the time. As soon as Ma went and lay down in his room he said, 'Where is Ma ? I am calling Her again and again, but Ma has not come.' When Ma stood before him he called out, 'Ma, Ma!' Ma responded

and seeing her one would feel there was no illness at all.”

This evening the news of Bholanath's death was broken to Didima. We consoled her as best as we could. In spite of the unbearable grief in my own heart I am consoing her. I keep thinking of the enormous blow that has been dealt to Didima in her old age. There is no solution. The decree of destiny to be endured with bowed heads.

May 9, Monday

This morning we received a reply to our telegram. Ma is well. She has shown no change in her behaviour. We have to go as per Ma's orders. We are leaving for Calcutta today by the six p.m. train.

May 10, Tuesday

We reached Calcutta at eight a.m. today. We first went to Shachi Dada's house to drop his sister. To got delayed due to our telling them about Ma and Bholanath. We then took Didima to her house. It is *ekadashi* (the eleventh day of the lunar calendar) today. After partaking of some refreshments at Didima's house we set out at one thirty p.m., visited a couple of houses and then reached Birla's Shiva temple. After sunset Ramratan Babu, Gopinath Babu, Shachi Babu, Jotish Babu and family came to meet us. We conversed till eleven p.m. Shachi Babu told us that Naresh Babu had written from Dehradun to say that after Bholanath's death, his body had been taken to Haridwar and given '*salil samadhi*'. Ma is keeping well and shows no change in her behaviour. There were no further details about Ma.

Jotish Dada narrated an incident. A few days ago his youngest daughter Butu had a dream in which she saw herself in a Kali temple. To the right of the deity she saw Sri Sri Anandamayi kneeling. The priest gave Butu flowers for Kali *puja*. Then she recited the *santra* and offered the flowers at the feet of the deity she observed that the flowers went and fell at the feet of Anandamayi Ma. This roused a doubt in Butu's mind. She thought to herself, "I offer flowers at Kali Ma's feet but they fall at

Anandamayi's feet. How is his happening?" Then she recited the *mantra* carefully again, and devoutly offered the flowers at Kali Ma's feet, praying that she should certainly accept the offering this time. But she saw that once more the floral offering fell at Anandamayi Ma's feet. Her doubts are now cleared. Immediately after this she woke up.

Shachi Babu came at night and said, "Naresh has written from Dehradun to his brother Rupesh. The letter gives the information that Bholanath's body was taken to Haridwar and given *salil samadhi*. There is no change in Ma's behaviour." There was no other news.

I remembered that in Haridwar, during *Kumbha Mela*, around midnight, when everyone was sleep. I was seated near Ma when she suddenly said, "Call Bholanath". I called him and stood outside the room as Ma talked to him. But from the very next day Bholanath started calling us all, "You will not have me here much longer. Just see what I shall do on the sing *sankranti* day." I guessed that Ma had said something to this effect, the night before Shankarananda Swami told Ma. "Baba (Bholanath) is saying all sorts of things." Ma replied, "He hardly does so with his own will. Last night we had a conversation on these lines." Whatever Bholanath may have said, he was certainly unable to do anything.

Later, during Bholanath's illness, Ma was seated in her room in the Dehradun *ashram*. Phani Babu, Bhupati Dada and we were all seated near her. When the conversation turned towards Bholanath Ma said, "When it is said that without the appearance of such and such there will occur a bad event as you people call it, sometimes Bholanath does not pay attention to it; he ignores what is said and behaves as he feels like doing. Just see, during the Kumbha in Haridwar he was called at midnight and told to do something. He only replied, 'Let us see'. But he did nothing. When I gave him the instruction I knew that he would not follow it, yet the instruction was given. For I observe that though an instruction cannot be followed, an internal *kriya* occurs within the body. It is like stamping an impression, what else? And do you know how it is?"

When the *kheyal* occurs it has to be said. Just as when saliva fills the mouth, it has to be spitted out, it is just that, what else? The *kriya* of that will surely be something."

Later, may be Bholanath remembered this instruction. One night I remember that when Bholanath was suffering intensely from the disease, he called Ma. As soon as she reached his room he said, "Forgive me." Another day Ma said to me when we were alone, "Just look, Bholanath does not have a sacred thread around his neck."

I remember yet another event that took place. Ma had narrated the following incident to me when we were alone. The incident had occurred on our way to Kailash. "Parvati had already decided to take *diksha* from Bholanath. Bholanath stood in the Manasarovar and gave the *mantra* to her. This body was also made to stand there for some time. At that time *mantras* started emanating from the lips of this body and a *kheyal* arose which prompted Bholanath to be told, 'Look, *mantras* are emanating from the lips — will you listen? You have already donned the saffron robes.' Bholanath replied, 'When we were in Uttar Kashi I came across many more *mantras*.' Hearing this statement, this body fell silent. A little later this body moved away and *mantras* continued to emanate from its lips. The next moment Bholanath cried, 'Speak out, speak out, these are *sannyasa mantras*!' and he began to listen to the *mantras* with great joy and concentration. This had occurred with that feeling in that place and therefore a name that carried the essence of 'Brahma is One, there is no second' was given. Even now Bholanath bears that *sannyasa* name. Later, during *purna Kumbha* in Haridwar in that conversation with this body at midnight, this subject was mentioned and he was told to complete his *sannyasa kriya*. He then accomplished all the rituals and on returning he said, 'I have completed the *sannyasa kriya*.' Ma had also been told, 'If possible, it would be well to try remain outside, going here and there.' But this did not happen."

Remembering all this I realised why Bholanath had been given *salil samadhi*. Ma had also mentioned that

Bholanath had wanted to take *sannyasa* in the 'Tirtha' sect. He had, therefore, been sent once to Dehradun to make an attempt to join the *Tirtha* sect but he was unsuccessful.

May 11, Wednesday

Two detailed letters from Bhupati Dada arrived today—one addressed to Shachi Dada and one to me. To me he had written — 'Whatever had to happen has happened. What will happen in the future cannot be predicted. But if you all have any inkling, I know nothing of it. Five days before Baba's death I began going to his room every hour to supervise his nursing care.' (We had ourselves observed this for two or three days before we left). The letter continued, 'Even at the time of his death, Ma was seated near his bed and performed a *kriya* touching Baba's body from his *brahmarandhra** to his forehead. She did this till he breathed his last. There was not the slightest change in Ma's *bhava*; she also did not seem to be disturbed in the least. After Bholanath's death Ma told us about his having taken *sannyasa* on the way to Kailash and revealed to us his *sannyasi* name. Ma told us that she had already narrated this to you.'

In the letter to Shachi Dada, Bhupati Dada had written — 'Bholanath had received the *sannyasa mantra* from Ma in Manasarovar. Ma had given him the name of Tibbatananda Tirtha. Baba's death occurred at nine fifteen p.m. on May 6th 1937 (he left his body at the age of fifty six or fifty seven). The same night Hariram, Jogesh Dada, Sadananda, Shanthi Baba and I went to Haridwar with the body, gave it *jala samadhi* and returned. There is no change in Ma's *bhava*. There is also no change so far as the bangles she wears or her *sindhur* is concerned. The smile on her face, her conversation, her eating habits, all go on as before. That is, there is no change in any aspect of her behaviour. Her *bhava* is changeless, immovable, steadfast. Ma says, "When was I a *sadhva* (married woman with living husband) and when did I become a *vidhava* (woman without husband)? But I am ready for any costume that you would wish to drape on this body. I

know that I exist in only one *Bhava*." Do not worry about Ma at all. As is done for *sannyasins*, on the sixteenth day after the death, that is on 21st May 1937, a *bhandara* (feast) will be given in on Haridwar and here.'

