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Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma

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

MATRI VANI

(*Replies to letters from different people at different times*)

67.

What you consider to be your duty, you will in any case try to carry out—in fact you are doing it. But man's special duty which is the thought of God, the activity of the mind that awakens the desire to know what you really are, on this you should concentrate ; and it is most important to make a special effort in that direction. Give your attention to your regular daily practice of *sadhana*. If circumstances will not permit any other exercise let it be only the remembrance of Him—the purpose of it all being the realization of the ONE who is manifested in all forms and in all modes of being.

68.

He who has given you a mouth will also provide you with food. Observe strict truthfulness and be ever mindful of Him alone.

69.

When the mind centres on what gives peace and one's gaze dwells on what promotes it, when one's ears listen to what fills the heart with peace and at all times there is a response from Him who is Peace Itself, then only can there be hope of peace.

70.

To spend your days serving your mother is very good indeed. Endeavour to keep your mind surrendered at God's holy feet—then alone can there be a prospect of the shadows of restlessness growing faint.

71.

It is for you to concentrate with all your might upon spiritual practices such as meditation and prayer—all the rest He Himself will get accomplished.

72.

Abide by your duty. To live in the home that he has created for himself is surely fitting for a householder. Do not however neglect the search for your real home. Only when this is found has one truly come home.

73.

In order to experience all this you have come into the world. In spite of difficulties cling to the thought of God.

74.

God alone is Truth. To be able to engage in worship and *sadhana* is man's good fortune. In all matters depend on Him. Whatever the Fountain of Goodness does must of necessity be beneficent. Do your utmost to fulfil your duties.

75.

To feel drawn towards anything closely connected with religion means to be attracted towards God — provided the attraction be of a genuinely religious nature. It is important to try and concentrate on the One. Such an effort promises future development of firm faith and single-mindedness.

76.

Merely to assume the robes of a *sadhu* while the spirit of renunciation is lacking will not do. Taking *Sannyasa* and becoming a *Sannyasi* spontaneously are certainly not one and the same thing.

77.

Those who meditate on the name of *Brahman** (the Saviour) should use for their *japa* a rosary made of *Tulsi*† or of pure sandalwood beads; whereas those whose *Ishta Mantra* represents an invocation to *Shakti* should use a rosary made of *Rudraksha*** beads.

* The Name of 'Taraka Brahma' which Shiva, the World-Teacher, is believed to impart to the ears of a dying person at Banaras, is popularly identified with the name 'Rama', but it is undoubtedly the sacred *Pranava* itself of which the name 'Rama' is an outer expression.

† The sacred basil.

** Rudraksha beads are made of the berries of a tree sacred to Shiva.

AMARA VANI

(16 A)*

Question :—Does the *Shraddha* ceremony benefit the person for whom it is performed even though according to the law of Karma he has in the meantime been reborn in another body ?

Mataji : It does Listen to a story.

A pandit and a fakir were very great friends. One day the pandit tasted a strong flavour of jack-fruit. It was distinct and quite unmistakable just as if he were eating the fruit. He could not imagine to what the sensation might be due. Moreover it was not the season for jack-fruit, although, there are of course trees that bear all the year round. The pandit carefully explored his garden, without however being able to locate the source of the phenomenon. Finally he begged an explanation from his friend, the fakir. "Come along", said the fakir, "let us get into a boat and cross the river." Having arrived on the further bank the two friends proceeded to a village where they found a man who was performing *Shraddha* and offering jack-fruit in the course of the ceremony. "This man was your son in your last life," explained the fakir, "and now in his old age he is performing *Shraddha* for you. You were extremely fond of jack-fruit in your previous birth ; this is why your son has taken the trouble to procure for the ceremony some jack-fruit from one of those rare trees that fruit throughout the year.

Question : Suppose someone has no relatives and therefore nobody to perform *Shraddha* for him, what will be his lot ?

Mataji : If a man strives with whatever capacities he has at his command to attain to the Supreme Goal of human life, his progress will depend on the intensity of his efforts.

It is the duty of a son to perform *shraddha* for his deceased father in order to help him on his upward path. If a man who has no son dies, another relative may carry out the ceremony, as for example the husband for his

* The Bengali original appeared in Ananda Varta Vol. III/4, P. 247.

wife and the like. Take the case of one who does not get married and who regards the Almighty as his sole support, leaving all matters in His hands. God Himself will draw such a person towards his goal. It has to be borne in mind that in reality only the One alone exists. Do not make the mistake of imagining that without the help of a wife, son or husband you cannot advance.

He who is the Creator of all things has made perfect arrangements. Remember : Thou alone art Father, Thou art Mother, Thou indeed art Friend. There is no cause whatever for worry.

How can a *sannyasi*, who has gone forth, leaving home and family, feel troubled ? Is it possible to become a fakir and yet have worries ? These feelings belong to the worldly-minded. For one who has become free from the bondage of birth and rebirth, what remains to be done ? Whether *shraddha* will be performed for him or not is of no importance.

Those who are unable to engage in *sadhana* will receive help from what their sons or others do for them. Really speaking the father is himself the son. One should endeavour to do one's own *shraddha*.

Listen to a story : Someone had passed away. It was decided that his body should be taken to the banks of the Ganges and burnt there. But the Ganges was very far away. The bier-bearers had walked already quite a long distance when, during the night, they were either overtaken by a heavy rainstorm or for some other similar reason they put down the bier and rested. Soon they fell fast asleep. Close to the place where they slept there happened to be a very old woman in a pitiable state of health. Her one longing was to be able to die on the banks of the holy river. Seeing that the bearers were sound asleep, she somehow or other managed to remove the corpse and to lie down herself in its place. When in the yet dark and stormy night the bier-bearers resumed their journey they failed to notice their change of burden and in this way the old woman was carried to the burning-ghat. As soon as they reached the Ganges she died. When at last it was discovered that the original corpse was missing, a thorough search was instituted and after a few days the corpse was found in an advanced state of decomposition.

The one who was destined to die on the banks of the Ganges reached there in the manner just described, whereas the other person whose fate was

herwise ordained could not be taken there in spite of the most strenuous efforts. Whatever is due to anyone, anywhere, God will bring it about by a combination of circumstances.

The important thing is to get first-hand experience of whatever work that one has to do. What is one's own responsibility should not be left to others, but must be carried out by one's own strength. If someone else is deputed to do the task part of its fruits will be his. Therefore if you do anything, do it with your own hands; see with your own eyes and hear with your own ears. To throw the burden on another while sitting back unconcerned is not proper.

Keep in mind: Whatever work you undertake must be done by you yourself and to the full. Although it is true that nobody can foretell in what way 'Maya' may interfere, at any rate one has to try to do one's best.

One may of course make a mistake or be incapable of performing any particular task, but that is another matter. One should not be guilty of neglect, then even if Providence wills it otherwise, one can have peace of mind, for one has nothing of which to repent; what has happened is not due to one's own fault. To carry out completely every action must be one's aim.

For this reason those who tread the path of *shadhana* must carefully avoid any cause for feeling guilty or negligent with regard to any line of action they may have entered upon. In this way Karma will become exhausted. Remember—it is He who comes to you in the form of work, therefore give it your undivided attention. Regard it as your duty to accomplish entirely whatever work you have undertaken and then God Himself will bring it to completion.

He has given you eyes with which to see everywhere but Him alone and hands to be busy in His service; feet to walk in His ways and a mind with which at all times to glorify Him. Be His servant, pray to Him, worship Him.

On rising in the morning remind yourself that you are His instrument, and pray that during the whole of the day good and beneficent deeds may be carried out through you, His instrument. Let all your actions be consecrated to Him, in other words engage in service and along with it sustain

a current of divine thoughts. Repeat God's name and bow down before Him.

On retiring for the night pray, offering at His feet whatever you have done throughout the day and examine in detail all your actions since the morning. If you have done wrong crave His forgiveness and ask His help that you may not blunder again in future, that all your actions may be pure and immaculate. Pronounce His name and prostrate yourself before Him—if not actually at least mentally; contemplate Him, placing your head at His feet and end up by surrendering your whole being, body, mind and heart at His holy feet. In this attitude of mind you should fall asleep.

If at all times you cultivate a spirit of dedication, who can tell but that perhaps some day, by His Grace, by His Mercy you may really become wholly His. This is why it is so important always to foster a spirit of self-dedication.

(16 B)

A young girl was talking to Mataji. She said : 'When I sit down to meditate I do not intend to contemplate any form, but how is it possible to meditate on the formless? I have noticed that at times when I try to meditate images of deities come floating before my mind.'

