

Ananda Varta



The Eternal, the Atman—

Itself pilgrim and path of Immortality

Self contained—THAT is all in One.

Vol. XXXXV

● JANUARY—1998

● No. 1

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Those who, prompted by a deep yearning for the vision of the Supreme Being Tread this long and difficult path, can do so only by His grace To take refuge in patience is the only acceptable attitude of mind. One must never lose hope. Wherever you may be placed and under whatever circumstances, let your thinking be centred in Him and in Him alone.

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.

Shree Shree Sitaramdas Onkarnath

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

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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

Sri Sri Sitaramdas Onkarnath

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MATRI VANI

Is it possible to train someone to be a Brahmachari ? It is a person's nature that makes him a Brahmachari. Everyone is born and acts according to the dispositions and tendencies acquired in former births.

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Everyone runs after happiness and enjoyment. Yet supreme happiness and bliss are ever 'there' and nowhere else. That which is eternal must be revealed and then the question of going or not going in search of anything does not arise.

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"Misfortune must will not be looked upon as a disaster ; it would be a sin to do so, for who sends the misfortune ? What he does is all beneficial. Under no circumstances, however adverse, should man accept defeat".

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"Let 'I' cannot be eradicated from your vocabulary. Time is gliding by swiftly ; for a few days only lasts this reunion with friends and Kinsman. Gather up your possessions, brother, no one accompanies you final journey".

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Everyone meets with disappointments in life. This is the common lot of mankind, but the man who trusts God and remembers Him constantly is free from worries. He recon-

ciles himself to every situation that falls to his lot "Contentment is a continual feast".

* * *

The real beauty of life in beholding the Divine everywhere. The whole nature before you is His manifestation. In this supreme vision lies your real freedom, peace and bliss.

* * *

Depend upon God in all things. Surrender to Him is the only way to inner freedom and peace.

* * *

Not to have the guidance of a competent Guru is indeed detrimental this is certainly very true.

* * *

"Throughout the twenty-four hours abide in the awareness of the Presence of God. Then only can there be hope of Realization. Who can foresee at what moment He may choose to reveal Himself? This is why one must ever keep wide awake".

The Divine Mother Shri Shri Ma Anandamayi

Dr, Premlata Srivastava

A. Good-bye Dhaka

In 1932, there was a gap of 21 days between Ma's birth date and birth tithi. Therefore, celebrations were held for 21 days without a break. A couple of days after the festivities were over, Ma with Bholanath and Didi, had visited one acquaintance. The lady of that house offered some vegetables and lentil to Didi who put them in the folds of her sari. Thereafter, they visited another home and asked for alms. In this manner, they visited many homes and collected so many things that they had to hire another vehicle to transport them to Ashram. She had asked all the people from whom she took alms, to take Bhogprasad from the Ashram in the afternoon. This Bhog was prepared of the food items received as alms. Thus, by playing the role of medicant, Ma satisfied everybody and unknowingly prepared to leave the city forever.

By renouncing the comfortable easy way of living at the Dhaka Ashram, she opted to tread the unknown, much difficult path like a true wandering ascetic.

On the day of Her departure, Ma went to Siddheshwari to touch the deity of Kali and the grounded peepal tree. By evening, she was in a different mood.

It was 11 o'clock in the night. Most of the followers had returned to their respective homes. Bholanath was fast

asleep, after the exhaustive festivities for the last three weeks. Ma woke him up, took him along to the temple.

After sometime, Bholanath was seen, getting ready to go somewhere. Meanwhile Bhaiji, too, arrived there probably on Ma's call. Ma was seated on the Panchavati platform. She told Didi.

"Patience is the foundation of Sadhana".

When she saw Didi disturbed, Ma said again.

"Don't be afraid. Allow this body to act according to its kheyal. If you intervene. I would not be able to survive".

Ma turned to others including Shashanka Mohan, who was present there, and said emphatically :

"This body is going out tonight and do not know when I'll return".

Ma asked Bhaiji to accompany her. Bhaiji was in a dilemma. Duties and responsibilities at home came before him. He said to Ma.

"Let me go home to collect some money".

But Ma said, time was short-Bhaiji should better make some collection at the Ashram.

When Bhaiji didn't move on Ma's suggestion, she retorted with conviction. "Can you not do so?"

With the resolute Ma in front of him, Bhaiji regained confidence.

"Yes Ma, I can do it if it is your kheyal".

By 11.30 p.m. on Thursday, the 2nd June 1932, Ma left Ashram for the railway station on foot. Many of Her followers wanted to see Her off at the station, but she discouraged them.

On reaching the station, she was asked where she wanted to go. Ma pointed to the train waiting at the platform. Tickets were bought upto the terminus station of the train. They boarded the train to reach Katihar. Whatever little money they had was almost exhausted. In a strange coincidence, a friend of Bhaiji came across. Inspired by Ma's darshan, he arranged for their further travel.