At night Shachi Dada brought a post card written by Jogesh Dada to Kesto Babu. It contained a description of the events on the day of Bholanath's death — 'On the morning of his last day Baba wished to eat rice. Ma herself supervised the preparation of soft rice to be served with the juice of green *gram*. Baba asked, "Has Ma eaten?" I replied, "No", to which Baba said, "First feed Ma". When I told Ma about this, she went to Baba's room and said, "Feed me a little bit". When Ma was given a morsel Baba requested her, "Now you feed me some of it". Ma did so and Baba's countenance brightened. It appeared as if he would then recover. Baba, meanwhile, has been calling out to Ma only as "Ma". Ma has responding with, "This is Ma, is she not?" and going near him. That evening Ma sat at the head of Baba's bed. At nine p.m. she asked for *kirtan* to be sung. We began to sing spot at the top middle of the head. Baba then gave up his body. At three a.m. we took baba's body by motor bus to the Nildhara in Haridwar where we gave it *jala samadhi* (consigned the body to water).'

May 13, Friday

Today we received a letter from Jogesh Dada which read — 'Two or three hours before his death, when the opportunity arose, Ma asked Bholanath, "You remember the *sannyasa mantra* don't you? Baba replied, "I do". Jogesh Dada's letter also carried the following injunctions from Ma :— "Let this event not cause any bodily harm to the duties awaiting you. *Puja, japa, yajna* and other practices must go on according to your schedule." Ma's orders are as unviolable as God's. Her attention is focussed on this matter all the time. She says, "Keep on doing whatever has to be done. Do not look this way and that way." Birth and death are alike to her. Therefore there should arise no hindrance to any work due to birth or death which are after all every day occurrences in creation. I observe

with astonishment that Ma is harder than diamond and yet, at the same time, softer than a flower. Repeatedly she says, "This body responds to whatever you people need, otherwise there is no necessity for its being this way." The truth of this sweet utterance causes everybody to fall at her feet.

May 14, Saturday

Today we left Calcutta. As per Ma's orders we are to reach Dhaka before the festival. Ma's birthday will be celebrated according to the Hindu Calendar on the night of Tuesday, the third day of the Jyeshtha month.

NOTICE/ANNOUNCEMENT

We sincerely regret to inform our Subscription that from the new-year 1998, the annual subscription of our quarterly journal ANANDA-VARTA has been increased from Rs. 40/- to Rs. 60/- only, though the actual cost of printing the journal is much more. We were reluctantly compelled to effect this enhancement to contain the mounting inflation in the cost of paper, printing, binding, postage etc.

Those who have already paid the journal subscription in advance at the old rate of Rs.40/- may kindly remit the balance difference of Rs. 20/- now at their earlist. The life subscription for the journal in any language has also been raised from Rs. 750/- to Rs. 1000/- with effect from January 1998.

Please do note in the front page the increased rate for the foreign countries.

Tapan Bose

General Secretary

Publications Division

1st October, 1997

Jagaddhatri Puja at "Matri-Mandir"

Shree Shree Anandamayee Charitable Society

Calcutta Zonal Office

"Matri Mandir"

47/1, Ballygunge Circular Road,

Calcutta - 700 019

Phone : 474-8504

Dear Brother/Sister,

We have great pleasure in informing you that we have organised Jagaddhatri Puja on the auspicious day of 8th November, 1997, Saturday (Bengali 22nd Kartick, 1404) and on the following day i.e. on the 9th November, 1997, Sunday (Bengali 23rd Kartick 1404) with Special Pujas of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, Shree Shree Onkarnathji & Kumari Puja in MATRI MANDIR. After the Purnahuti the assembled devotees will be entertained with prasads.

We look forward to your active participation in this auspicious programme.

Yours

In the Service of MA, Members
(Executive Council)
Shree Shree Anandamayee
Charitable Society

Dated : The 4th Sept. 1997
(18th Bhadra, 1404)



A Tribute to Joy Ma

Sm. Ruby Ghatak

Happiness is a state of mind according to some. Yet Thomas Hardy had once written 'Happiness is an occasional episode in the general drama of pain.' (Mayor of Casterbridge). In my opinion it depends on the individual self. Some may find pleasure in wining and dining whereas others may find it in just being together in a happy home. The hearth is warmer to such an individual. One cannot always get what he wants in life.

In the Geeta Krishna has given us many options (Chapter XII). He tries to put unto you the fact that He controls the Universe. Now it is upto you as to how you are going to interpret it. Take for instance one of the four music maestros of the fifties — The late Ustad Alauddin Khan saheb. He was almost the age of our Rashtrapita Mahatma Gandhi but he survived upto a ripe old age.

Belonging to Tripura he was the son of a poor Sufi, who worked as a labourer in the tea gardens. From his talented father, he ardently followed the path of his devotion to music and the followings of Shiva. Put to school at the tender age of five he began to play truant. His mother was adamant that he should follow the system of schooling and grow up. His severe chastisements drove him to despair and one night he ran away from home. After a week of hopeless wandering in Dacca and Nabagram, (now Bangladesh) and weeks of starvation, he boarded the train to Calcutta. His paltry belongings got stolen on his way. At last he found a great magnanimous guru in the well known musician Nanu Gopal, who promised to train him in vocal music if Alauddin would follow his instructions meticulously.

Pandit Nandlal agreed to teach him tabla and mridangam. Eating one meal a day, that too in a charity house, sleeping in a medicine shop, Alauddin devoted the

next seven years of his life to the rigorous and constant practice of vocal music. By his single mindedness (constant practice) of purpose and conscientious riyaz he pleased his teachers.

Unluckily, just at the time when all seemed set for a great future his distracted family traced him out and tricked him into marriage with a ten year old hindu girl. On the wedding night itself he fled back to Calcutta only to hear that his beloved guru Nanu Gopal was no more. Stunned by the news he swore to bury his vocal music and devote himself solely to instrumental in future. In the Geeta again the Lord has described inadvertence as one of the good qualities of Bhakti (XIV).

After years of endless roaming about he finally settled down at Maihar — the origin of the tamboora or tanpura as we call it today. It is said that upto his last day of life he climbed the stairs of Sharada Mandir (a form of Shakti) situated there. Today his son Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and son-in-law Pandit Ravi Shankar are famous for their regulated lives.

In Hindu Mythology we come across the various re-births of Shiva. We hear from those stories how much each time Shivas forgetfulness provoked Parboti to bring him to his fits of madness. Sati or Durga is always associated with the various names of Bholanath. The goddess Kali too has been given various names by we human beings. They are basically the same. There is not to deny the fact that someone up there controls the world.