Mataji : Whatever image arises in your mind on that you should meditate ; just observe in what shape God will manifest Himself to you. The same form does not suit every person. For some Rama may be most helpful, for some Shiva, for others Parvati and again for others the formless. He certainly is formless, but at the same time watch in which particular form He may appear to you in order to show you the way. Consequently whichever of His forms comes into your mind that one you should contemplate.

Proceed as follows : When sitting down to meditate first of all contemplate the form of a deity ; further imagining the deity to be enthroned on His seat, bow down before Him and then do *japa*. When you have concluded the *japa* bow down once more and, having enshrined Him in your heart, leave your seat. This in short may be your practice if you are not able to meditate on the *Brahman*.

Be ever convinced that at all times and without exception He is doing and will do that which is best for you.

Reflect thus : In order to aid me He has revealed Himself to me in this particular guise. He is with form as well as without form ; the entire universe is within Him and pervaded by Him. This is why it is said : 'The *Sadguru** is the World-teacher and the World-teacher is the *Sadguru*.

The aforesaid is especially meant for you. The same does not apply to every person. The more you contemplate Him the more rapid will be your progress. If any image arises in your mind it is He, as He is also the formless—mark what comes spontaneously.

* The perfect Guru who shows the way to the knowledge of the Real.

A JOURNALIST'S IMPRESSION

By

B. C. Biswas, Advocate

Rep. :—The Pioneer, Ananda Bazar Patrika and the Hindusthan Standard
(Calcutta and Delhi Eds.)

It is a veritable honour done to me by asking me to write about my impressions that I might have gathered as a journalist about the celebrations in connection with the 60th birth-day of the Mother.

The celebration went on for near about a month in those dire days of broiling heat. The Reception Committee presented myriad types of items, ranging from didactic speeches to staging of dramas and music demonstrations by artistes of All-India fame, in an eye-filling gaily-bedecked pandal, the like of which has never been witnessed in recent years.

I visited the scene of festivity daily, morning and evening, and covered news-letters, in my own way. Verily, it will be difficult for me to forget the brilliantly spectacular decoration with line-and-brush work, deftly executed in a Santiniketan style, giving shape to the suggestiveness of a South-Indian temple. The

massive gateway fronting the pandal and the closed doors at the back of the dias, the decorated pots and plates and statutes affixed on door-panels and porch-lintels, all smacked of a design, resembling an ancient stony architecture. Their impression will live long in my memory.

But what struck me most was the atmosphere which reigned everywhere, surcharged with placid serenity. As the door was wide open to all, people of all walks of life brushed shoulders with one another in the vast assemblage of people that gathered there every day. A large number of men, professing faiths other than Hinduism, also took part regularly. Yet there was no discord. All appeared to be charged with an inexplicable awareness of equality and kinship that obtains among sons and daughters of a common mother. This message of humanity—a message of equality, kinship and brotherliness—is,

I suppose, the message of the 'Mother'. I could read this message of humanity in the Ashram, where Kamalda and other inmates thereof used to be seen always encircled with people, in the community kitchens where on an average one thousand and five hundred devotees of the Mother, irrespective of their position in life, dined together. The Ashram in those days was a veritable continent, all living together in an indistinguishable whole, like different flowers bunched together in a bouquet.

I have already said that the atmosphere, be it in the pandal or the Ashram, was surcharged with placid serenity. There was no disturbance nor even flutter, when the daily items were on, and the people used to hear everything with rapt attention, though it is but natural that at times there might have been some items which had no spontaneous appeal or when the microphone failed to receive even the soulful voice of some of the artists. The audience sang in chorus with the mother, whenever she was pleased to sing devotional songs in her own inimitable voice.

Truth to tell, as a journalist I join functions occasionally both in and outside the city of Banaras, but never had I any chance of seeing the organisers so punctiliously mindful of the

comforts of the assembled people. Those were the days of gruelling heat and meticulous arrangements were made to mitigate its langour and oppresiveness by lavish provisions of electric-fans and 'Khus' screens. Free ice-water was supplied to the thirsty. Not satisfied with this, the organisers made arrangements for occasional cooling spray of rose-water on the vast audience, which used to be anywhere between 10 to 12 thousands each day.

I suppose it is the benign grace and soul-lifting inspiration of the Mother that I witnessed in the face of the organizers whom I saw from very close quarter, working day in and day out, with other enthusiasts and devotees, without ever betraying the least sign of a drooping spirit in their eyes, a frown upon their brows or an expression of chagrin on their lips. Whenever I posed questions or enquired things about, their eyes beamed with joy and the reply came out forthwith.

In the end, I voice forth my sentiments through the medium of your magazine, Ananda Varta, that it is this 'human message', that has cast an indelible impression upon my mind. This is, I suppose, the message of the Mother to the world, torn asunder with strifes and conflicts.

“LOVE’S PHILOSOPHY”

By

Rai Saheb Akshay K. Datta Gupta, M.A.

The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion ;
Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one another’s being mingle—
Why not I with thine ?

In these well known lines the English poet Shelley (following, it has been supposed, an older French song) has delineated what he was pleased to describe as “Love’s Philosophy”. Switch them on to the Divine and you have the quintessence of the religion of love as professed and practised by mystics all the world over. The devotee approaching the Divine with a heart saturated with love ever fresh and unsullied, not only longs for His blissful company but wants to merge his entire self in His. The longing has its meed of joy as also no little pang, but both are pursued with equally devout zest, and so it represents what the Vaishnava Acharyas of Bengal have called the *ragatmika bhakti* : devotion fea-

turing love as its soul : in both its aspects of *milan* and *viraha* (union and separation). It has been well recognised that such devotion can truly well up only from the heart of a woman and hence the *bhakta* (devotee) practising it, has to suppose himself to be essentially a member of that sex. So the great Mira Bai, when she was refused an interview by an eminent Vaishnava saint in Brindaban on the ground that she was a woman, retorted with killing effect, that she was surprised to hear that there was any male in Brindaban. And so also Cardinal Newman has aptly said : “If the soul is to go on to higher spiritual blessedness, it must become woman—yes, however manly you may be among men.” Thus love which in its most charming and engrossing form, can spring and subsist between two persons of opposite sexes, finds its justification in the realm of religion when offered to the Divine.

The self merger of the devotee in the Lord of his love in the way

presented in Shelley's impassioned lines has been allegorised in the *padabali* literature of Bengal as the *nikunja lila*, that is, the sports of Radha and Krishna in the most secluded bower in Brindaban, and their subsequent awakening to other interests and consequent separation at the *Kunja bhanga*, the break up of the bower.

But the Vaishnava Acharyas did not forget to utter the much needed warning that the *ragatmika bhakti* as described above is not for the common spiritual aspirant, as, to quote Sri Aurobindo's words, "no error can be more perilous than to accept the immixture of the sexual desire and some kind of subtle satisfaction of it and look on this as a part of *sadhana*. It would be the most effective way to head straight towards spiritual downfall". The Vaishnava Acharyas have, therefore, recommended for the common devotee not *ragatmika* but *raganuga bhakti*, that is, devotion not affecting but in tune with love. Here he has to place himself not in the position of Radha or a Gopi or even a *sakhi*, i. e. a companion herself in love with Krishna, but a *manjari* a sort of chambermaid bringing about and attending on the union of Radha and Krishna and deriving her utmost satisfaction from such service only. It may be noted in passing that here

also the devotee has to suppose himself to be no man but a woman, thus bearing out the contention of Mira Bai that there can be no male in Brindaban except, of course, her Giridharilal, i. e. Krishna.

Complete merger is possible only when there is unity of being as between the fountains and the river, the rivers and the ocean, the winds of heaven "mixing for ever with sweet emotion" as sung by Shelley or to take an example familiar in Indian Philosophy, as between space enclosed in a jar and the unlimited space outside. On this point Indian mystic thought ever since the days of the earliest Upanishads has never entertained any doubt. *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* (truly all this is Brahma), *Ekamevadwitiyam* (One only without a second) *Neha nanasti kinchana* (there is no duality here) are some of the Upanishadic texts which are familiar to all, and Sankaracharya, the greatest monistic philosopher of all ages, taking his stand on those texts, has gone so far as to declare that the apparent plurality in the world is only an illusion. Theistic thought finding it difficult to eschew duality which is necessary for the purpose of worship, has made a sort of compromise by devising the cult of qualified monism or that of duality-cum-unity of at least two

different shades. There is only one in and out cult of duality the protagonist of which, Madhvacharya, has, however, been hard put to it to affiliate his cult with the earlier upanishads.