They reached Dehradun from Katihar via Gorakhpur and Lucknow. Dehradun was completely new to them. It was an unknown place, full of unknown people, an entirely different atmosphere but Ma ecstatically said, "Nothing is unknown".

They took up lodging at the local kalibari. Subsequently, Bholanath and Bhaiji went to enquire about a remote place and they came to know that Raipur was a village in a remote locale in the middle of jungles, about 7 km away from the city.

Ma said, "She could adapt to any place without any problem.

Another coincidence was association of a gentleman who volunteered to help, since he was going that way.

B. Ma on the Move (1932-1982)

At 10 o'clock Wednesday, the 8th of June 1932, Ma, Bholanath and Bhaiji took shelter in the damp, cramped room of the inn, adjoining an old Shiva temple in Raipur. This temple was on a hillock at the end of a village. The pathway was rough and weathered which transformed into a rivulet during the rains. The temple was in the midst of a

clear ground at one corner of which stood a Mango tree, encircled with a vedi-platform around its base. All this looked withered ill-kept, and neglected. Later on Ma has pointed out the sanctity of this place and said that many saints meditated at that place in Raipur.

The place however, overlooked the beautiful Shivalik ranges. Bholanath liked this place at the foothills of Himalayas and began his meditation here. They managed to survive on whatever food Bhaiji brought as alms. Sometime, he was given vegetables, flour on some other occasions. The flour was kneaded on a cleaned stone slab and loaf then roasted and taken with the juice of boiled vegetables. Thus, Bholanath and Bhaiji had begun a very hard, arduous life of an ascetics.

Only Ma knows why did she opt for such a difficult living against all odds in a forlorn place when she had the comforts of Dhaka Ashram at Her disposal. But she demonstrated that control of one's desires and sacrifice is a must on the path of Sadhana.

Ma, who had a retinue of followers at Her service for each little chore, was now in the role of a mendicant, begging for alms. Where she will go from here ? Nobody knows Her mind. Now, she was either lying in a trance at the temple room or she was taking a stroll outside.

Like the clouds can not completely cover the bright yellow sun, likewise, despite the forlorn and remote locale, Ma's magnificence could not be put in shade. Words spread in villages that an exquisitely beautiful lady was staying in

the temple and most of the time she is lying in Samadhi. Her body illuminating a radiance.

Sevaji (Dr. Sharda Sharma) was among these privileged few who had darshan of Ma at that time. Her body exuded an aura which she covered with Her sari. When she slowly returned from Samadhi the glow used to diminish in that order.

Gradually, some people braved the jungles for Ma's darshan. Bhaiji, who could speak English, communicated with the visitors, and replied to their queries. Later, people stopped asking questions. They were simply overwhelmed by the magnificent personality of Ma.

Ma's hair, which got matted due to negligence for long, took the shape of a crown. The local women cut the matted hair in the shape of a cap, which is still preserved at the Kashi Ashram. After the hair-cut, Ma in white clothes looked like a young Brahmachari.

In March 1933, Shri Hariram Joshi met Ma. He was, then an Inspector with the U.P. Cooperative society, and was among those people who hob-nobbed with VIPs. Hariram Bhai was so impressed by Ma's darshan that he encouraged whoever he met, to have darshan of Ma.

In his book he has written :

"Ma's, body exuded a kind of joy and happiness. The pleasant smile on Her face and Her amiable nature had completely transformed Her personality. It is unbelievable that this level of contentment, of joy and happiness, as mentioned in the Bhagavatgita, is possible to attain by a human being."

Baba Bholanath went to Uttarkashi via Musorie. In Uttarkashi, he began his most arduous meditations on the banks of Ganges. On the other hand, Ma moved to Krishna-shram and from there to Manohar Mandir, both in Dehradun and near by places perhaps at Bholanath's instance.

For almost ten years since she left Dhaka, Ma's Leela was evident in Dehradun and the hilly areas nearby. From here Ma's leela spread to the entire north India.

Life in Dehradun (Manohar Mandir)

Among the ladies who visited the mandir in the morning were Laxmi Ji and Meera Ji, the wives of Kashi Narayan Tankha and Dwarakanath Raina respectively.

Ma's magnetic personality—the charm, ambience and amiability attracted them to the verandah of the temple where she was putting up. Ma could speak only Bengali which these ladies, did not understand. However, that did not deter them from visiting Ma daily with their families. In this manner, the number of visitors swelled. Initially the Kashmiris, then Punjabis, Bengalis—people from different provinces came for Ma's darshan.

On the request of Her devotees, Sri Krishna Janmashtami festival, which was a regular feature of Manohar mandir was attended by Ma that year (1933). Havan was arranged after the puja. The sacred fire for this was specially brought from Vindhyachal Ashram. The place in the verandah where Ma used to sleep earlier was made into 'Havan Kund' by removing a few stone slabs. Later Ma shifted to one of the rooms in the mandir. Gayatri Havan was performed, so also

Kumari and Batuk Puja. For people of this region, this was a novel experience. They were impressed by these rituals.