When Arjun saw the endless light glowing from Sri Krishna in Chapter XI (Viswaroop Darshan) he began a long prayer. Part of which is

त्वमादि देवः पुरुषः पुराग, स्तमस्य विश्वस्य पंरनिधान
वेत्तासि वेद्य च पर चधाम त्वया ततं विश्वमऽनन्तरुपम ॥

In the words of Krishna it further goes —
पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य व्वमस्य पूज्यञ्च गुरुर्गशियान
नत्वत्समोस्त्य भ्याधिक कुतोऽन्यो लोकत्रयेप्य प्रतिमप्रभाव
तस्मात् प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं प्रसादयेत्वा महमोश मीडम
पितेव पुत्रस्य सरवेव सख्यु प्रियः प्रियार्याहसी देव सोदुम

(Chant 41 to 44)

In the end Arjun realizes and his amazements know no bounds. We also understand that Krishna is all pervading and with steadfastness of character, discipline and a regulated life we can reach the Ultimate goal.

By the eighteenth day of Kurukshetra battle Arjuns inner eyes were opened. He finally got convinced of the fact that Krishna rules the world. He is called 'Chhalia' by some of his devotees because he does not set any specific rules as to how we should pray to Him. The poet Soordas saw Him though he was blind since birth. Meerabai renounced the pomp and grandeur of the palace in search of her नन्दलाला। She was completely misunderstood by her family because of her whimsical ways. So much so that even Ranaji agreed to poison her although he loved her so much.

With all these simple examples I am trying to put into the fact that we are not responsible of our destiny. He rules Supreme. May it be राम or कृष्णा, अल्ला or Jesus. Everything in this material world of today is transient. We can only plan but someone up there whom we call by different names rules the world. What will happen tomorrow nobody can predict. Of course today science has proved it otherwise. Astrologers, palmists and other thought readers can predict an outline of our lives and part of it may prove to be true. He is omniscient, omnipotent and all pervading. So let us join hands and together pray to Him in our own respective languages.

वंशीविभूषित करान्नवनीर दाभात्य
 पीताम्बरा दरुणा बिम्ब फलाधरोष्ठान ।
 पूरन्दि सुन्दरम मुखादरविन्दु नेत्रात
 कृष्णात्परम किमपि
 तत्वमअहं नजाने ॥

REMINDER

Re : Renewal of Annual Subscription of ANANDA-VARTA for 1998

Dear Brother/Sister,

Kindly note that with this October, 1997 issue your annual subscription for ANANDA-VARTA ends. You are so requested to renew your subscription for the year 1998 and remit the required fees to reach this office on or before the 31st of December, 1997 without fail—in order to enable us to mail your journal regularly from January 1998. Subscriptions are to be sent to the undernoted address either by M.O. or by DRAFT only on any Calcutta Bank along with your Subscription Number and present address.

Rate of annual subscription

(including postage) for India,
Nepal & Bangladesh

Rs.60/-

Other Countries :

(including Europe & America)

By Sea Mail

\$ 14.00 or £ 9.00

By Air Mail

\$ 26.00 or £ 17.00

Life Membership Fee :

(for each language including postage)

For India, Nepal &

Bangladesh only

Rs.1000/- or \$300.00 £ 200.00

In case, you have already paid your renewal fee in advance please ignore this reminder which is being issued as a routine to all our subscriptions.

This also carries our best of wishes and Vijaya/Diwali greetings to you. You are sincerely requested to contribute your experience when and how you came in touch with MA. We gladly publish that in our English Ananda Varta.

Sri Tapan Bose

General Secretary

Shree Shree Anandamayee

Charitable Society

October, 1997

Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma

Nigam Kumar Chacraverti

Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma was not an emissary but an incarnation of God. That has been the realisation of her devotees by and large. It hardly matters how many of them were erudite scholars. What sages have realised throughout ages has descended to the posterity and the human mind carries the bliss of their knowledge. The identity of Godhood is ingrained in the souls of human being and despite existence of very many contrary currents the souls wake up to acclaim their recognition of a divine being. One who has seen Mother has known her identity.

There is no difference between the creator and the creation. All that exists in manifestation and all that is not manifest but still exists constitute the Infinite Being, who is capable of appearing in any form at any moment without diminishing the infiniteness of the rest of the creation. Ma represented that unique infiniteness of the sole Infinite Being in a human form and needed no introduction. She knew all, saw everything and could do anything which appeared to her worth doing and she moved as she liked. When somebody appeared before her or attracted her attention, she could at once recognise the person, not only as he or she was in the present life but all throughout the cycle of births. She recognised the soul in sojourn in the vast dimension of Time and Space.

It is not possible to describe even one's own comprehension about such an embodiment of Infinity. That is why people write about their experience in meeting her and the conversation that had with her, which is also a difficult task as I feel about it, I, therefore, prefer to express some of the feelings that inspire me to think of her or in writing about her. It has been said by a learned person that talking to a friend is thinking aloud. Sometimes I feel that thinking about Mother is thinking silently. She appears to be so close that words need no vibration. When I write about her, my thoughts move in a different

way and sometimes I have to recollect. Ma preached Bhakti and inspired the devotees to join the chanting of divine songs. She explained all aspects of divine manifestation in simple words with deep affection to the devotees. She was adored by the common man as also the religious order alike. The scholars failed to fathom the depth of her knowledge. A person like me can not even express his humble feelings about such a phenomenal manifestation of Divinity in human form.

God has come down to earth in human form through ages to preach love, morality and virtues, which men and women in this mundane sphere are apt to forget about in pursuit of material achievements and prosperity, thereby drawing an artificial divide between the creator and his creation. The human soul emanating from the great Divine Soul, the consciousness in the living creatures manifesting from the universal consciousness and the essential tie of the creation with the creator get lost in the illusion shrouding the creation. Nevertheless the said eternal bond continues to exist. People have to be reminded time and again about this eternal truth, so that they do not get distracted from the path of their eternal pursuit through ages for their ultimate union with the Great Creator. The oneness with the creator has to be felt at every step, it is His work that we do here, it is His song that we sing and it is His eternity that we cherish. The apparent duality has to merge in the unity of His Being. All these can be achieved through a process of Yoga, which again can not succeed without Bhakti i.e. a sense of complete devotion and unqualified dependence on His omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. Ma came here to enlighten us, to awaken us and to light the dormant fire in our inner being and to say "Know thyself".

Ma is Anandamayee — the apostle of joy, Sachchidanandamayee — the apostle of eternal joy. God himself is the repository of all joy — Brahmananda. It is boundless joy. It is that joy which inspires the soul to seek and meet its source. It is manifested in the creation in all its diversities. It is transformed into Bhakti, which joins the devoted soul to the universal soul — Paramatma,

The duality merges into the infinite oneness — Adwaita. Tagore's realisation expressed in ecstatic Bengali words will read something like this in humble words in English used by me without any serious attempt to translate, which I am quite incompetent to do.

That's why your joy rests on me
That's why you have descended
Without me, O Lord of the Universe,
Thy joy would have been in vain.

You have spread out this fair with me alone
With my heart overflowing with emotions
In my very existence 'tis thy will
Which is vibrating in diverse tune.