The Buddhist with his obsession with the cult of void, *Sunya*, speaks more of extinction (*nirvana*) than of union or merger, although this cannot altogether be excluded as the *nirvana* is said to have a content of *Maha Sukha*, Supreme Bliss. The Buddhist mystic, Mahayanist, of a later date in a subtle way almost substantialized his "void" by giving it a female robe and character under the name of Niratma (non-soul) on whose bosom the *bodhi chitta*, the awakened or freed one, is to fall to be merged with it in supreme bliss. *

Unity in diversity has also been the ideal of Indian art and architecture from very early times and is also the last word on it. It is a noble as well as a difficult ideal to attain. The Indian artist succeeded because it was with him a spiritual heritage from the days when the *Purusha Sukta* (*Rigveda X*) first revealed

itself, singing of the cosmic Purusha with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet, covering the universe and yet exceeding it the measure of ten finger breadths.

This heritage has stood the test of time. It has been kept alive and efflorescent by a brilliant succession of spiritual teachers. They taught diversely but always in tune with the *akhanda* (the whole and unsliced truth). Thus there were very few occasions for deadly intolerance among different creeds in Hindu India.

Those who have been following the words of Ma Anandamayi as reported in the pages of the *Ananda Varta* cannot have failed to marvel how when discussing the different views presented to her concerning spiritual matters she, while holding every such view as being valid in its appropriate circumstances takes care in her own charmingly convincing way to lift the minds of her audience to the one *akhanda* with reference to which every thing should be viewed and judged. The One should be viewed in many and many in the One.

* For the ideas of mystics in other lands I can do little more in this article than refer the reader to Aldous Huxley's book the *Perennial Philosophy*.

THE SUPER PERSONALITY OF THE MOTHER

By

Swami Madhav Tirtha

About ten years back, I had read and heard about Shri Anandmayee Ma and I desired to have her Darshan and some talks with her at the first opportunity.

The first event took place about five years back when she came to Ahmedabad and stayed at Kantibhai Munshaw's house (in a tent in his compound). As my Ashram is only ten miles from Ahmedabad, Kantibhai wrote me a letter that it would give a pleasure to all, if I be present at the time of Satsang with Shri Ma. I liked the invitation and went to Ahmedabad to stay at Kantibhai's house for four days.

On the first day in the evening, I went to see the mother in her tent, but she had already come out for Satsang, so we met on the way and we exchanged the famous namaskar ॐ नमो नारायण with folded hands. At that time, she took both my (folded) hands in her hands as if we had a relation for several births and said to me: "I will remain in Pitaji's house". I replied, "Pitaji's house exists

everywhere". She appeared to approve my reply. Then I put her the question (while standing on the Road):- "What is the cause of so many contradictions in our world which is believed to have been created by God?" She replied at once, "विरुद्ध धर्म देखना ही विरुद्ध धर्म है—'To see contradictions is itself a contradiction". That was a reply which I liked very much. That means that God appears as the world from the worldly point of view and the world appears as God from the divine point of view. So the apparent contradiction is not in the world but in our view of the world.

Then both of us went together in the large pandal erected for Satsang where about 2000 people had come for that purpose. In the usual way, Kantibhai first came to us with two garlands, and thinking perhaps that I should be garlanded first, came to me first with a garland in his hand, but I did not like that I should be honoured before Mataji; so I took the garland from his hand and placed it round the neck of Mataji. Then

Kantibhai went to Mataji with the other garland and Mataji said, "Pitaji has taught me how to garland others," so she took that garland and placed it round my neck. That was a very happy moment for me. This also showed her love for saints. Then we took our respective seats, and some talks began in which she addressed me as Pitaji and I addressed her as Mataji. Then I told the audience that this was a new kind of relation, as she became the mother of her Pitaji and I was the father of my Mataji. The audience laughed at this talk.

Then some Bhajans commenced and there was good silence. My mind also became silent in the presence of Mataji. After about 15 minutes, I experienced a sort of elevation or levitation as if I was rising higher in the air. I had a similar experience in the presence of Shri Raman Maharshi about 14 years back. I attributed this to some spiritual influence coming from the Mother. I think that this is the best method to obtain spiritual benefit from a great saint like Mataji, i.e. we should try to sit quietly. M. M. Thakore who was sitting by my side saw that I felt some better change in me, but this was not the time for talk, as the influence might fade away. After some time I came back to my worldly consciousness.

After the Bhajans were over, there were some questions and answers and both of us tried to reply, but I did not like to talk much on that day and wanted to hear the answers which Mataji gave.

On the second day, I wanted to show to Mataji and to the audience, the result of my 30 years research work on Einstein's theory of relativity by means of some figures on the black-board. The organisers of the Satsang and Mataji agreed to the proposal. I commenced my work at the time of the evening Satsang in the presence of Mataji with several diagrams on two black-boards. The subject could have been explained better in the English language, but as Mataji did not understand the English language, I had to explain that difficult subject in the Hindi language over which I had not a full command. My lecture was therefore a failure, but Mataji wanted some more information which I briefly explained to her. Mataji said, "Pitaji has given like a college lecture."

That day night, at about 12 o'clock, Mataji had gone to a neighbouring house where Swami Swayamjyoti Tirtha was living and they had about one hour Satsang between them. In the morning I asked Mataji "what was the substance of the talk?" She replied "It was regarding the one soul in all bodies".

Third day evening commenced with the same kind of Satsang in the same pandal. There were some questions from the audience and both of us tried to answer. At the end, one man put the following question :—

“As there was only Brahma in the beginning, when and how the world has been created ?”

I asked Mataji to reply. She asked me to reply. I told Mataji thus : “The man who has put the question wants a reply from you and if I reply, he will not be satisfied.” Mataji told me, “I am putting the same question to you and you should reply”. Then I had to reply as under :—

I first put the following question before the man who had put the above question :—“How did you come to know that there was only Brahma in the beginning ?” That man could not reply. The audience thought that I did not reply properly. Mataji said, “Pitaji has given a proper answer” i.e. “पिताजी ने अच्छा जवाब दिया है।” The substance is that the question was incomplete. It can only be answered by opposing question so that he may know how to put the question correctly. The question should have been “when did the universe as seen by me begin”. Then I would have replied, “It began at the time of your observation of the world”. Such questions require a different kind of

language. Mataji calls this language as उलटी-मुलटी-बाणी। It was a pleasure for me to hear such language from the Mother very often. Sometimes she calls “is” or “is not” and also beyond both. There is “is” where there is “is not” and the Real is beyond both. Mataji advises her disciples very often to try to understand such spiritual language. It is a language suitable for supra-mental experience. Next year I met her at Kantibhai Munshaw's house, when she stayed for a day or two only on the way of her pilgrimage to the Saurashtra with Hari Baba and other Bhaktas. I entered the Satsanga pandal and Hari Baba began his kirtan with न गुरोरधिकं फलं—there is no higher reward than Guru's grace. This lasted for about half an hour. Then there were few questions and answers and the time of train was nearing, so the audience had to take leave. One woman with a small child came near Mataji for namaskar, but the child did not do Namaskar to Mataji. I asked Mataji, “what was the reason ?” Mataji said, “the child does not know that there is some advantage in bowing before the saints.” Then another woman with a child came near Mataji for namaskar. I asked Mataji, “what is the birth-date of this child as The child does not know its own birth ?” Mataji asked me “What do you think about the Mother ?”

I said that it is stated in the Bhagwat that an individual is born when he accepts the world i. e. when he gets a knowledge of the world and of himself (11-22-39)." Mataji said, "That is true". This means that a father is born when a son is born to him and so the individual and his world are simultaneous. As in dream, so in the waking condition.

Then the audience dispersed. Mataji went into her room to be ready for the journey to Saurashtra. After half an hour, I saw her in the Motor car which was to take her to the station. I said at that moment to her, "Both of us are together". She replied at once, "Where is the question of two and where is the question of togetherness?" I at once saw the mistake of my language.

On a third occasion, when I was giving public lectures on Bhagawat in the Madhav Bag in Bombay, somebody informed me that Mataji was to go that night from Bombay to Delhi by the frontier mail. I finished my lecture and went to the station to pay my respects to her. I touched her hands in reverence and they were found to be cool like ice.

Last time, I saw Mataji at Kantibhai Munshaw's house at the time of the Bhagwat Saptaha M. M. Thakore informed Mataji that Swami Madhav Tirtha had come to meet her.