Gradually, Bhaiji taught the regular visitors the way of praying and kirtans which were in vogue at Ramana Ashram, Dhaka. Thus Dehradun became another Shahbag.

Smt Kamala Nehru, the wife of Pandit Jawaharlal, was staying in Dehradun during those days. Hariram Bhai who used to visit them regularly, wanted to take Mrs Nehru to Ma. He also wanted a meeting of Mahatma Gandhi with Ma, which, he thought, would pave the way for quick success of Gandhi's movement of non-violence. Thinking in this manner was Hariram Bhai's mistake. For, never did Ma show any interest in politics despite giving darshan to several national leaders. Among those stalwarts who met Ma were Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sarojini Naidu, M M Malviya, Jamnalal Bajaj, Sardar Patel, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and many others.

In July 1933, Kamala Nehru, accompanied by Hariram Bhai, had Ma's first darshan at Anand Squire Dehradun. A pious lady, she was initiated by Swami Saradananda of Ramakrishna Mission. Ma's charming personality attracted her so much that she returned to see Ma again the same day in the evening. She stayed with Ma for a longtime before returning home. Ma asked Kamala to visit her only with her husband's permission. Once Ma said, "Kamala had infinite love and respect for this body. At the slightest opportunity, she would take this body out for short excursions. Around this time she also organised a Yagna at the Ambika temple, Rajpur, Dehradun. Like the Ashram's female inmates, She

wore unstitched clothes, and took part in the yagna with utmost sincerity. For several devotees japa Ahutis were consecrated in this yagayagni. One Ahuti was given after one lakh Japa.

Around this time Ma began the tradition of ten minutes 'Silence' prayer after returning from Rajpur to Dehradun.

Ma with folded hands actually begged for this ten minutes uninterrupted silence daily, throughout their life. Many devotees even in the worst of their time in lives have followed this routine.

During this time Kamalaji used to visit Ma quite often in the dead of the night. She would sit in meditation beside Ma in the solemn dead night with full allegiance unmindful of the surroundings. She would sleep alongside Ma and would return back home before dawn.

With Ma's attraction and constant meditations, Kamala Ji had attained significant spiritual bliss which was evident when at times she went into samadhis. She wanted to give up her social work, inspired by Gandhiji and come to Ma. But Ma refused her the permission.

In October 1935 Kamalaji was recovering at the Bhawali sanitorium when Ma met her. She stayed with Ma for a night in Mussorie when Bholanath and Ma sojourned there on their way back from Uttarkashi. Probably, this was Kamalaji's last meeting with Ma.

Kamala Ji, after she left for Switzerland to recover her poor health, kept on writing to Bhaiji to know about Ma's well being. Once, she wrote :

"I regret to say that you do not write to me often so that I am posted with regular information about Ma. However, I see (visualise) Her at times. Yesterday, I saw Her clad in a broad redbordered sari."

Bhaiji, who was at Kankhal (Hardwar) those days, wrote back. "It's a fact that the evening, you've mentioned to have seen Her, Ma wore a similar sari, presented by a Bengali devotee."

Kamalaji had a telepathic contact with Ma. This is also an evidence of Kamalaji's higher spiritual attainment.

As destined, Kamalaji lived for only three years after her meeting with Ma. Later, her husband Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru came to see Ma on many occasions. Ma, too, had visited Teen Murti House, then the Prime Minister Nehru's residence.

In the later years, many big leaders—including Indira Gandhi came for Ma's darshan. Indiraji, who had immense love and respect for Ma, used to come whenever she snatched away some time off her work to visit Ma. At times, her sons Sanjay and Rajiv and their wives accompanied her to Ma's Ashram.

In 1933, the Bengali followers of Dehradun organised Durga Puja in Ma's presence. They invited all non-Bengali devotees to the puja, thereby assembling of the devotees of Ram, Krishna, Kali, Durga etc started with Ma as the central figure.

Smt. Laxmi Tankha, a devout follower of Ma, was asked what attraction she saw in Ma when neither could she communicate with Ma (Ma knew only Bengali which

Laxmiji didn't.) nor she had seen any of Her miracles. Laxmiji's terse reply "Is there any need for miracles in Ma's case? Ma Herself was greatest miracles to us what more can anyone want than Her presence? To see Her welcoming smile was more than enough for us."

Dr. Madan Mohan Joshi, brother of Hariram Joshi, was the chief medical officer of Solan (then under Baghat Kingdom). On Dr. Joshi's persistent request, Ma acceded to visit Solan. It was in March 1934 when Solan was having rains and snowfall, Ma reached Kalka railway station, and went straight to stay in Salogra cave. This cave, located below the bus stand on Solan-Simla highway, was so small that Ma could barely sit inside.

