

Ananda Vartā

A quarterly journal dealing mainly with the divine life and teaching of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee and with other religio-philosophical topics.

Board of Editors

Mahamahopadhyaya Sri Gopinath Kaviraj, M.A., D. Litt.

Kumari Lalita Pathak, M.A.,

Kumari Padma Misra, M.A., Acharya.

Kumari Bithika Mukerji, M.A., D. Phil.

Brahmacharini Atmananda.

Sri Sailesh Brahmachari.

Sri Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta, M.A., B.L.

Sri K. Bose—*Managing Editor.*

• • • • •

Annual subscription (postage free) India—Rs. 5/-

Foreign—Rs. 6/- or 10 shillings or dollar 1.25 only.

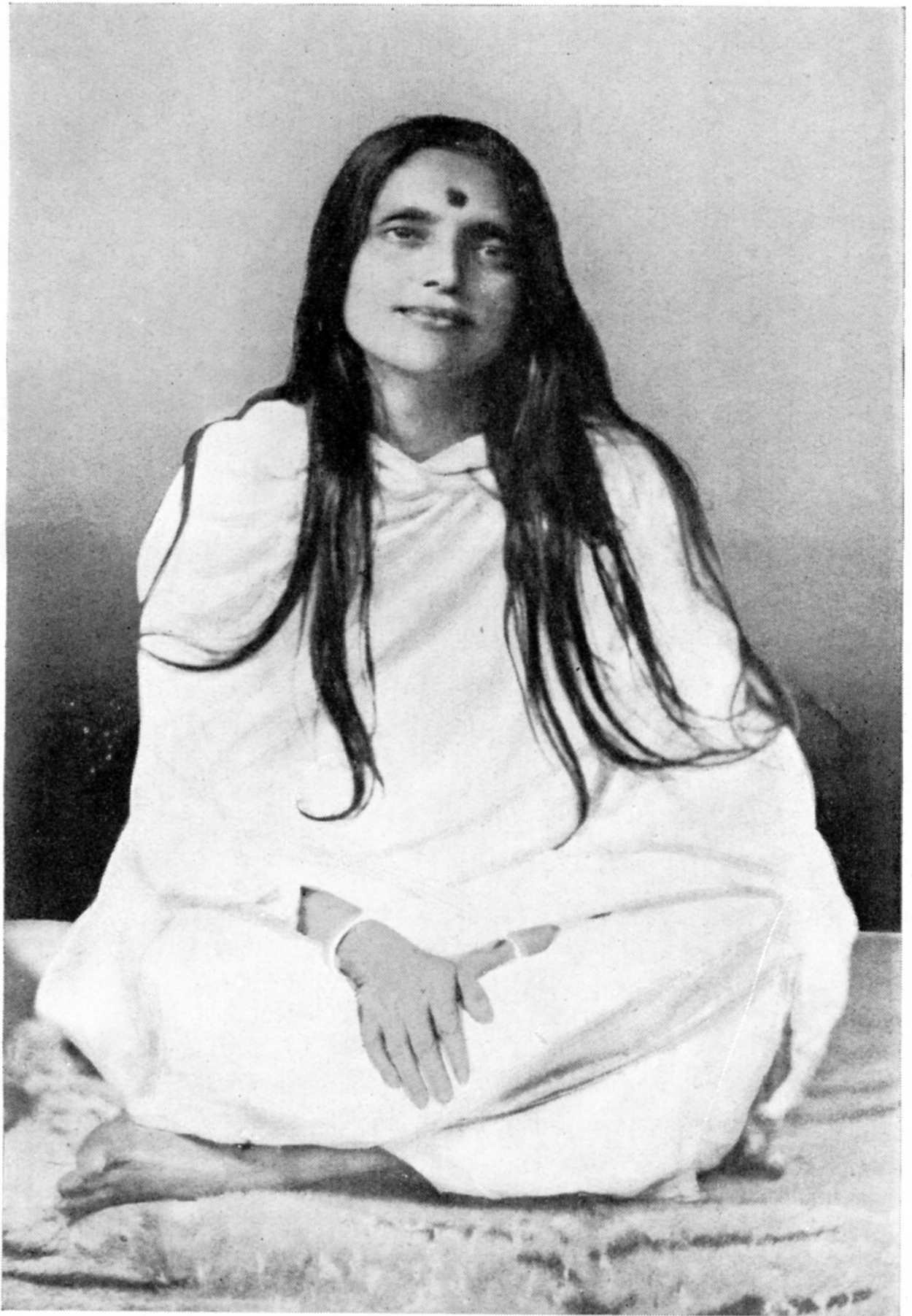
(Rs. 8/- extra for Air-mail postage)