She at once came out. We exchanged Namaskars. Then in the afternoon we again met in the pandal where Bhagwat Katha was going on. After the Katha was over, we had certain talks. At that time Avadhuta Swami was also present and he gave some explanation. Mataji in her usual language said, "Truth is everything and yet nothing; you may call it one, two, many or infinite, all is well".

Once Kantibhai Munshaw told me that the Mother said that she had no previous birth, i. e. she has not passed through many births and that her body is not the manifestation of the accumulated Sanskaras. This statement required to be investigated. I discussed this point with a Swami who stayed in my Ashram last month for 16 days and who knows the Mother very well. He said that he did not believe that the body can come without previous Karmas. My opinion is based on a different viewpoint. The main question is whether the mother sees her body as we see it. The answer will be "no". Sometimes she sees her body as non-existent and then the question of the Karmas of that body does not arise. Sometimes she sees her body and all other bodies as belonging to one Spirit; then also the question of individual Karmas does not arise. There can be, then, only the

Karma of the cosmic spirit. She has not learnt much about our world and this has helped her to go deep into the spirit. It is the material and secular education now imparted to the students that takes them away from the spirit. It is only a bread-winning education.

In short, the Mother has got a rare and unique capacity of reducing the number of independent elements and in keeping before us always and in all circumstances only one independent element, viz God. Modern science of relativity has also reduced the number of independent elements in the system of reference of the observer. In practical experience also, there is only one independent element in our dream, and there is no reason why there should be more than one in the waking period. The future of the world is in the hands of those saints

only who will attract all races i. e. when Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists will like simultaneously to become the disciples of those saints. Such saints will speak and act from true experience of the soul. Such was the case with Shri Raman Maharshi and such is the case with Shri Anandamayee Ma.

Everything is good for a man in his present state of life, but if that man wants to progress to a higher level, then the relative good accepted by him will have to be transcended.

I have yet a desire to invite the Mother to my Ashram, and to live with her at any place for some more days so that I may be able to understand her in a much better way. The above account contains only the result of my short experiences gathered at short periods.

ANANDAMAYEE MATA

By

Dr. M. Hafiz Syed, M. A., PH. D., D. Litt.

It will not be unreasonable to suppose that this outer solid seeming world has not been created or has emanated without any definite purpose. The all-powerful, the all-wise, the all-compassionate Ishwara must have had some definite reason and objective in manifesting this world. It may appear Mayic, illusory because it is constantly changing, but it has an underlying Divine Life immanent in it. The real purpose of this manifestation may be rightly said to be known only to Him who is the Source of our being. Many guesses have been made and many explanations have been offered as to the Why and the Wherefore of this Universe. But no one has yet given a satisfactory and convincing answer. It is rightly said that unless one becomes one with the Reality, one cannot possibly understand the real purpose of this outer world. Suffice it to assume that as it has sprung from a wise source it must have some definite objective.

According to ancient Hindu thought, there are two paths for man to tread: the Pravritti and Nivritti

marg, the former for the spiritually backward and the latter for the spiritually advanced.

In response to recurring spiritual need of mankind various teachers of spiritual eminence have come and gone. They come from age to age to elevate mankind and to destroy the evils that may have crept in the society.

Only such beings are called *Siddha Purushas* (perfect beings) who by virtue of their strenuous "Sadhana" and intense moral purification and spiritual realization attain a state of being which awakens in them cosmic consciousness. They have no separate will of their own. They merge their individuality in the supreme Reality and are more guided by it than by their own "Sankalpa". They are also called *Nitya Siddha*. There is no limit to the spiritual height. They become not only Ishwara in course of their spiritual evolution but *Mareshwara* and *Parmeshwara* also.

None but a spiritually evolved soul can understand or fathom their spiritual depth. To an ordinary soul

the life and activities of such beings appear no better than a mystery. They are capable of doing things which appear impossible to others. Their desire is calmed, their passion eliminated. They are not repelled by anything repellent nor attracted by the attractive. They come to this world with a pure motive of service of humanity.

If we examine Anandamayee Mata's every day life and her activities in various spheres in the light of this fact, we find that she comes up to the highest standard of these ideals. No one has yet been able to gauge her spiritual depth or measure her spiritual height. She has been a puzzle and engima to so many of us. Even her devotees failed to understand her. Only a spiritually realized soul can understand what she is in reality. Those who think that she is an incarnation of the Divine, come down to earth to relieve its sufferings, are not wrong. Perhaps those who identify her with *Sukadeva* or with Shri Krishna, are right because she appears to tread in the foot-steps of the Lord whom we call by various names. Although Lord Sri Krishna was the fullest manifestation of Mahavishnu, he lived his life like a normal natural being without asserting His divinity and all that it connotes. He played with children and frolicked with his

eternal companions and devotees, the much mis-understood Gopis. When statesmen and men of learning assembled, in their midst he played the role of a mediator. When the time came for waging a war, he first did his best to persuade the warring parties to desist from the internecine course, but finding them adamant and heedless to His advice, he served as a charioteer of Arjuna and took part in the mighty war of Mahabharat in all seriousness. He was ever considerate and helpful to his old friends and playmates. Similarly Shri Anandamayee Mata plays every role in her life as a wife, as a daughter and as the Sakhi as carefully as Lord Sri Krishna played His own part in different spheres of life. She observes the Varna and Ashram Dharma scrupulously and yet she treats an Indian and a foreigner alike. She is kind and compassionate to the young and the old alike. Her Grace flows out to every body of whatever social status he or she may be.

It is clear to an observant eye that the purpose of Her emergence on this earth, is deliverance of the people from the miseries of the world.

There are four kinds of Karmas, Sakam, Nishkam, Ishwar Arpan and Swabhavik. Her activities obviously belong to the fourth category. Like Shri Krishna it may be said of Her

that there is nothing in the three worlds that should be done by Her, nor anything unattained that might have to be attained and yet She mingles in action. For if she mingled not ever in action, unwary men all around would follow Her path. She is not content to teach us by words of mouth only but sets practical examples to us how to do things in right manner. Often in a Kirtan, she recites God's name herself and so inspires us to recite it with the whole of our being. She is one with the supreme Reality and she sees One Life vibrant in every atom. She sees the indwelling self in all. Once she is reported to have said, "Every body's satisfaction is my satisfaction. Every body's happiness is my happiness. Every body's misery is my misery."

On another occasion she assured us in the following soothing words :— "The Lord does not wait for your spiritual fitness. Like the flowing Ganges He goes on bestowing His compassion on all. This is His nature. This is His being".

One of the greatest proofs of her

spiritual greatness is that although she has not learnt anything, any sacred scriptures of any religion, yet she is capable of answering subtle philosophical questions put to her by eminent philosophers or scholars and satisfying them completely. Let us remind ourselves in this connection what Lord Krishna taught us : "All the Vedas are as useful to an enlightened Brahmana as is a tank in a place covered all over with water." She is in touch with every plane of the invisible world and this outer world as well. While sitting in one place she is capable of knowing what is happening in other places. She knows where her presence is urgently needed, and which soul is crying for her help and guidance. Outflows Her Grace to bring relief and solace to the distressed. Most of her work is done in silence which is more eloquent than the discourses of learned men. The best thing for us would be to surrender ourselves to Her and let her utilise us in any way she likes. We must merge our will in Her will, because she has merged hers in the Divine.

PATH TO PERFECTION

By

Swami Sivananda

The attempt to achieve spiritual perfection starts with the consciousness and application of the immediate reality that is presented to the senses. That which is certainly known to be existent in the normal human state of consciousness is the body situated in a world of plurality. The maintenance of the body in proper balance in relation to the inner metabolism as well as in relation to the external world is the first empirical concern of man. It is, therefore, a duty of the seeker of Self-realisation to see, first of all, that his body is not in any way out of its balance at any time. The health of the body is of great importance in one's power in the quest of Truth. External purity and observance of the laws of hygiene should never be neglected if the body is to be maintained as one's friend and helper. Purity is the basic rule of sound health. This must include the system of participating in outdoor activities and recreations, partaking suitable diet, in a suitable quantity, at suitable intervals, sufficient and restful sleep, cultivating keen and alert

thinking, healthy ambitions, interest in one's work and always seeking some new meaning, new purpose and new joy in life.

Mental health and physical health are, in ordinary persons, interdependent. The practice of the moral law or ethical conduct will pave the way to the maintenance of a sound mind in a sound body. Passions and disturbing emotions disbalance the system and ruin the health of a person. A mental disturbance means the irrhythmic distribution of the vital energy and the disturbance of the nerves. This leads to illness of the body.