When Raja Solan came for Ma's first darshan at this cave, he was astonished by Ma's cheerfulness despite the crampedness of the cave, with water dripping all over from the ceiling. Raja Saheb saw Ma in a splendid mood as she beckoned him to come to inside and suddenly she broke into peals of laughter. Yogi Bhai (a name given to him by Ma) was completely overwhelmed by the roaring laughter as it came suddenly out of a person apparently so frail, so innocent, with so many odds to Her nature, in that cave. That was the turning point in Yogi raj's life, the rest of which was spent in Ma's proximity. From that time until his death in 1977, Yogiraj, as christened by Ma, lived like a yogi.

Durga Singh, the Raja of Solan, was a religious minded pious person. No child was born to his wife. As per the custom of Princely states Durga Singh could marry again. But he did not. Instead, he took the path, as shown by Ma,

and dedicated much of his resources in service of Ma. He also motivated many royal families to come out of their regal homes and follow the path of spiritual bliss.

Raja Durga Singhji who instituted Ma Anandamoyi Vidya Peeth at Almora, regarded Ma and the Kali of Dakshineswar as one and the same.

Since the summer of 1933, Bholanath was absorbed in Sadhna at Uttarkashi. The people of Uttarkashi, who showed deep respect for Bholanath, intimated Ma in 1935 that they were instituting a Kali temple and requested Ma for Her presence on the occasion of its consecration ceremony.

This was the beginning of the tradition of festivities at different places in Ma's presence. Ma's devotees from Nainital, Almora, Dehradun, Mussorie etc. played excellent host to Ma's devotees who came from far away places.

Ma left for the Uttarkashi function in August 1935, along with a group of devotees. The hilly circular track and the beautiful landscape reverberated with the kirtans of Ma's followers. This multilingual group included Bengalis, Punjabis, Kashmiris, and people from the hills and plains of Uttar Pradesh. Since the destination was at a higher attitude, the climbing of hilly track was difficult for many. Some had vomiting tendencies, some other complained of breathlessness. Ma kept on cheering them all the way until they all reached Uttarkashi.

The Kali of Uttarkashi was consecrated following full religious rites in the divine presence of Ma. On this occasion the family priest (Kulguru) of Bholanath was also invited.

On return Laxmi Tankha, who reached Dehradun before Ma and other devotees had arranged for the group's comfortable stay and return journey.

Ma's devotees saw Baba Bholanath for the first time when he came back to Dehradun via Gangotri. Deeply impressed by his personality, they welcomed Bholanath and started calling him, Pitaji (Father).

While returning from Uttarkashi, Ma and Her devotees faced extremely bad weather. With women, old people and children, they came across a hilly stream in its full, rapid flow amid heavy rains. Despite the current, Ma went into the middle of the flow, not only she stood her ground but amidst the rain and frequent lightning, Ma helped everyone in the group, cross the river.

This was Ma's Leela, amidst the thunder, rain, and lightning. What a splendid sight was this! Someone has rightly said that Ma's role in that calamity was like the controller of this universe in act of deliverance from the earthly life.

Kirtan at Shimla Kali Bari : (*The first Naam yagna in North India*)

After the birth anniversary celebrations of Shri Ma at Kishanpur Ashram Dehradun in 1936, Ma left for Shimla with some of Her devotees. Being the then summer capital of India, Shimla was then abuzz with lot of activities. There she went for walk daily in the morning and evening, attracting passers-by with Her magnificent charm and composure. There too, following picked up rapidly parti-

cularly among those who were members of the 'Harisabha', organisers of an annual kirtan festival, from dawn to dusk. That year 1936, some members of Harisabha proposed to organise the kirtan festival in presence of Shri Ma and Baba Bholanath.

Made in tune with the vaishnava tradition of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the arrangements included a Tulsi manch around which kirtans would be held. After the ceremonial purification on June 22, began the Naam yagna. With holymark of sandal paste on the forehead and garlands of flowers round the neck, the devotees danced around the alter to perform the kirtan. Bholanath, who got up at 6 in the morning, was there until the end without drinking a drop of water. As the sound of kirtan reverberated in this hilly place, Ma's body was beginning to show signs of the Mahabhava.

Inspite of Shri Ma's best efforts to control it, the 'Mahabhava' burst out suddenly with Her body illuminating an aura, brilliance and slokas and mantras streaming out of Her mouth.

Most of those present on this occasion were from respected, well-to-do families. It hardly took any time for them to realise that this manifestation of Ma was something extraordinary and they were lucky to be witness to this event. It was shocking as well as overwhelming for the Shimla citizenry.

It was at the same place on June 27 where Ma organised for the first time a kirtan recital exclusively by the ladies of Shimla.

In this way, the tradition of Naam Kirtan began in Shimla and the entire North India as some devotees at the Shimla Kirtan, who were from Delhi, returned home to carry on the tradition with more like-minded people.

Ma would often say, "Everything is possible through Japa and Kirtan which purifies the place, the soul, and also who listens or does it.

The death of Bhaiji in 1937 and Bholanath in 1938 sent disturbing waves among the devotees. But Ma remained calm, unmoved and unperturbed.