That's why although being the King of Kings
You are roaming about in fascinating attire, O Lord,
Only to win my heart
Always is awakened State.

That's why, O Lord, wherever has descended
Thy love upon the love of the devoted soul
In that unification of the two
'Tis thy image which is fully manifest there.

It is this merger which brings about the transformation of soul. That's why God descends both in form and in abstraction. Ma also descended like that. She has distributed love and affection, the recipients have felt the connection of their soul with the eternal ethos, some have advanced towards the knot, some are on the way, the goal they must all reach.

One who has seen Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma has seen her in her eternal joy. All melancholy in a person's mind disappeared in her presence. It gave way to positive feelings of serenity, joy and achievement.

"Yam labdhwa chaparan labham
Manyate nadhikam tatah

Yasmin sthitey na dukkhena
Gurunapi vichalyatey”

The above sloka in Shreemat Bhagavat Geeta speaks of that achievement which makes one feel that there is nothing better to gain, of a state of mind wherein no grave misery can produce any restlessness. Ma's "darshan" produced a feeling like that at least for some time. Earthly beings as we are, we are normally not capable of retaining that disposition for ever without Sadhana by following the path advised by the Guru. But even that moment's spark can cause ignition, if one is ready for that at that particular moment. Ma used to say that the Divine Bliss is constantly powering on us, we have to hold it by unfolding our receptacles.

Ma was the embodiment of Param Brahma, the Supreme Divine Power. It once so happened that after I had a brief meeting with her in the room on the first floor of Agarpara Ashram near Calcutta, where she was staying on the occasion of some utsav (celebration) and was about to leave having had her blessings, someone came and informed Mother that some monks of Raman Maharshi's Ashram were waiting for a meeting with her. She nodded and in no time the Sadhus appeared and paid their respects to her. Ma asked them to sit and looked at me standing nearby. I had a feeling that she desired me to stay on and so I did. The conversation of the Sadhus with Mother started, in course of which Ma came to the topic of Brahma and Param Brahma. I was listening with great attention with a deep sense of gratitude for having been provided with the opportunity of being present on such an unique occasion. Ma said that Brahma was everywhere, every soul represented Brahma. Then pointing out to herself she said that Brahma has merged in Param Brahma in that body. Then she said that Param Brahma is there at the top of the head of every person. She proceeded further to say that she wondered when somebody after offering "Pranam" to that body (i.e. to her) requests her to place her hand on his head. Then looking at me for a moment smilingly she said that such a prayer is made

by treating her as Guru only. I was enlightened. Then after the Sadhus did their "Pranam" to take leave of her, I fell on her feet with a great realisation and did not have to ask her to place her hand on my head. I do not actually remember what happened. that is not of much importance. What I listened from her, what I realised from that and what feelings I had while on her feet, what She conveyed to me with a smiling face when I took leave of her are invaluable assets. When I came down, Dr. Gunen Roy asked me how a Swastik mark of red colour came on my forehead, I thought he was joking, when he drew the attention of my wife, who was standing at a distance. She too could find such a mark on my forehead. I could not find or offer any explanation and took it to be Mother's Blessings.

The message I got from Ma on the above occasion was itself a great blessings. I could understand in a moment what she actually meant to convey and what I am required to do. How far have I been successful in proving worthy to the same I do not know. I have met Ma on subsequent occasions when she must have assessed that. It may be that I am still being assessed. There have been many ups and downs in life and I feel that she is keeping me under constant vigil. Material prosperity is only incidental, spiritual upliftment can not be achieved without the guidance of Guru. I must say that what Mother used say about "Ishta" appearing as Guru at the proper time is a truth capable of appreciation only when Guru so desires.

Just as Ma used to say about the mother's knowledge about her children — she knows what food is good for a particular one and what for the other one — Ma as Jaganmata and Jagatguru knew all about the creation and the creatures. She prescribed that particular path to a particular devotee, which would suit him or her to develop to the higher state for having access to "Jnana" and "Param Jnana". When I met her for the first time at Varanasi in the year 1957, amongst other advice that she gave me, she asked me to read "Geeta". In course of study of "Geeta" I learnt things I never knew, besides under-

standing properly many things which I had known earlier by reading the book on my own. There is much yet to learn and understand. This clue to the eternal process is part of the process itself. It reminds me of a particular passage in chapter 13 of Sri Aurobindo's "Essays on Gita", which, too, I read after my meeting with Ma in 1957, as aforesaid. It goes on like this :

"The Soul and Nature are only two aspects of the eternal Brahman, an apparent duality which founds the operations of his universal existence. The Soul is without origin and eternal, Nature too is without origin and eternal; but the modes of Nature and the lower forms she assumes to our conscious experience have an origin in the transactions of these two entities. They came from her, wear by her, the outward chain of cause and effect, doing and the results of doing, force and its workings, all that is here transient and mutable. Constantly they change and the soul and Nature seem to change with them, but in themselves these two powers are eternal and always the same. Nature creates and acts, the Soul enjoys her creation and action; but in this inferior form of her action She turns this enjoyment into the obscure and petty figures of pain and pleasure. Forcibly the soul, the individual Purusha, is attracted by her qualitative workings and this attraction of her qualities draws him constantly to births of all kinds in which he enjoys the variation and vicissitudes, the good and evil of birth in Nature. But it is only the outward experience of the soul mutable in conception by identification with mutable Nature. Seated in this body is her and our Divinity, the Supreme Self, Paramatman, the Supreme Soul, the mighty Lord of Nature, who watches her action, sanctions her operations, upholds all she does, commands her manifold creation, enjoys with his universal delight this play of her figures of his own being. That is the self-knowledge to which we have to accustom our mentality before we can truly know ourselves *as an eternal portion of the Eternal*. Once that is fixed, no matter how the soul in us may comport itself outwardly

in its transactions with Nature, whatever it may seem to do or however it may seem to assume this or that figure of personality and active force and embodied ego, it is in itself free, no longer bound to birth because one through impersonality of self with the inner unborn spirit of existence. *That impersonality is our union with the Supreme egoless I of all that is cosmos,*" (emphasis supplied).

Ma has shown me the path and now she has set me to write. I shall be writing so long as she desires me to do so. Both of us got her Blessings together at Dehra Dun Ashram in May, 1967. She completed her "Karma" and crossed the mortal barrier. The two souls united by Mother's Blessings are now on two sides of that magnetic line in everlasting unison with the eternal entity.

Jai Ma ! Jai Ma !! Jai Ma !!!

Sai Ram Sahay

Grihsta (Householder) and Perfect Master

If a man leads only the married life with his wife children and relations he is called grihsta but if a man leads his life worldly and spiritually he is called the perfect grihsta. (Perfect man).

Let us study first a man's worldly life.

A man and a woman marry. For him, she becomes "My Wife". For her, he becomes "My husband". They rear up a family. He calls them "My children". She also calls them "My children". Now, in addition to working for the appeasement of his own eleven organs, he also has to work for the appeasement of the hunger and thirst of his "My wife" and "My children". She also, in addition to working for quenching the thirst of her own sense-organs, has to work to fulfil the hunger of her "My husband" and "My children". The wheel goes on rotating and rotating.