A good aspiration towards a non-selfish end is the pre-requisite of a good programme of life. The early stages of one's life should be spent in the pursuit of knowledge, service of elders, self-control and austerity. At this stage one should not concern oneself with politics or the business of the world which is likely to draw one's attention away from the primary duties which one is expected to fulfil at this time. The moral law

which includes the canons of truthfulness, love and continence should become the guiding factors in the expression of one's thought, word and deed. Contentment, joy and devotion to the ideal of one's life confer good health of the mind as well as of the body. One's ideal of life should be that which never perishes in time and is never contradicted by anything else. To know what this ideal is one requires the aid of proper education at home and at school.

When one undergoes the process of education, no other factor in life should be allowed to interrupt or interfere with. The process of education should be such that it includes a balanced way of developing all the sides and layers of the human nature—physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. Physical health, intellectual understanding, moral integrity and spiritual wisdom are what lead to ultimate happiness. The different intellectual sciences which are taught in the universities of today are a feeble apology for integral education which is necessary for the development of the human personality. No education which neglects certain important aspects of human life can be complete and worth its name. A well-adjusted and balanced study of the essential human nature constitutes real education.

After one is well-educated, one must direct one's consciousness and intelligence to the analysis of experience and knowledge of Truth. Understanding, willing and feeling are the three faculties in man which have to be taken as the means to the practice of the method or approach to Truth. Some make use of all these faculties in a certain proportion in their march towards God-head. Others take to an exclusive path.

The path of right understanding is the rational method of investigation of experience. Here the understanding and the will become one, the former having become another name for the movement of the force of the understanding. The experience of one's finitude implies the existence of the Infinite. The nature of Infinity is opposed to that of individuality. God is accepted not because the scriptures have made mention of Him or because the teachers believe in Him, but because one's own experience and understanding become self-contradictory in their expressions when the intelligent infinite is not accepted and also because the infinite consciousness becomes the logical deduction of the inmost experience of the finite individual. The sense of the infinite and the ultimate reality is ingrained in the deepest experience of every one. The sense of the infinite

is the indicator of and the guide to achieve perfection in the realisation of the Infinite.

Contemplation on the idea of the Infinite is the way to perfection. The objects of the universe are the phases of consciousness. The existence of the individual is on the same level of reality as that of the other individuals in the universe. The subject and the object are related to each other as complement, and one is not superior to the other in the grade of individual reality. Contemplation should, therefore, take the form of an assertion of the conscious reality of the universe as a whole. The universe ceases to be a material presentation to one's true nature of consciousness but discloses one's true nature of consciousness. The knower and the known sink into a reality more profound than it had ever been. The individual becomes the specimen of what is systematically going on in the cosmic nature, the one purpose of contemplation and meditation being to attune the individual's processes with the Cosmic Process.

The attachment does not consist in any action of the body, but in the attitude of the mind. It is the intense affirmation in consciousness of the supreme validity of the indivisibility of the truth of the universe. This conscious affirmation of absoluteness

should be continued until the actual realisation of perfection or absoluteness is attained. The practice should be continuous and should be a method which transforms the other methods into itself or keeps them away as subservient elements.

The method of feeling is faith. To some, faith in God is the standard way of attaining Self-knowledge. Love of God and service of God through His manifestation is the principal path. Faith does not question and reason, but simply accepts the testimony of the apparent justifications of the omnipresent God being the only reality of the universe. This acceptance of the Cosmic Presence implies an attitude of reverence and love on the part of the devotee, not only towards God but His creations as well. The human emotions are not destroyed here but are sublimated and turned Godwards. God is loved as father, mother, son, daughter, friend, husband, wife, or master. The world becomes a pointer to God, and worldly love an indication of the love of God. The world is the body of God. Nothing is to be rejected. Everything is to be loved as a step to God-realisation.

The path of the will is the austere method of determination and decision in regard to the way and the goal. The will bases itself either on faith or

on understanding. The will based on faith is different from the will based on intellect, and the two wills constitute two different paths. The will that is based on faith concentrates itself on the Supreme Being which is accepted as an act of faith. As God is everywhere and the mind of man is characteristic of a behaviour which is contrary to the fullness of God, the mind should be disciplined and its modifications transformed and sublimated. Contrary modifications are opposed and replaced by others of a more beneficial nature, or the modi-

fications of the mind are fixed on God and given a transcendental touch of the philosopher's stone of higher intuitional experience. Matter is separated from Spirit through contemplation on the essential distinction between the two and on the independence and absoluteness of the Spirit. The power of the will is such that it either completely excludes from consciousness all forms outside the infinitude or absorbs them into the consciousness of the infinitude. The consummated will is a means to Self-realization.

DIARY LEAVES

By

Atmananda

(9)

In 1951 Mataji's birthday was celebrated in the Punjab, the time of the celebrations being divided between several towns. Mataji stayed in each one of them for a few days. Before the final function which took place at Amballa, 3 days were spent at Doraha, a small town surrounded by open fields. It is a charming country side and Mataji used to go for evening walks on the banks of the canal and for some time sit down in some solitary place under a tree, where a small group of us gathered around Her. Then we could ask questions informally and Mataji would reply. One evening a Sannyasi had an interesting discussion with Mataji. He told Her that some Punjabi ladies had approached him and asked some questions. He wished to know whether Mataji approved of the replies he had given them. "The first question," he said, "was as follows: 'What should a woman do in case of a family dispute? Should she side with her husband, her father or her father-in-law?' I told them that it was a wife's duty to support

her husband always and under all circumstances. Was I right?"

"Well, yes," replied Mataji, "but on the other hand her father-in-law is her husband's Guru and one's own father is one's elder and has to be respected. Therefore whichever side the God within the woman's heart prompts her to take that is right for her."

"Then," continued the Sannyasi, "the ladies told me that they were so unfree, so dependent in every respect. What were they to do to improve their lot? I explained to them that it could not be helped, that everyone was dependent on something or other. We Sannyasis depend on the Guru, on the Dharma, etc. Every human being is in bondage. Surely, this is correct, is it not?"

"No," said Mataji, "dependence is due to fear. As long as you are afraid you will be bound. But the moment you are fearless you will be independent and free. The householder is bound by rules and regulations, but the Sannyasi, who is not

afraid of any one or any thing is free."

Then Mataji proceeded to relate the story of a woman who did not get on with her husband and could not bring herself to obey him. In her despair she turned to God with such fervour and concentration that her husband by and by also began to take interest in religion which gradually made him change his behaviour towards her, so that finally their problem became solved in this way.

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In 1952 Mataji's birthday was celebrated again in the Punjab, this time in Khanna, a small town where Sri Triveni Puri Maharaj had resided for many years. It was his keen desire that Mataji should bless Khanna with Her presence during Her birthday celebrations that year. He had built a couple of rooms for Her use, adjoining the Saraswati Sanskrit College, which is situated in the open country in the outskirts of the city of Khanna. The College by the way owes its existence largely to the initiative of Sri Triveni Puri Maharaj, who was eager to spread Sanskrit learning in the Punjab.

Unfortunately Sri Triveni Puri passed away shortly before the celebrations started. However Sri Krishnanandaji Avadhute and the disciples of Sri Triveni Puri prevailed on

Mataji to visit Khanna all the same and made excellent arrangements for Her and Her bhaktas' stay.

At Khanna also Mataji's evening strolls were often found to be occasions on which She seemed in a delightfully communicative mood, at times relating incidents from Her early life at Dacca and Shahbag.

One evening we came to a cluster of houses amongst trees in the open fields in the vicinity of Khanna. We were told that only Mahatmas lived there. Mataji sat down on a brick platform under a peepal tree and all of us who had accompanied Her sat on loose bricks on the ground. The tree had lovely fresh green leaves in spite of the grilling heat of May and Mataji remarked on it. Then She began to tell us about the trees in the garden of Her Ashram at Dacca. The following is the gist of what She said: "There is a tree there of a Madrasi species of mangoes. That kind of mango is not to be found in Bengal. But anything may become possible in a spot where so many Mahatmas have lived. Who knows, perhaps someone ate a Madrasi mango and threw the stone away in the garden and the tree grew. The leaves of that tree shed honey. I noticed that the verandah of the Ashram was always besieged by ants and one day I told someone to

put a brass tray under the tree. Soon it was full of honey. So much honey dropped down from the tree that it could fill a jar. Some people said that the tree was not a tree but a Mahatma in the shape of a tree. Then there is a jack-fruit tree which bears fruit all the year round.