From 1932 to 1982 the main booming fifty years of Matri Leela was the Leela of unending and uninterrupted religious festivities centred round Ma. Thus she travelled from one corner to another extreme corner of India on earnest desire and request of Her devotees, unmindful of Her comforts and convenience. Millions of Indians and hundreds from abroad had Her darshan.

Wherever she went she brought joy and happiness to the surrounding. Festivities over, Sri Ma, the cynosure of the crowd, would promptly bid good bye with great sense of humor leaving the devotees sad and melancholic by Her absence, like a bird on the wings.

It was astonishing to see Ma managing big crowds by Herself even when organisers fail to control it. She could very well organise in limited time space and often resources big religious festivals and functions in which everybody could participate.

Looking to their own ease, desire and happiness devotees started constructing new Ashrams to invite Ma amidst

themselves for various religious activities connected to it. Most of the time Ma would respond to their calls.

Thus a chain of Ma's Ashram started coming up, mostly during fifties and surprisingly all of them were born out of some special events.

At present there are 25 ashrams of Sri Ma in India and two in Bangladesh. Ma frequented all of them not sticking to one place for long. As soon as the place become comfortable Ma would leave it giving the aspirants of the path a lesson of hard austere life for them.

The vast travelling by Sri MA enabled thousands of people to have Her divine darshan. Not only the mankind but even trees, birds and animals were not spared by Her. Here only few of the events from Matri Leela are mentioned—

Once, Ma was travelling by car from Kanpur to Lucknow. On the way, she suddenly said (passing by a village near Unnao) what a lovely village, how lovely are the trees ?

The car had sped past the place by the time Sri Ma had exclaimed. Nevertheless, Dide, accompanying Sri Ma, asked for the car to turn back. On reaching the spot, Ma went near two trees, one each of Neem and Banyan, standing by a pond, caressed them fondly. She asked for flowers and fruit baskets from the car, and decorated the trees with them, calling them Hari-Hari. Distributing the fruits to the villagers, who had assembled by then, Sri Ma advised them to perform puja of these trees for their well-being. The trees might have been waiting for ages to have darshan of Ma which is why they attracted Her attention !

Before visiting Kailash, Ma and Bholanath had gone to Nainital. While resting at a Dharmashala, Ma suddenly suggested for a walk. Strolling along the banks of Nainital, Ma decided to return home. On Her way back, they saw a bird falling down a tree. A devotee placed the fallen bird before Ma who looked at it with great kindness and compassion. The bird too looked at Ma, fidgeted before becoming calm forever.

While the people in Ma's company, wondered, about the strange coincidence, Ma, mentioned that the bird's supplication, brought Her Here.

In another incident, Ma suddenly starts for an unknown destination from Kankhal Ashram. The devotees who were accompanying Her, knew not where they were going. She went to Calcutta where she took up residence in the garden of a local devotee, in the out skirts of Calcutta, thereby pleasantly surprising Her devotees in Calcutta by Her sudden arrival. In that garden where she sojourned, Lived a pet deer who was unwell, Ma saw the deer, the animal too looked at Ma keenly. The next day, that deer died Ma asked the host to give Samadhi to deer with full rituals. Evidently, the deer waited for Ma's darshan till that day.

Now, only an occasional events from Matri leela have been mentioned.

In the forties, Ma's kheyal took to the ancient religious City Kashi, (Varanasi). For the next two decades, Kashi remained the centreplace of Ma's Leela.

Initially Ma live in a boat on the Ganges that purified the holy city. Didi was looking for a suitable place for Kashi

Ashram. Once, when Ma and Didi were relaxing in the waiting room of Lucknow railway station, they saw a map of Varanasi city hung on the wall. Ma quickly went up on the table and pointing to a spot on the map, said "Look Didi, this is where is your Ashram."

Ma had placed Her finger between the localities of Assi and Bhadaini. Ma's Kheyal and Didi's follow-up took shape in 1942 when land was procured exactly at the same place. Basanti puja was performed at the spot where stands the Chandi Mandap of the Ashram, today in the year 1944 under a tin shed.

On August 16, 1941, the disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, Jannalal Bajaj came to Raipur, Dehradun to see Shri Ma. He had come for a day but actually returned only after a fortnight. He was deeply moved by the solemn surroundings of the Ashram and of course, Ma's divine presence. Jannalal spent hours talking to Ma. He said, he was lucky to get Ma as mother and Mahatma as his father. Planning to build a house near the Ashram, he even bought land.

But Ma was characteristically evasive. "Does one know how long will he pull on? Here, there is no assurance of a single breath."

On his return from Dehradun, Jannalal Bhai followed Ma's instructions to live in a hut at a remote place called Gopuri. Abstaining from speech during the entire day, he spent his time in kirtan, bhajan and service of cattles.

On 10th February 1942, that is seven months after he met Ma, Jannalal Bajaj breathed his last at Wardha, Maharashtra.

The first meeting between Sri Ma and Mahatma Gandhi was on 20th February 1942, at Sevagram. To Mahatma, Ma said she had seen him before, in Dhaka, from a distance.