They want a 'My house' and they have to work for it. He wants to earn a (good or bad) name and he has to work for it. The individual wants to gain more and more power-physical, social and political and he must work for it. All this work apparently ends in the death of the individual. But no ! he has to reap the fruits in the births to come and he has to carry the impressions with him wherever he happens to be re-born.

(Call of Gita)

Text 17

Evam grhesu saktanam
pramattanam tad-ihaya
atyakramad avijnatah
kalah parama-dustarah

Translation

Insurmountable, eternal time imperceptibly overcomes those who are too much attached to family affairs and are always engrossed in their thought.

Purport

"I am now happy: I have everything in order: my bank balance is quite enough: I can now give my children enough estate: I am now successful: the poor beggar sannyasis depend on God, but they come to beg from me: therefore I am more than the Supreme God". These are some of the thoughts which engross the insanely attached householder who is blind to the passing of eternal time. Our duration of life is measured, and no one is able to enhance it even by a second against the schedule time ordained by the supreme will. Such valuable time, especially for the human being, should be cautiously spent because even a second passed away imperceptibly cannot be replaced, even in exchange for thousands of golden coins amassed by hard labour. Every second of human life is meant for making an ultimate solution to the problems of life, i.e. repetition of birth and death and revolving in the cycle of 8,400,000 different species of life. The material body, which is subject to birth and death, diseases and old age, is the cause of all sufferings of the living being, otherwise the living being is eternal: he is never born, nor does he ever die. Foolish persons forget this problem. They do not know at all how to solve the problems of life, but become engrossed in temporary family affairs not knowing that eternal time is passing away imperceptibly and that their measured duration of life is diminishing every second, without any solution to the big problem, namely repetition of birth and death, disease and old age. This is called illusion.

Srimad-Bhagavatam (Contol, Ch.13)

The pond in the forest was full of lotus plants, many of them in bloom. Bees were buzzing around the flowers. One big black bumble-bee (bhramara) was so absorbed in enjoying nectar that it lost all sense of time. Soon the sun set, darkness crept in, the petals of the lotus flower started closing. But intoxicated with the nectar, the bee was not aware of what was happening. When at last it came to its senses, it found itself trapped inside the closed flower. It then thought: 'Very soon the night will pass, the

rosy dawn will come, the sun will rise, and this beautiful lotus will open again. And...' But alas! just then an elephant, which had come to the pond to drink water, pulled out the lotus and chewed the flower, bee and all. To be absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure and, when difficulties come, to dream of a better future, only to see one's hopes vanishing in the gullet of the great guzzler, Time—this is how human life is mostly spent.

The life of every human being is filled with desires. Most of these can never be fulfilled and have therefore to be suppressed, ignored or transcended. We can hope to have only some of our desires satisfied. Even out of these only a few actually attain fruition. We ponder and plan, struggle and compete experience and experiment, hope and dream, pray and worship. Yet very often our calculations go wrong, the edifice of our 'great expectations' comes tumbling down and the goal slips through our fingers. In other words, we often fail.

(Prabhudha-Bharata 1983).

Generally man is trapped in the web of his own desires.

In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

Sri Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

(Translated from Bengali)

(Continued from Previous Issue)

After the ninth 9th Vaisakh of 1353 (San). I had not had the pleasure of having sight of Sri Ma. In the meantime the political situation of India had experienced a tremendous change. Under the instigation of the British, the seed that was sewn under the leadership of Jinnah had now assumed the proportion of a huge tree, which had obscured the skyline of India. Man had shrunk even below the level of animals. Murders, the burning of houses, the raping of women, and stealing them, dacoities etc. had become almost a daily affair, which instead of being confined to the limits of a fixed boundary, had now become a problem of all India dimensions. The terrible acts that had been committed at Calcutta, Noakhali, and Bihar led people to believe that this quarrel between brothers and sisters would lead to the eclipse of Indian culture and tradition. In order to keep India directly under their heels, not believing they could do this successfully, so as never to keep India independent by any means, the shrewdly political British Raj decided to divide India into two parts. Mahatma Gandhi and other leading political figures had to accept this unpalatable decision and agree to the partition of India. In fact this did not lead to the stopping of blood-shedding, moreover in many areas of the country, such as the Punjab and surrounding areas, under the cover of Govt. power, untold sufferings seemed to take place. Realising Pakistan was only fit to be inhabited by barbarians, lakhs and lakhs of human beings abandoned their ancestral houses, and ran towards the Indian Union ! There was no limit to how many millionaires became beggars or how many happy homes were desecrated. Even today the dangers of these signs showed no signs, of being limited. There were practically no Hindus

in West Pakistan. Those that had first decided to stay in Eastern Pakistan were gradually forced to abandon their homes. The local govt after seizing all the homes of the Hindus in East Pakistan helped to abolish their homes and Pakistan helped in this process by being indifferent to the abolition of the Hindus !

Ananda Varta (Vol.XXI, VIII)

A question may arise whether are there any solutions for human beings problems ? Where there a will, There is away.

The way out:

Can he work to free himself from the yoke of the results of his own blind work? Why work for the transient objects, the passing show, the restless organs, the momentary attachments, the imaginary gains, the illusive individually ? Can we not work for something abiding, something permanent, something impartial ? The name of this "Something" is God or Atman or Brahman, and Sri Krishna being God Himself calls this 'something' as "Me". How to work for Him? And what would happen by such work? The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita declare Him to be the Subject, the Knower, the Eternal and Abiding Reality — pervading and transcending the entire Universe. So, in order to work for Him, one has to transcend not only the drags and pulls of one's mind and senses, but also one has to rise above any consideration of the apparent small cell or the temporary limited ego — the so-called individual. He had to work to sacrifice the individual for the cosmic, the temporary for the permanent, ultimately for God.

Somebody may ask what have we run away from the house and live in the forest for peaceful life. The peaceful living can not be attained by running away from the world but by participating in it with right understanding and taking refuge under asaint (Perfect. Master).

A Perfect Master is one who not only becomes God but, after achieving God-realization, also comes down to

the ordinary normal consciousness of man. He possesses simultaneously God-consciousness plus mental, subtle and gross consciousness. God is Infinite Love. Those who know say that God resides in every heart. It means "Love" is latent in every heart. Love awakens love. When a man comes in contact with a Perfect Master, who is love personified, love that is dormant in man is awakened and he is attracted towards the master in spite of resistance of his mind.

MOKSHA MARGA

Samsara

113 (A devotee) N.G. Chandorkar bowed to Sai Baba and said: Enough of this Samsara for me. As the Sastras describe it, samsara is really nissara i.e. worthless. Break its fetters off from me, Baba. What first seems to be joy here is seen to be but sorrow at the end. Fate leads us a nice dance here and there. I cannot discover even a bit of happiness in this Samsara. I am quite disgusted, I do not wish to touch it, Baba, any further.