“Where so much Kirtan is sung many miraculous things may occur and in Shahbag Kirtan was performed day after day. Two cypress trees grow near the house where this body used to live. The wood of these trees has turned into sandalwood. Not only has it the scent of sandalwood but its other properties as well. People used it to make sandal paste for their puja. Manmohan Baba (the architect of part of the Banaras Ashram) cut a piece of wood from the trunk and took it to Banaras. It is there even now. The leaves, flowers and fruits of those trees are still those of a cypress, only the wood has changed.” “Are there any sandalwood trees near about?” asked someone. “No”, said Mataji, “sandalwood trees do not grow in Bengal.”

Between Jhulan Ekadashi and Janmastami the young *brahmacharinis* of the *Kanyapith** usually every night

stage dramatic performances of religious scenes or plays, songs and dances. Mataji is the chief guest of these performances, which are quite informal and not meant to be a show, but the few bhaktas, especially the women who happen to be present at the Ashram after 9 p. m. when the Satsang is over, are also allowed to attend at the *Kanyapith* hall.

One night in August 1952 Mataji said: “Suppose this body arranged for to-morrow’s ‘Lila’, would you be willing to co-operate and act the parts to be assigned to each one of you?” Most people agreed.

The next night we found the hall arranged in a most original way, in fact there was no audience, everyone present discovered that he was joining in the ‘lila.’ The main parts however had been distributed among the *brahmacharinis* of the *Kanyapith*, teachers as well as pupils, and among a few others closely connected with the Ashram. The whole performance was improvised, everyone knew his part only, not what the whole would be like. At the Westend of the hall a Shiva altar had been put up in one corner and one for Krishna in the other. Didi had been asked to sit before the Shiva altar in silent medi-

* *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Kanyapith*, the school at the Banaras Ashram, where girls are educated according to the ancient ideals of Hinduism and are at the same time instructed in all subjects of the modern curriculum.

tation and Gangadi before the Krishna altar. Both of them sat very still and straight with their eyes shut and were obviously deeply absorbed. Their faces were turned half-way towards us so that we were able to observe them well. At the East end of the hall a large swing is suspended from the ceiling every year during the *Jhulan* week. It was artistically draped with Banaras silks and parted in the middle by a sari only. On either side of it images of Sri Rama and Sri Durga had been placed respectively and worshippers were sitting in front of each of them performing *Puja*. The South of the hall was occupied by Mataji, Didiam and Mounima sitting on raised seats and by one of the girls, dressed up as Sri Shankaracharya, surrounded by some younger girls who acted as his disciples; a little further off the smallest children, bare to the waist were engaged in the performance of *yogic asanas*. When the people who had no special parts were allowed to enter Mataji asked them to join whatever worshippers were nearest to them and to remain concentrated in complete silence. The women were accommodated in the hall itself and the men on the veranda just outside, from where they could watch through the wide-open doors and windows. Mataji left the hall and went on the

small balcony at the South. There She wrapped Herself into a dhoti so as to look like a very old woman. A young woman graduate who acted as the speaker called out to Mataji: *Tirtavasini Ma*, a book is wanted over there !” Mataji came and handed the book to her. Then a drum and later an incense burner were required by other groups of worshippers. The *‘Tirtavasini Ma’* provided whatever was needed. The lights went out and everyone proceeded with their meditation with great seriousness and in complete silence. Mataji changed into Her ordinary dress and occupied Her seat in the hall. The lights were turned on again. The speaker said: “See Didi and Gangadi absorbed in meditation. It looks as if they had attained to the object of their contemplation. And there behold Sri Shankaracharya with his disciples and further some young children who are performing *Hatha yogic* postures with great skill and accuracy; Sri Rama and Sri Devi are worshipped over on that side”

It was a play and yet it was real life also, for everyone who acted his part had to actually live it with all earnestness and not for show; moreover everyone had been assigned the role that suited him best. The atmosphere was overwhelming. One of the girls started singing a hymn to

Krishna, followed by a hymn in praise of Shiva sung by another girl. After this a hymn to Rama and passages from the Ramayana were recited. Next the worshippers of Durga chanted from the *Durga Sapta Shati*. Then someone recited the, *Guru stotra*, the *Guru vandana*, etc. Arati to Sri Rama and Sri Durga were performed one after another with the various appropriate songs. The 'lila' ended with *Pranams* to the guru, to Sri Devi, Rama, Krishna, Shiva etc. which always form the conclusion of every Satsang at the Ashram.

It was a most impressive evening and for a long time after its influence could be felt by those who had taken part. Was it not symbolic of Mataji's *Lila*, namely the *Lila* of Her life? Does She not in Her ashrams unite in friendship and harmony adherents to every cult and sect? '*Tirtavasini*' means one who stays in places of pilgrimage. Wherever Mataji goes men's minds are turned towards religion, in fact every place becomes a place of pilgrimage by Her very presence, besides she does very frequently visit sacred places. And does She not provide for everyone exactly what he needs, be it a book (a symbol for learning and wisdom) or drum (a symbol for music), incense (a symbol for worship and ceremony) or anything else that may help any

particular person? Everyone who approaches Her is drawn into Her *Lila* and has to play his part. It is perhaps not without significance that three European bhaktas were present on that particular evening.

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One morning at Hardwar in 1953 Mataji said to me: "Anger is also one of His beautiful modes of being." I was rather taken aback as Mataji had often urged me to get over my bad temper. I asked: "Why then should anger be avoided?" Mataji: "Because it is very painful for the one who gets angry for no other reason." Question: "So then if one could recognise anger as one of His beautiful modes of being, there would thus be no need to overcome it?" Mataji: "Long before a man can reach this stage, he will have become incapable of anger." Question: "What about the ancient Rishis? We are told that some of them did at times get very angry!" Mataji: "That is on a different level altogether. One who has the power to create also wields the power to destroy. Besides the state of a Rishi is also a stage."

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Several years ago a young Englishman who had come to India to study philosophy and had also practised sadhana, was about to return to his country. He asked Mataji many

questions. One of them was as follows: "When I get home I shall no doubt be asked to give talks on India over the Radio, in clubs and societies, etc. Should I respond to such requests or keep quiet?" Mataji replied: "Most certainly you should respond. Before starting your discourse mentally prostrate before God and pray that you may be a pure instrument to be used by Him.

Then tell your countrymen that just as in the West many ways and means have been devised for people to be trained in various professions in order to be able to earn their livelihood, so India has since time immemorial devoted her energies to the discovery of the innumerable paths that lead to the Supreme Goal of human life, which is self-realization.

MATRI LILA

In our last issue, we carried the story of the Matri Lila to the commencement of the 60th Birthday Anniversary or Jayanti celebration of Mother to be held at Banaras from 2nd to 28th May, 1956. We had mentioned in this connection that the Bhaktas of Mother had decided to celebrate this occasion in a special manner and were looking forward to it with eager expectation.

Since it is not possible to give an adequate account of the entire Jayanti celebrations within the limited space at our disposal in the columns of the 'Matri Lila', we propose to confine ourselves here to an account of the ceremonies and functions observed during the celebration directly relating to Mother.

Unlike other years, the Jayanti celebration this year opened on the 2nd May with 'Puja' offered to Mother, at the suggestion of Sja. Gurupriya Devi (Didi) with full rituals lasting for two to three hours from about 3-30 A. M. the actual time of birth of Mother, on the same lines as the 'Puja' performed on the last i. e. 'Tithi puja' day in the past years. The 'Puja' was performed in the Chandi mandap or

'Puja' hall of the Ashram in the presence of the Bhaktas who had already arrived, with Mother seated on the steps of the 'lion-throne', especially made for the Jayanti celebration this year. She refused in spite of all entreaties of the Bhaktas to take Her seat on the throne itself.

It is said that Sri Avadhutji Maharaj had seen Mother as 'Singha-Vahini' i. e. seated on a lion, a familiar figure of incarnation of Maha Shakti described in the Chandi and other scriptures. He therefore had proposed that a special throne resting on a lion be made and that Mother should be worshipped seated on it during the celebration. Though not every one was very enthusiastic about it, a suggestion from an eminent Mahatma like Sri Avadhutji could not be lightly set aside. So Sja. Gurupriya Devi made efforts to have such a throne made. Sri Nitai Pal, a famous artist of Calcutta, who, it may be recalled, had made the images of Sri Gouranga and Sri Nitai with eight metals for the temple at the Vrindaban Ashram, was commissioned for the purpose. He designed and made a fine and impressive figure of a lion of more



Main entrance to the Pandal



than life-size with the traditional eight metals and a spacious silver throne in two sections, exquisitely ornamented and covered with velvet resting on its back, and accessible from the ground by steps also made of silver and covered with velvet. The throne and the lion together weighed 28 maunds and became one of the popular sights for visitors and the local public during the celebration.