Bapu was spinning the wheel when she entered the hut. Ma said to him, "Father your mad daughter has come."

Mahatma replied, "If you were mad, Jannalal Bajaj wouldn't have been influenced. He got the peace of life from you in two weeks, which I couldn't give him in 30 years!"

Bapu had heard about Ma from Kamala Nehru. When he addressed Ma as Kamala's Guru, she flatly refused to accept it. Ma said: "Father, this body is nobody's Guru."

Among those present on that occasion in Sevagram were Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Acharya Vinoba Bhave and others. Despite requests from several people, Ma spent only one night in Sevagram.

On 14th January 1947, the occasion of Chaitra Sankranti, began Savitri Mahayagna at Kashi Ashram. During the three years of yagna, the venue was visited by several saints and Mahatmas, and thousands of Ma's devotees from India and abroad. The Ashram looked as if some fair was being held with continuous religious festivities. During this period, Ma quite often visited Kashi Ashram.

Ma Anandamoyi Girls school (kanyapeeth) was now permanently located at Varanasi. During the Jhoolan Purnima and Janmashtami, the students of this school used to enact plays in Ma's presence. Sometime, even Ma took part. Meant for only ladies, men were not allowed there without Ma's permission.

During Jhulan festival in the month of August 1952, these girls were playing some drama with Ma in the centre. Ma asked them, "If this body arranges tomorrow's Leela, would you like it?" Everybody agreed to it.

Students, teachers, some senior girls of the Ashram—each of them know their part in the play individually. But one didn't know what the other will do.

The play started at night. At one corner, Didi was absorbed in Shivpuja. At the other corner, Ganga Didi was doing Krishnapuja. Both were sitting straight, full, concentrated in their meditation. As was customary, a swing hung from the ceiling in the middle of the hall. In the southern part of the hall, on a pedestal was the seat of Ma, Didi Ma and Mouni Ma. One girl stood as "Shankaracharya" among her 'disciples' at one place. While little girls performed yogasana at a distance from them.

Ma, as always, was in green room until she came out as an old lady, wrapped in a white sari. A longtime devotee given the job of an announced, "Tirthavasani Ma, a book is needed there," Ma gave the book as requested.

Main lights were put off. In dimlight, everybody sat in meditation. Ma quickly sat in Her seat. Everybody played the role as advised. Eyewitnesses claim it a wonderful event of Ma's Leela.

In this manner, Ma educated and entertained Her pupils through medium of plays and sports.

In 1951 Holi, Ma was in Vrindavan.³ After the Rasleela Ma was returning along with Her devotees when the group confronted a beautiful black cow. It came running through

the crowd of Her followers; they tried but could not stop it. Finally, Ma went near the cow, caressed it and said, very affectionately. "Mother, we have met now. You may return happily." Strange as it may seem, the cow responded to Ma's words and affection and left the place.

The same year, Ma's birth celebrations were held in different places of Punjab, mainly Ambala. This function was organised at the initiative of respected Haribaba and Avadhoot Swami Krishnanandaji. In this small township, Ma frolicked in the fields, canals, and trees as she enjoyed the breath of fresh air in the countryside.

In 1952 the major celebrations in Punjab were held in Khanna. On the request of Trivenipuri Maharaj, Khanna was chosen the venue. But a little before the scheduled celebrations, Khanna baba Maharaj left this world forever. The local Sanskrit college in Khanna is due to Triveni Puri Ji's efforts.

The celebrations were very well organised by the disciples of late Triveni Puri Ji and Avadhoot Ji. As in Ambala, Ma frequented the fields and the ashgreen surroundings. Once, she reached a cluster of houses, which, she was told, housed several Mahatmas. She sat on a platform under a tree nearby and pointed to the lush green foliage even in the month of May, the peak of Indian summer.

For decoration of the podium and Puja place on the main tithi day, Sri Avadhootji had invited artists from Vrindavan. They are expert in making a beautiful house of Jasmine flowers and bannana skin (Phool Bangla) which was prepared for the occasion.

In 1952, Ma went on a tour of South India along with 14 people which included Haribaba and, Sri Avadhootji Maharaj. The tour was organised by Ms Talyar khan, who had lived at Ramana Maharishi's Ashram. Ma was given a rousing reception everywhere she went during this trip. On this tour, she also 'visioned' Shiv in an image of Krishna.

On return, Ma's Kheyal was to institute a Shivlinga. Therefore, in Vrindavan Ashram, first at Shivkuti and later Panchshiv temple was instituted in the mainhall of the Ashram.

On 18th February 1953 Ma reached Vrindavan for the inauguration of the new Ashram and special puja at Shiv temple. Eight days later, the Ashram was formally opened in the presence of several saints. The Ashram of Swami Sharananand Ji just adjacent to Ma's ashram was also inaugurated the same day.