Baba: What crazy and delusive talk is yours ! There is some truth in it — mixed up with error. As long as the body remains, samsara remains. None escapes it. How can you ? Even I am caught up in it (of-17,97,119). Samsara is various sorts. It is like the surface of the body. Kama (desire) Krodha (anger) etc., and any mixture of these is samsara. All mental and bodily processes are samsara. The contact of any two things is samsara. By going away to a forest you cannot escape samsara. Your present condition, has been brought about by yourself. What is the use of irritation at it ? This Deha Prarabdha is the result of the karma done by you in former births. This body was, therefore, born. The Jiva takes birth in body to work out former Karma. Without suffering the results of prarabdha Karma, you cannot get rid of it. All persons, all creatures differ in form etc, Why ? Because of previous Karma of each. Differences between species, like differences between individuals is due to the same cause. See the difference between the rich man's dog lolling on sofa and the poor man's running about in

search of crumbs. That is due to Deha Prarabdha.

(Sai Baba's Charters and Sayings)

Sri Rama Krishna says about Tyaga as follows :—

We have seen that the most important practical step that Sri Ramakrishna stressed was the need for intense aspiration. Another practical point he emphasized was the non-essential nature of rituals. He had himself practised all kinds of rituals. But he never taught them to his followers. Of course he never said rituals were useless. Rituals may have their value during the early stages of spiritual life but one should not get stuck in them, one should go beyond them. Rituals are not the ideal or goal they are just a preliminary means.

Yet another point Sri Ramakrishna emphasized was renunciation. 'Tyag chada kichu hobe na, baba', without renunciation nothing will happen, my child', he used to say. However, he never insisted that every one who wanted to realize God must renounce the world. According to him, the householder's life also is capable of leading to God realization just as the Sannyasin's life is. The term 'renunciation' need not be understood in the old traditional sense of giving up the world. Mental detachment is enough for the householder. His advice to them is:

Do all your duties but keep your mind on God. Live with all — with wife and children, father and mother — and serve them. Treat them as if they were very dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you. A maid servant in the house of a rich man performs all the household duties, but her thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her master's children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them as 'my Rama's or 'my Hari'. But in her own mind she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all.

Renunciation is primarily a state of mind. If the mind does not accept renunciation all your effort is useless, whether you are a monk or householder. But if you have

an intense spirit of renunciation in your heart, you will be able to give your mental energies on God concentrate all your mental energies on God wherever you are, whatever you do. You will then surely reach your goal, and no outer activity will be a bar to that.

(Prabuddha Bharata, Dec. 1986)

INVOCATION

I bow down to all the saints: I bow down to all the prophets: I bow down to all holy men and women all over the world.

A BUDDHIST PRAYER

Our salutations go to all the past Prophets whose teachings and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race, clime, or creed! Our salutations go to all those Godlike men and women who are working to help humanity, what ever be their birth, colour, or race ! Our salutations to those who are coming in the future — living Gods — to work unselfishly for our descendants.

Swami Vivekananda

PROGRAMME OF CEREMONY

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Mahalaya | 1st October, Wednesday |
| 2. Shree Shree Durga Puja | 8th October - Wednesday
to 11th October - Saturday |
| 3. Shree Shree Laxmipuja | 15th October, Wednesday |
| 4. Shree Shree Kalipuja | 30th October, Thursday |
| 5. Shree Shree Annakut | 31st October, Friday |
| 6. Shree Shree Jagaddhatri Puja | 9th November, Sunday |
| 7. Samyam Saptaha | 8th November Saturday to
15th November Saturday. |

Mother Anandamayi

Those Whom Thou Once hast touched with Thy fair eyes
Have Known What is the loan of Heaven's Light,
A bounty none could ever here Surmise
In an earth-born woman's gaze which Silvered Night
Earthly, yet not of earth : in life's dark drift.
When storms tear through and wilts our faith in day
A prey to clouds — the Pall could only lift,
If the eyes revealed a love-lit soul in Play.
For-Thee all, all is play : Thou art a child
of the Mother still, and yet who'll dare deny
The Child's the Mother of mothers? So Thou art styled
Ananda's Daughter — a gift of the blue sky,
A dowry of dream to din! Thy message rings
To our harassed ears like some melody!
For when Thou speakest the earth-bound float on wings
Of hope and love, then learn to soar on light
Old scriptures are life's finger-posts, we heard.
We pored and pored and felt old, satiate
Until we saw a Face upturned, Godward:
Not ears — 'tis eyes that lead, intoxicate.
O later-Grace blown on our graceless earth!
How shall we pay thee homage — we nevertood
An alley to worship! Pent, alas, from birth
In the step of worldly wisdom, we shed our blood.
Only for things that break their truths for ever.
Of deep fulfilment : science, art and passions
Still urge us on in life's dismal endeavour;
'Tis half-lights are adored today of nations.

Toward an Understanding of Mataji's Teaching

January 1939 : Mataji had very few companions with her while she travelled in Gujrat ; Ruma Devi and Abhaya, and at times Sadhan Brahmachari. But, as was only to be expected, it took hardly a little while for people to find out that she was in town and to gather at whatever place she was staying. She put up at Rambagh Dharmasala in Dakore. Didi was sent away by Mataji to see to the affairs of the Kanya Ashram, saying that it was not proper to neglect a project after initiating it. Mataji knew that Didi's naive faith in all people doing their utmost to carry out any work which was started in her (Mataji's) name, was not justified. Didi was obedient to Mataji's suggestions regarding her own responsibilities for the institution she had brought into existence; but she could not be convinced by Mataji or by anybody else that she would serve any good purpose anywhere, away from Mataji. In this instance, Didi, with a heavy heart, went to Allahabad to stay with the girls for a little while. The Kanya Ashram was housed in a garden-house near Daryaganj, in Allahabad at that time.

Mataji travelled through Baroda and Ratlam and stopped at Mathura. The people who were most concerned about her whereabouts and welfare lost contact with her after Mathura. Sadhana and Abaya had both been sent away and they wrote to the dismayed devotees that Mataji had expressed her wish to remain by herself for a while. There was nothing for them to do but to abide in patience till Mataji should have the *kheyala* to come into their midst again.

Mataji, it transpired later, had travelled right across North India and had come to Navadweep, accompanied by Ruma Devi only. For about thirteen days they lived on a boat on the Ganges, belonging to one Ramraj. Ramraj was at first a little wary of his unusual passengers. Unobtrusively, he would keep watch on their activities. Soon word travelled regarding the presence of a striking lady and her companion on the banks of the Ganges. The local Police Station sent a con-

stable to make enquiries about these visitors. Ramraj had a long talk with the constable. He said that as far as he could see, Mataji was no ordinary human being but surely a *devi*. The constable was himself likewise impressed, and enjoining on the boatman to look after his passengers carefully, he left.

During the day the boat was rowed away from the crowded shore and during the night it was brought back again to the river-side. Ramraj and his fellow boatmen became self-constituted guards and care-takers of Mataji. This was not at all unusual for her because it can be seen that wherever she goes, she evokes this response of care and concern in people. For this it is not necessary for her to speak. As a matter of fact not many people could understand Hindi in Gujrat, where she had travelled extensively. Wherever she is, people are irresistibly drawn to her as if she were the most cherished person and feel impelled to do their best for her. And so it was with the simple men who plied boats on the Ganges for a living.