For the remaining period of the celebration till the 'Tithi Puja' on the last day, the Bhaktas had to be content with 'Arati' performed before Mother daily in the morning and in the evening. But on several occasions, particularly in the morning, the Arati of Mother had to be postponed or abandoned when She would be engaged elsewhere or when it clashed with Sri Hari Baba's Kirtan starting from 7-30 A.M. or when the rush of Bhaktas was too great in the Ashram compound at the time of Arati and to offer garlands to Her and to receive them from Her in return after the Arati was over. Mother on such occasions would find refuge in Her rooms or if it was late enough, in the pandal.

On two occasions beautiful bowers made up of and decorated entirely with a large profusion of white flowers were set up on the dais in the 'pandal' for Mother, by experts in flower

decoration brought over especially from Sri Behari Lalji Temple at Vrindaban at the suggestion of Sri Avadhutji. But Mother could not be persuaded to sit there for hardly more than half an hour. These bowers were then utilised for the 'Lila' which was part of the daily programme at the pandal.

'Tula Dan'—One unique feature of the Jayanti celebration this year was the 'Tula Dan' ceremony performed on the 24th May. It had been proposed by the Bhaktas of Mother that the Jayanti celebration this year should include the ceremony of 'Tula Dan' when Mother would be weighed against different articles, such as gold, silver etc. and these articles should then be distributed among Brahmins and other deserving people, as enjoined in the Shastras. Bhaktas had accordingly contributed varying amounts of gold, silver, and money for this purpose.

A light but neat structure with wooden frame and supports and roofed with palm leaves, was put up on a raised platform in the Ashram compound before the entrance to the Kanya Pith. The entire structure was covered over with bright red cloth and suitably decorated. Inside was set up a specially constructed wooden balance strong enough to support the

normal weight of a person. Preliminary ceremonies including 'Puja' and 'Yajnas' had been begun the night before and concluded at about 2 P.M. on the appointed day i.e. 24th May.

Mother was then brought there for the actual ceremony of weighing. Bhaktas who had been waiting since the morning with keen expectation for this ceremony which was something of a novelty, now poured into the rather small Ashram compound in such large numbers that volunteers, aided by a few police men, were hard put to it to control the crowd and many had to go away disappointed.

Mother was successively weighed against various articles, viz. the traditional eight metals such as gold, silver, brass, copper, etc taken together and also again each of the following:—rice, wheat, til, mashkalai (a kind of pulse), ghee, batasha (light pieces of dried sugar syrup), fruits, silk as well as cotton cloth. Later these articles were distributed among Brahmins and other deserving persons. In addition, at the suggestion of a devotee, Dr. Panna Lal of Allahabad, Mother was weighed against silver only, the proceeds from its sale being ear-marked for a religious object.

Tithi-Puja—At last on the 28th May came the Tithi Puja day (a date varying from year to year being

determined by the conjunction of stars at the time of Mother's birth) which marks the culmination of the celebration and for which so many Bhaktas of Mother (their number having swelled to nearly fourteen hundred by this time) from far and near had been waiting eagerly for so many days, braving the rigours of the extreme heat and all other discomforts so smilingly. Arrangements for the Tithi Puja had been made at the pandal at a short distance from the Ashram as the Ashram compound was considered too small for the function. Admission into the pandal was by passes and was allowed only after midnight so that there was no unseemly rush and over-crowding as had been witnessed during some of the earlier functions. The 'Puja' was due to commence at 3-30 A. M. but long before that the Bhaktas and visitors had assembled and taken their seats there.

The dais in the pandal had been tastefully decorated with flowers' hangings, carpets etc. In the centre stood the lion throne gleaming brightly in the light. Articles for the 'Puja' had been arranged very neatly on the dais. At a short distance were seated on the dais Srijiut Hari Baba, Srijiut Avadhutji and other distinguished Mahatmas.

At the appointed hour, Mother

was escorted to the pandal from the Ashram in a procession seated on a palanquin decorated with flowers and surrounded by Bhaktas singing Kirtan. She took Her seat on the steps of the throne as She had done at the time of Her 'puja' on the opening day of the celebration. But at the request of Sri Hari Baba and Sri Avadhutji, She at last agreed to mount the steps and took Her seat on the throne. But soon after when the 'puja' performed by Brahmachari Kusum commenced, She laid Herself down, as She usually does on such occasions, on the spacious couch-like throne and remained thus till the end of the ceremony.

The vast gathering sat hushed and motionless in an atmosphere charged with solemnity and spirit of devotion, their eyes focussed on the ceremony before them and particularly the huddled and covered figure of Mother on the throne. As the Puja came to an end shortly before day-break, the assembled Bhaktas came up one by one on the dais—thanks to the special efforts of the organisers,—and felt blessed and overjoyed to lay their 'anjali' or offering of flowers at the feet of Mother who lay motionless all the time on the throne. Each Bhakta received as he left the dais, a gift of 'Prasad' tied up in a piece of small kerchief especially made for the pur-

pose. It was now broad daylight and Mother was slowly escorted back to the Ashram in a procession in the same manner as She had been brought from there.

Thus came to an end the great celebration unique in the annals of the Ashram that had begun nearly a month ago. The programme at the pandal continued but on a limited scale for a day or two longer. The next few days saw the gradual exodus of the Bhaktas, who after taking leave of Mother, began to return to their respective places. Mother continued to stay on at Banaras till the 5th June.

It will not be out of place at this point to pause a moment and reflect on the celebrations that had just concluded. Leaving its deeper philosophical import to be discussed by those competent to do it, we can only repeat what has been said before. To the Bhaktas of Mother there is no question of the birth of Mother in the ordinary sense. Her Birth therefore should signify to those who celebrate it or contemplate on it their own birth into a new life—that of the spirit from the life of the body they had been leading so far. This is but one way of putting the simple faith that inspires the majority of Bhaktas everywhre.

We feel that we should say something about Mother as the Bhaktas saw

Her during the celebration, apart from the 'pujas' and ceremonies performed in homage to Her. Of course there was no opportunity or possibility for the Bhaktas of Mother during this period to come close to Her, and hear Her talk for long periods or to speak to Her and be spoken to by Her as in ordinary times when Bhaktas stay in the Ashram with Mother.