28th February was Holi.* After the Rasleela, devotees sprayed colour on Ma. In a sudden change of mood, Ma too started playing. The joy of the devotees knew no bounds as Ma threw some colour powder upwards; the colour seemed to stand still in the sky. Someone handed Her a colour spraying gun. Which Ma used effectively to colour everyone present, as if spraying Her love and compassion on everybody.

After playing with Her devotees, Ma went to Pandit Sundarlalji's house and sprayed colour on him.

Panditji said, "I will be impressed if you can manage to spray colour on Haribaba."

Ma's next stop-over, therefore, was Haribaba's residence. Haribaba had kept the door locked from inside. When he heard that Ma had come, Haribaba looked out from his terrace. And that was the chance Ma took to colour Haribaba.

From Haribaba's ashram, Ma went to Swami Akhandanandji's place. She did the same and said smilingly, "Father is a Sannyasi but he is now in Vrindavan."

People around laughed at Ma's comment but she asked for his pardon for this childish behaviour and left Krishnanandji's Ashram. She was in no mood to leave anyone out. Accompanied by kirtans and several devotees, she also visited the ashram of Kathia baba. Thereafter she sprayed colour on cattles, trees plants, whosoever and whatever came in Her range. This was Ma's wonderful way of playing the festival of colours.

One day during satsang, Pandit Sunderlal said :

"Ma, we are all beggars. We beg for your pity and compassion." Ma replied, "And I am the poorest of all who all the time beg to surrender all your desires, jealousies, lust, vanity, anger etc to God."

Haribaba's disciple Manohar, who was moved by the splendid sprawling seven acre ashram of Ma at Vrindaban, suggested a temple of Gaur Nitai in that place. Ma's Kheyal took the shape and construction work for this temple began in right earnest.

The idol of Gaur-Nitai, made of eight alloys (Ashtadhatu) was carved by an eminent artist of Calcutta Nitai Pal. On Holi-Purnima day in 1955 this temple was formally consecrated amidst festivities in presence of Ma and other Mahatamas.

The Karunamayee Maa

Ruby Ghatak

I was trying to recollect our days with Joy Ma I suddenly realized that I should try to put down some incidents or experiences I happen to feel still. When according to reality Ma just does not exist bodily anymore I got a wonderful dream. To my horror it was daylight and I was feeling quite unwell. I was put on heavy teanquillizers for my own benefit & my family was quite upset to see me getting worse consuming so much of allopathic medicine.

In my dream I was having an arguement with Maa and she some how convinced me to believe that she still comes down when her true bhaktas call her in distress & true longing. Such is her power and by the time I woke up & came back to my senses I was completely normal with firm conviction of Maas words. As a tribute to Maa's Karuna I dedicate this article for the Puja issue of ananda Varta.

Maa is the embodiment of shakti herself. When I went to 'Matri Mandir on her birthday celebrations I could see her in all her finest clothes just sitting on the dias in her regal form. Though the place was so over crowded & the nagar sankirtan party aggravated further by singing out of time creating a stampade I could feel her presence which is just ineffable. There was so much noise, choos & suffocation in that place I had to tear myself away from the heavenly sight because of the commotion. Though my husband & I

were requested to stay on for taking the heavenly prasada I had to decline to the offer for various reasons.

From times in memorial Bhaktas of Maa Anandamoyee have seen her in various forms. Somehow too feel she is Maa Bhagoboti still transcending on this earth in the form of Durga durgoti nashini. Every year she comes down to the earth & Durga Puja is celebrated with great enthusiasm & valour all over the country. Even abroad today we find pictures & publications of Maa's photographs & literature rarely found in India. Her foreign devotees also celebrate Durga Puja in big cities of Boston, New York & other parts of the world on different dates.

By Maa's grace I have somehow inculcated the habit of reading a few stutis from the chandi every weekend. In the Markandeya Purana the Rishis have written seven hundred slokas of sanskrit out of which some are forbidden to be read by women living in the day to day world of the Sansari. The praises of Debi Durga where first she is prayed by the name of Saptasati are beautiful. They are Shailoputri, Chandra Ghanta Kushmanda, Skandamata, Kattayani Calaratri & Mahagouri respectively. As we read further Debi Durga has been prayed as Kalika. In this episode she has been the killers of the famous rakshasas Shumbo & the Nishumbho, Chanda & Munda and Raktabiya. Incidentally in adyasotra also these names of the various rakshas are mentioned. They are just the bad qualities existing within our selves which we can rectify with a little effort e-g-kama, krodha, Moha Lobha etc.

Later on Debi is prayed as Mahalaxmi and aparajita or Saraswati. In the XI chaptet of chandi the goddess is prayed in ecstatic language by the devatas. Somehow I get a hair raising feeling when I recite these lines. I have tried to memorize some of them but I cannot yet recite the whole thing by heart. Even I try to recite most of them during my dcily prayers Hopefully someday I will be able to devote more time & dedicate myself to this sadhana. The seed of which was so aptly sowed in by Joy Ma at a any tender but impressionable age. Long live our Ananda Varta & those who have revived the small anecdotes of the mother ever since she entered this land of Ramakrishnadeb Vivek ananda and other great Saints or sages. I conclude my essay with the prayers.