Abhaya managed to find his way back to Mataji and procured her permission to inform other people about her whereabouts. Within a day or two a crowd collected at Navadweep. The grateful devotees felicitated Ramraj on his good fortune and the latter received so many gifts as would be beyond his wildest imaginations.

By the end of February Mataji left Navadweep to go to Puri. From there she went to Deoghar via Calcutta and then to Banaras on March 5th. In Banaras Mataji stayed at Hari's Dharmasala this time, but only for a day. On March 6th, she came to Vindhyachal. Didi, who was waiting all this while impatiently for permission to rejoin her, was able to do so now.

Didi was troubled by practical problems concerning the arrangements to be made at the various ashrams. The inmates eagerly awaited some definitive instructions from Mataji regarding daily life. They were not prepared psychologically to obey any other authority. Didi was always put in a quandary over this matter because nobody had relegated any authority to any one person and everyone was, more or

less, free to do as he or she liked. In general this worked quite well, but at times some readjustments had to be made. Didi stuck to the principle that everything should be brought to the notice of Mataji in order that her *kheyala* might be evoked. In this connection, it may be recalled that Bhajji had had a totally different approach. He had never wanted to trouble Mataji with details of practical matters. Didi, on the other hand, never imagined any issue to be too trivial for Mataji. In this instance, to Didi's appeals for some mandatory advice. Mataji answered, "I have only one thing to say: All of you together, in conformity with each other, should strive for your spiritual well-being. You, who are looking for that great Unity, can you not be united in your search for it?"

At Vindhyachal, visitors arrived from Banaras, Allahabad, and Mirzapur, the nearest towns. Sitting among a group of visitors one day, Mataji said, "Strive for Immortality."

Somebody remarked, "It is difficult to know which is the true path." Mataji rejoined, "If you sit with all doors and windows closed, how can you see the path? Open the door and step out, the path will become visible. Once on the way, you will meet other way-farers, who will advise and guide you as to the path. Your job is to muster whatever strength you have to get underway — thereafter help is assured."

Another person raised the question of will and grace. Mataji said, "Yes, it is true that there is naught else but grace, but one has to bring oneself to the realization that *this is so*; that one has no independent power to go counter to the flow of grace. What I say is that a little effort is required to reach the current, as it were. Supposing you are going to the river for a swim. First you will have to walk to the river. Secondly you will have to swim out to the current. Once there, you will find that the current is guiding you; that you have nothing further to do but relax and float with it. It is also true that the initial effort which is required of you is possible because of the gift of the will in you. It is only right that you should make proper use of this gift which you know as your will."

One day a group of women came to see Mataji. Mataji

greeted them in the manner of old friends renewing acquaintance. They did not immediately perceive Mataji's intention and answered that had not met her before and that this was their first visit to the Ashram. Mataji expressed great surprise, "How is this ! You have forgotten me ! Forgetfulness creates difficulties, you know. When you are in possession of something and forget about it, much hardship is caused in looking around for it when the need for it arises."

The women then caught the trend of Mataji's talk and in answer to her further question, "What family do you have?" one of them answered, "We have nobody but you."

"Then you should never "go away and leave me !"

In a more serious mood, Mataji said, "Look, will you do something for me ? Take a little time from your housework every day and devote it towards acquiring peace. Even the Government gives leave of one day a week from work. Break the routine of housework every day for a little while to remember His name. This will be my sustenance too."

Mataji left Vindhyachal soon enough and passing through Banaras again, came to Delhi, on March 25th. The devotees of Delhi received her at the Railway Station and escorted her to the new Ashram in the city.

This visit was of specially great moment to the people of Delhi, because Mataji had not been there since the purchase of a building, which was to be the Ashram for the time being.

Crowds began to assemble. The women left their household duties to come to the Ashram. The men came from their offices as soon as they could. Delhi, like Dacca had a great tradition of *kirtan*, because the nucleus of the party of devotees, in general, belonged to the Harisabha. This was the time for Vasanti Puja as well. Elaborate arrangements for puja, kirtan and other festivities were made. Mataji's presence enhanced the joyous atmosphere a thousandfold.

On invitation, Mataji visited the Birla Temple and also the Valmiki Temple to participate in kirtan with the Harijans. One day Dr. J.K. Sen, one of the elders of the group of devotees, took her to visit a friend, who was a renowned Kaviraj (an authority on Indian medicine). After a little con-

versation, the Kaviraj asked Mataji, "What proof is there, that there is God?"

"What proof is there that you are?"

"Simple. I perceive that I am."

"Who is this 'I'?"

"Ma, I do not want to engage in a philosophical discussion. I want to know from you plainly and simply if God is a reality."

Mataji, entering into the spirit of the question, answered emphatically, "God is a reality just as you are to yourself."

The Kaviraj professed himself happy and satisfied with this answer.

Mataji's visit to Delhi drew to a close. She gently countered innumerable pleas for staying longer. The people of Delhi sadly bade her farewell even while the devotees of Dehradun were preparing to welcome her in their midst. This was the inevitable pattern of Mataji's unceasing travels. The various towns had come to know the thrill of excitement at the prospect of her visit and also the dejection of spirit which followed her departure.

Mataji came to Dehradun on April 9th. An important event took place on April 13th, 1939. Didima was initiated into the order of Samnyasis by Mangal Giri Maharaj of Kankhal.

For long Didima had expressed her sole desire to be allowed to accompany Mataji on her travels. She had no other wish than to be with Mataji. Although, her youngest son Makhan had been married recently, she could not be persuaded to take up residence with them, so that she would be comfortable and looked after properly. Since her husband's death, she considered herself as having discharged fully her obligations to her family and ready to take up the life of an ascetic. It is not that she thought out the matter in this way or that her whole life had not been one of self-sacrifice, discipline and fortitude. The fact was plain and simply that she wanted to be with Mataji and did not count the cost of the hardships of ceaseless travel. On one occasion Mataji had mentioned that in general, her constant companions were renunciates; Didima had no difficulty at all in accepting this

as a prerequisite for this privilege as it were. All those who have known Didima will readily understand that the ritualistic transformation was a formal recognition of her whole way of life. She always had been the very personification of self-effacement and other-worldliness. It can be said that in her own characteristic gentle way, she brought grace and dignity to the order of asceticism.

The *samnyasa* of a woman is not at all usual. An opportunity presented itself for this rather rare event when the very much revered and renowned Mangala Giri Maharaj of Sri Bhola Giri Ashram, Hardwar, agreed to initiate Didima into *Samnyasa*. The holy man was, in general, a recluse and did not encourage random visitors to his Ashram. Mataji, however had always been a privileged guest. It may be said that Mangala Giri Maharaj had the distinction of according due recognition and honour to Mataji at a time when she was yet to be known in ascetic circles.

A crowd assembled in Kankhal at Giriji's Ashram for the ceremony. In the early hours of the morning, after a night's vigil, Didima was initiated into the ascetic order and given the ochre robes of the *samnyasi*. Her new name was now Muktananda Giri.

Mataji said, "You always say that I never give you any advice as I do to other regarding spiritual well-being. Have I not spoken to you now in asking this of you? It is indeed a great good fortune for anyone to attain freedom to devote oneself wholly toward Self-realization."