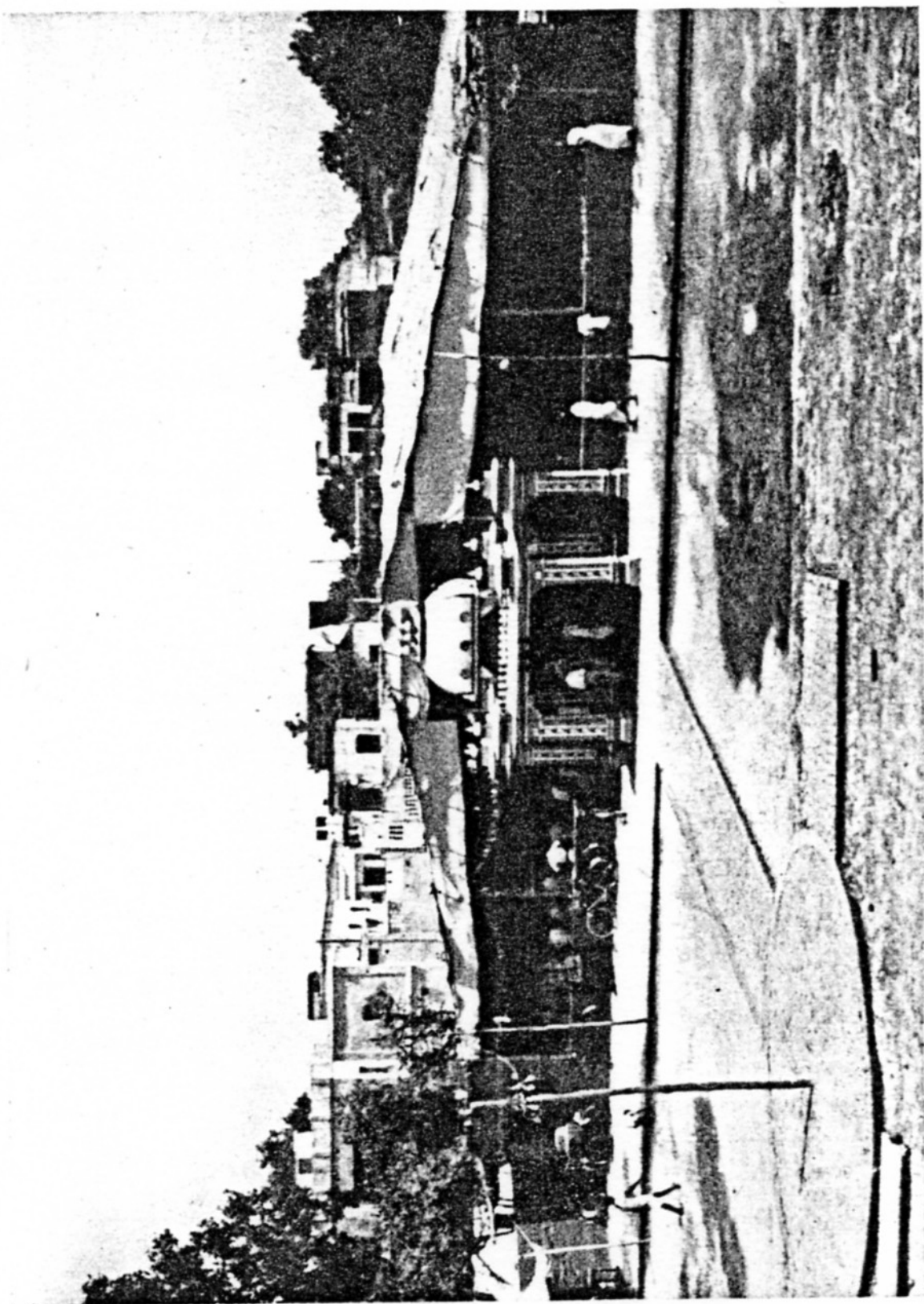
For the Bhaktas, the only way and time to see Her for long was during the programme at the pandal where she remained for several hours daily both in the morning and in the evening. Although half an hour every night after 9 P. M. was set apart for talks and Kirtan by Mother in the programme at the Pandal, She hardly ever, as is usual with Her, addressed the audience. She would sometimes sing 'Kirtans' in her inimitable rapt manner with the vast gathering following Her with rare fervour.

Mother could be seen in the Ashram ordinarily at the Kirtan of Sri Hari Baba in the morning & in the evening or during her *Arati* before or after the Kirtan or in the evening during *Arati* or when taking a much-needed stroll for a few minutes in the evening along a narrow path formed by the Bhaktas, standing in a

dense mass in two lines on the parapet facing the Ganga.

At other times Mother would be closeted in Her room seeing people, especially seeking Her advice either regarding matters connected with the celebration or their personal problems.

But it would be altogether wrong to conclude from this that during the celebration Mother remained practically aloof and inaccessible to the majority of the Bhaktas. In fact it was a common sight to catch a fleeting glimpse of Mother at most unexpected places darting electrically from one place to another, Her head wrapped in a wet towel if it was hot, followed by a small group of devoted attendants, who could hardly keep pace with Her. She would be seen pausing for a few moments, on Her way to the Pandal, at the 'Chandi Path' where a whole host of Brahmins were reciting the 'Chandi' or pushing Her way into the kitchen, the workers waiting apprehensively as Her eye critically took in the situation at a glance or again watching the Bhaktas at their meals sitting anyhow and enjoying the experience so different from what they had been accustomed to at their homes. If any body fell ill and there were several cases, some of them serious, Mother



Infront of the Pandat

would come often and sit by the bedside making enquiries, giving directions and thus bringing cheer to the patient and the attendants. What is more significant, it was no rare experience for many Bhaktas who longed for a word or gesture of recognition from Mother; to find Her suddenly passing from nowhere by his side, with a nod and a smile or even a word from Her or more rarely a garland thrust upon him and the next moment She was away engulfed in the crowd and impossible to follow.

Thus Her presence was felt everywhere by almost every one, making the entire atmosphere pulsate with life and joy. Literally the whole celebration moved round Mother as the centre.

But in the midst of all Her dynamic activities, Her passive impersonality, one felt, remained as it is. Such is Mother, as has been well put,—“in everything, not in anything; either of the two, and yet neither of the two”.

To resume our story of the Matri Lila. Among the distinguished Mahatmas attending the Jayanti celebrations at Banaras was Swami Sadananda, Secretary of ‘Paramartha Niketan,’ a famous Ashram at Rishikesh. Before he left he had earnestly

requested Mother to come and stay in the Ashram for sometime during the ‘Sat-Sang’ which is organized there for three months at this season every year.

Accordingly, leaving Banaras on the 5th June, Mother reached Rishikesh the next day. More than three hundred inmates of the ‘Paramartha Niketan’ led by Swami Sukdevanand, its founder and Sriyut Hari Babaji Maharaj and Sriyut Avadhutji who had already arrived there, welcomed Mother with Kirtan and took Her to the Ashram. ‘Paramartha Niketan’ had been founded with the primary object of enabling religious minded people including ‘grihasthas’ or householders to lead a life of devotion and meditation amidst an environment ideally suited to the purpose. Nestling at the foot of the Himalayas on the banks of the Ganga, Rishikesh has from very early times been reputed as a place for austerities and meditation of Sadhus and Mahatmas. Covering a large area on the banks of the Ganga, ‘Paramartha Niketan’ comprises about 200 rooms built in rows and furnished with modern amenities like pipe-water, electric lights, telephone, etc. Save for an interval of an hour or two after the midday meal, the entire day at the ‘Paramartha Niketan’, from 4 A.M. in the morning when a kirtan party went

round calling people to their devotions till about 10 or 11 P. M. at night, was taken up with some kind of devotional exercise or other. As usual Mother's presence seemed to infuse a new spirit and zest in the life and atmosphere of the Ashram.

During Her stay there, Mother one day accompanied by Sri Hari Babaji Maharaj and others, paid a visit to the Ashram of Swami Shivanand, founder of the famous 'Life Divine Society'. The Swamiji and the Ashramites welcomed Mother and showed Her round the Ashram. He also sang some Kirtans in Hindi and in English. After taking meals there, Mother and the party returned to the Ashram.

Mother also paid a flying visit lasting for a few hours only to 'Anand Kashi' where the Rajmata of Tehri had put up a small structure comprising a few rooms for Mother at a secluded spot at the foot of the Himalayas. The place had been named 'Anand Kashi' after Mother.

13th June—Mother suddenly left for Banaras which she reached the next day. No previous intimation of Her arrival had been received at Banaras. The state of health of Didi (Sja Gurupriya Devi) had again taken a slight turn for the worse after Mother's departure. The incessant strain she had to undergo during the Jayanti

celebrations in her weak state of health and possibly the depression of spirit induced by her temporary separation from Mother might have been at the root of the present setback in her health. The unexpected arrival of Mother filled her with joy and her health began to mend rapidly.

20th June — Mother stayed in Banaras till the 20th June when she left for Dehra Dun, accompanied by Didi. Having arranged for Didi's stay at the Kishenpur Ashram, Mother went back the next day to 'Paramartha Niketan' in Rishikesh.

27th June — Mother returned to Kishenpur from Rishikesh and the next day Sri Hari Baba and his party also reached there. With his arrival the usual programme of Sri Hari Baba consisting of Kirtan, Lila etc. was taken up and followed in the Ashram.

From 9th to 17th July, Bhagavat Saptah was observed at the Kishenpur Ashram in memory of late Choudhury Sher Singh of Donga, a village in the district of Dehra Dun, at the suggestion of his widow. Choudhury Sher Singh who died last year, was an old and ardent Bhakta of Mother. He was one of those who began visiting Mother since She first came to Dehra Dun from Dacca with Bhajji.

19th July—Mother left for Banaras while Didi had to go to Bombay for

treatment. On her way to Banaras, Mother halted for a night at Brahmachari Prabhu Dattaji's Ashram at Jhusi, Allahabad. She reached Banaras on the 21st morning.

22nd July—Guru Purnima was celebrated with due ceremony on the 22nd July. A number of Bhaktas had arrived at the Ashram for the occasion. On this auspicious day, the sacrificial fire which was being

carefully tended in the small temple at the southern end of the Banaras Ashram facing the Ganga, was removed from there and placed in the 'Kunda' or the hollow receptacle for sacrificial fire built and preserved in the centre of the Ashram compound. It was here that 'Purnahuti' had been offered on the conclusion of the Great Yajna in 1950. A beautiful small temple has been built recently over this 'Kunda'.