“A parson who knows that he is ignorant must be credited with having most certainly attained to some measure of knowledge”

Ma Anandamayi

By Courtesy of ;

MR. M. M. NAYAK

Contractor

AT/ P.O.—DANGADI

DIST—JAJPUR ROAD, ORISSA

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee A Ghanibhuta Parmalaya

S. K. Bose

Shree Shree Ma at a level of superconsciousness in response to a question expressed to one Sanyasi that She is amongst us in a state of GHANIBHUTA PARMALAYA. That is Purna Brahmawasta is retained in herself in a consolidated form. In other words a representative of Bramaswarupa which is unknown unknowable and cannot be explained, is retained in a densified form. An evolution of divine Jyoti of this nature, the power of light that enlighten mankind rarely rises once in many decades. Such Brahmamuhurtam came on the auspicious day of 30th April, 1896 at Kheora a village in formerly known East Bengal, where Shree Shree Ma was born. Her holy mother Mokshoda Sundari called her as Nirmala one who is in a state of absolute purity.

In her childhood days she was found performing spiritual activities, chanting slokas from Vedas, even Koran and Bible. She came to earth As "Avatar" and like everybody followed rituals of life like marriage with Sri. Ramani Mohan Chakraborty latterly known as Baba Bholanath. Whilst doing duties towards elders, her mind was always inclined to spiritual diciplines which gradually lead her to complete liberation from worldly matters This little girl Nirmala of outstanding spiritual personality later internationally known as Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee an apostle of love who preached about the approach to attain eternal

peace and bliss through her Vanis and Kripa Dristi. People irrespective of castes and religion were immensely benefited in elevating themselves towards immortality and self realization, so that in her words no "RETURN TICKET" is obtained to follow never ending cycle of life and death. She frequently awared us "to realise the sears of truth" which is the basic driving force of every microscopic actions and reactions of all the creations of God. This can be achieved by diving deep into the religion in the Sprit of worship of God—Almighty. In many occasions she expressed "Knock and the door shall be opened unto you. Knocking may be interpreted as Meditation, Sadhana, Dhayan, Yap etc. Ultimately the goal of owning Param Pada will succeed, while passing through the process of success and failures. This is uttered by Ma as BANAT BANAT BANJAIGA.

Her language of expression was simple but on analysis was found to have tremendous impact in motivating one to understand that without Brahma Nand there is no second object of power and we are all its parts. In several occasions her simple utterings covered absolute content of sastras, their interpretations followed by conceptual application for the attainment of truth. All these may be achieved by directing the mind to the inner soul by way of controlling the bundle of sense parameters e. g. five Indrias. Once this is successfully done God Wispers. That means one is to realise himself. This was the reason of arranging "SANYAM SAPTAHA" every year at Kankhal in the month of November, Most of the people extracted spiritual benefit

by her presence at that time. This practice is still continued not only at Kankha but in other ashrams as well. Mother many times emphasized that mind must be occupied by God alone, so that it is set free from wordly matters and aligned towards realisation of God. She frequently used to say 'To talk of God alone is of Value all else are painful & of no significance "HARI KATHA AUR SAB VRIETHA VYATHA."

It was on 27th August, 1982 Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee an embodiment of truth, spiritual power, Baramashakti, an inseparable entity of God left her body at Dehradun for an unspelled destination—ABYAKTA DHAM, after urging everybody to concentrate mind to "ISTA".

Jai Ma

Annual Naam Kirtan at "Matri-Mandir"

SHREE SHREE ANANDAMHYEE CHARITABLE SOCIETY

"MATRI MANDIR"

57/1, Ballygunge Circular Road,

Calcutta-700 019

Phone : 474-8504

Dear Brother/Sister,

With deep pleasure, we are announcing the celebration of Annual 'Naam Kirtan' at our above addressed office. The Adhivas will be observed in the evening of Saturday, the 8th March, 1998 Next day, i.e. on Sunday, the 9th March, 1998 — a **DAWN TO DUSK NAAM KIRTAN** will be observed. On this occasion, Special Puja of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, Shree Shree Narayanji and Shree Shree Baba Onkarnathji will also be performed. At noon after Purnahuti, prasadam will be distributed among the devotees participated in the function.

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

Yours

In the Service of MA,

Members

(Executive Council)

Shree Shree Anandamayee

Charitable Society

Dated :

The 1st January, 1998

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 earliest. 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.

1st December, 1997

Tapan Bose
General Secretary
Publications Division
T. No. 474-8504

One who serves God Can Never be helpless. The more ardently one seeks communion by engaging in japa, His Service and Contemplation, the fuller will be his revelation.

MA Anandamayi

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P.O. UNCHAHAR

DIST—RAIBAALI

UTTAR PARDESH

“The ceaseless, never-ending current of divine Mercy and Compassion ever flows forth, in that current one should bathe.

MA Anandamayi

With Best Compliment :

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