Contents

ENGLISH SECTION

	Page No.
1. Matri Vani	161
2. Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma— Professor B. Ganguly	164
3. Pages from my Diary—Gurupriya Devi	168
4. With Mataji on the Bank of the Gomati River— Krishnanath	177
5. The Background of our Letters—U. C. Dutt	190
6. New Diary Leaves—Atmananda	197
7. Matri Lila	206

*Printed & Published by K. Bose for
Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Varanasi,
at the Kamala Press, Godhowlia, Varanasi.*



By courtesy : Sri G. Das Gupta, Calcutta.

The ONE who is the Eternal, the Ātman,

His Himself is the traveller on the path of Immortality,

He is all in all, He alone is.

MATRI VANI

He who yearns for God will find Him, and for the man who has found Him death dies. One should look forward to the vision of God which is the death of death and endeavour to let one's mind at all times be engrossed in activities or practices that may prepare one for such a vision. You do not know in what shape or manner God Himself is with you. Ever try to spend all the twenty-four hours in the contemplation or remembrance of the Supreme Being, in the repetition of God's Name or the study of books of wisdom. By some realization, by a divine mood or appearance, even by tears shed in longing for Him, the One at times makes His Presence felt. Endeavour to keep your mind anchored in the thought of Him, and in readiness to experience His touch in all forms and modes of being. The day that is gone returns not. Try to make the best use of every precious

moment, being ever intent on the Realization of your own Self.

* * *

God is the support of the helpless. Time cannot pass in one way only. Abide in patience. Just as when having tumbled down, one rises up again by supporting oneself on the very ground to which one has fallen, even so—never remain without Him. Pray to your *Iṣṭa* for His revelation. When asking for worldly goods, happiness and comforts, one will be disappointed time and again; this only creates distrust in one's *Iṣṭa* and in God. But to pray to God for His own sake and to the *Iṣṭa* for His revelation, leads to peace and faith.

* * *

Aiming at liberation and peace, spend as much time as possible in the contemplation of God. Man's body is the result of his actions in former births and therefore it is but natural that he should have to endure all' kinds of suffering and disease. Let your mind ever dwell on the One by the remembrance of whom all pain and sorrow are healed.

* * *

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

*

*

*

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

Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

PROFESSOR B. GANGULY

(Translated by Atmananda)

(8)

Ranchi Ashram,
21st May, 1958.

Question : What does "*Guru seva*" (the service of the Guru) mean ?

Mataji : To obey the *Guru's* instructions without reasoning.

Question : To me the Name and the One whose name it is seem different ; how can they become one ?

Mataji : In the indestructible* Brahman there is no division. God Himself is present as the Name. Just as the seed and the tree are one, so are the mantra and the *Iṣṭa*. The tree is contained in the seed. If the seed *mantra* is implanted in the heart, the *Iṣṭa* will be revealed. When a seed has been sown, it must not be taken out of the earth and looked at, or shown

* A play upon words : '*Aksara*' means indestructible as well as letters of the alphabet. Therefore the Indestructible and the Name are one.

to anyone. Similarly the seed *mantra* should not be disclosed to others, since it thereby loses its power. If kept concealed and tended in the heart, the reality underlying the Name or *mantra* will become revealed. Then He who is indestructible will be realized as the Name. By suitable practices the Name or seed *Mantra* has to be fostered ; keeping it hidden within one's heart, the mantra has to be repeated regularly every day according to the prescribed rules. Thereby the One will finally be realized in all forms.

Question : May the *mantra* not be disclosed even to a realized Being ?

Mataji : Why should it ? Since by telling him the *mantra* one would become his Guru. However, when it is necessary to correct the mantra or clear up doubts, then an opportunity for this arises on occasions.