After a few days, on May 3rd, Mataji accompanied by a small party, started for Uttarkashi. The mountain path was long and arduous, being used only by pilgrims and ascetics. Covering the distance in slow marches they arrived at Uttarkashi on May 7th. In addition to Didi and Akhandanandaji there were Ruma Devi, Abhaya, Keshava Bhai (as he is known now), Kanu, Sisir and Kamalakanta in the party. This being the time of Mataji's Birthday, they managed somehow to celebrate the auspicious occasion. The simplicity of the puja performed by Didi was more than made up by the grandeur of the Himalayas.

In Uttarkashi Mataji acquired a following of a bunch of

school children. They spent their free time with her, a few venturing to engage in conversations, the rest communicating with shy smiles. Mataji asked if they would have her as their friend. This being readily accepted, they were asked if they were willing to do what their friend may request of them. This also being granted Mataji told them about her five-point programme for children; (i) To remember God every morning and then pray to Him to make one a good boy/girl; (ii) to obey one's parents and teachers, (iii) to be truthful; (iv) to study well; (v) in case the above four were carried out, to feel free to be a little naughty if one were so inclined. The children laughed with her and promised to remember her words.

Abhaya raised a characteristic question one day to Didi. He asked if she had ever seen Mataji doze at any time? Didi, not uncharacteristically, had never given this matter a thought, and answered with growing wonderment, "You know Abhaya, I never have, for the matter of that, nobody has ever seen Ma overcome by sleep. Even when she was sitting for more than twelve hours at a stretch, as so frequently happened in Dacca, we never saw her dozing or even fatigued. This was the main reason why the fact that Ma was sitting for long hours, went unnoticed. On the other hand I must say that whenever I happen to doze off while sitting in a satsang, I wake up with a jerk to find Ma's eyes on me ! This happens without exception. When I am quite alert and listening to kirtan or the discourse, I hope that Ma would notice what an intelligent interest I am taking in the proceedings, but no, as soon as my eyes begin to close, I find her regarding me steadily !"

Mataji joined in the general laughter and said, "You see, her thoughts are always directed here (towards Mataji); no matter what she is doing or with whom she is talking, her thoughts remain one-pointed; but when she dozes off this thread is broken and my *kheyala* is drawn to her."

After a few days it was decided to attempt the hard climb to Gangotri (10,000 ft.), the visible source of the holy Ganges. Starting on May 12th and climbing slowly the hazardous mountain path, they arrived at Gangotri in the evening of May 16th. Here they were pleased to find Swami

Paramanandaji, who had met Mataji previously, and who now was happy to be able to be of considerable service to the party. Paramanandaji had been living in Gangotri for the past few years and was familiar with local conditions. He dissuaded Abhaya and other from attempting the further climb to Gomukh, the site of the cave out of which the Ganges is seen to emerge. Gomukh is considered to be the end of the journey because nobody can penetrate any further into the cave. It seemed that the hard climb had been made harder at this time by frequent avalanches. The project was therefore abandoned.

Mataji and her companions stayed at Gangotri for three days. They put up at the dharamsala. By order of the Maharaja of Tehri-Garhwal, no householders were allowed to stay in Gangotri. The few log huts were occupied by ascetics and pilgrims. During the winter, the hard core of inhabitants had to descend to Uttarkashi. This is how Paramanandaji had spent 6-7 years of his life in these places.

The party returned to Uttarkashi on May 23rd. Everyone was in need of rest, so they welcomed the respite from climbing and also the prospect of staying for a few days surrounded by the wonderful scenic beauty of the Himalayas.

Mataji had a visitor even in this remote place. Bankey Bihari, a lawyer from Allahabad came to Uttarkashi in the hope of spending a few days with her. He said one day, "One of my European friends, who makes a practice of visiting mahatmas, was saying to me, "Everyone that I have come across seems to have something characteristically his own to say. But Mataji's very special characteristic seems to be just her smile."

On another occasion, but somewhat in the same context, Abhaya said to Mataji in a mood of dissatisfaction choosing deliberately to misinterpret her smile. "It would have been much better if you were a creature (*jiva*) like us. Then you would be able to understand our misery, and not be amused at our predicament. Sri Paramhansadeva and Sri Chaitanyadeva were much better than you. They commiserated with the sorrows of men."

Mataji entered into the spirit of Abhaya's disgruntled ac-

cusation, saying, "You can't expect everyone to be the same as everyone else ! There are infinite manifestations of the Infinite, there has to be better and worse !"

Abhaya persisted, "If we cannot receive anything from you, in what way should you be called higher than us ?"

"Who says I am higher ? Just because they make me sit on a cot, and you are sitting on the floor ? I am just like one of you."

Abhaya was silenced for the time being. His question in effect, continues to be asked many times and in many ways by the merely curious, or even the *sadhaka* who yearns for Knowledge. How should we understand the presence of Mataji in our midst? We find that she does not seek to establish any philosophy of her own because she affirms the faiths and convictions of all religious disciplines. The only 'message' she seeks always to convey to all who come to her is that man's only and highest duty is to be established in Self-realization. To the question: "If you have no mission to fulfill or message to give, why do you tell us to worship God?" Mataji has replied, "If you do not ask, then I have nothing to say; but if you ask, and if it is my *kheyala*, then certainly I shall tell you about the better way of life (*Sreyas*)."

So we see that Mataji in effect teaches us how to live in the world in which we find ourselves. In listening to her we glimpse the possibility of understanding the meaning of life. The Indian tradition is one of holding together the ideal of renunciation and also a full involvement in the world as responsible citizens. Mataji by her living example shows the people the ideal form of this unity, a state where the two are not two but one. She is a living personification of the identity of this world and the spiritual world. She has no reason to choose, elect, or reject and therefore everyone experiences the same quality of welcome from her. She asks her people to live constantly in the remembrance of God and that all else would be made available to them.

This brings us to the crux of the matter: Everyone, who is touched with yearning for Knowledge so to say, knows that God is to be worshipped. Even for the devout, this knowledge is not enough to engage the will toward God or Self-

realization. Or in other words, men are helplessly enmeshed in the world and are a prey to despair. The words to promise read in scriptures are not enough to dispel moods of hopelessness. In a world given over to considerations of mundane activities, Mataji appears as the living presence of Divine Grace. In hearkening to the following words spoken by her some time after Abhaya's question and perhaps in answer to it, one may learn to hope again: "There is no cause for anxiety at all. I ask you to make an effort toward Self-knowledge, because all of you exercise your will in the world. You have a sense of obligation which prevents you from being negligent or unmindful of your duties; so I enjoin upon you not to be indifferent towards that which is of ultimate importance. However, it goes without saying that nothing is possible without God's grace. It is somewhat like — and yet unlike — applying for a job. You cannot hope to be considered unless you apply. But there is no surety of getting the job either. One must make an application and then await results. The difference is that no effort is futile in the sphere of grace. I tell you there is no cause for despair. Be convinced that success is assured. Never allow yourself to think to the contrary. Despondency and doubt are uncalled for. Pursue your goal with the greatest optimism you can command. I tell you it is as I say it is !"