Question : If the meaning of the *mantra* is not understood, will the *japa* bear fruit ?

Mataji : The fruit of the *japa* will be reaped, but not the result of understanding its meaning. If the meaning is understood, the result will be still better.

Question : What does "*mantra caitanya*" (a *mantra* that has become alive) signify ?

Mataji : When the One blazes forth as the reality that underlies the *mantra*, then the *mantra* has become alive.

Question : Is bestowal of the *Guru's* power identical with the *Guru's* Grace ?

Mataji : The words are different—but essentially they signify one and the same thing. Power is bestowed by the *Guru's* Grace.

Question : What is the significance of a *mantra* ?

Mataji : This is explained in detail in the *S'āstras*. By the regular and sustained repetition of the *mantra*, its significance may of itself become revealed.

Question : If all of us are *Brahman* in any case, why should we have to accept a *Guru* ?

Mataji : Why do you ask ? Because you are in doubt. "I am *Brahman*"—if this has become knowledge beyond the possibility of doubt, who can be called whose *Guru* ?

Question : Does the *Ātmā* become divided or not ? In what sense does the *Ātmā* become united to the *Paramātmā* ?

Mataji : When the *jīvātmā* is united with the *Paramātmā* they become one. When a pitcher of water is emptied into the ocean, the water remains water ; only it is then not called pitcher—water but sea-water. It is similar when the *jīvātmā* is united to the *Paramātmā*.

Question : Why should the fruit of one's actions in this birth be reaped in another birth by another body ?

Mataji : All bodies in the world are indeed your bodies. Only you are unable to realize this. You perform actions with your present body and reap some of the fruit in this body and some portion of it remains over. Birth after birth the results of your actions are experienced in different bodies.

Man's life must be oriented towards finding Himself. To find one's Self means to find God.

The day that is gone will never return. Do not waste precious time.

"Ma"

Pages from my Diary

GURUPRIYA DEVI

(Translated from Bengali)

27th May 1957.

After the birthday celebration at Ahmedabad, Mataji has come to Poona via Bombay about three days ago. This morning a few of us were sitting in Mataji's room up to eleven. At that time Sri Dilip Kumar Roy*, together with some devotees and disciples arrived for Mataji's *dars'ana*. Attired in the ochre robe, with a yellow cap on his head, a silk shawl printed with sacred names slung round his shoulders, his forehead adorned with a mark of a new style, his whole appearance was bright and pleasing. We were meeting him again after a considerable number of years, but no special change was noticeable in his features.

Srimati Indira was also accompanying him. Dilip Kumar introduced her to Mataji in the following manner: "Ma, she is the daughter of your devotee Kriparāmji of Dehradun. Her actual name is Janak Kumari. I have called her 'Indira'. She has two sons. The elder one is studying engineering in Bombay and the younger one stays with his

*The famous singer Sri Dilip Kumar Roy. Formerly he used to live in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. At present he resides in his own newly built Ashram at Poona.

mother and studies at home. Her husband is also an engineer. From time to time he comes here."

We had already heard of Indira. She also was dressed in a yellow sari. Her face was ever smiling. After bowing to Mataji, she sat down near Her.

Sri Dilip Kumar said : "Mataji, you must please come to our place one day."

Mataji : *Baba*, don't you know, that this body has not entered the home of any householder for the last so many years. (Dilip Kumar and his party are at the moment putting up in Sir Chunilal Mehta's house.)

Dilip Kumar : There is a consecrated image in the house. What wrong can there be in entering it ?

Mataji : Nothing wrong, surely, *Baba*. But such has been the way of this body for many years. Everyone knows it.

On hearing that Mataji never enters a householder's home, Srimati Indira's feelings seemed somewhat hurt. She said to Dilip Kumar in English : "*Dada*, how is it the home of a householder, since you are staying there !" Mataji caught the meaning of her words and said : "*Baba*, although at present no householder is living there, yet there was before you came and there will be again after you leave."

After a short pause, Mataji continued : "All the same,

nowadays it does occur at times that a householder's home is converted into a temple or an ashram, and on such occasions, provided that no householder will occupy the house in future, this body has quite a few times been taken to a place of this type."

Dilip Kumar expostulated : "I remember having seen you in a householder's home in Calcutta."

Mataji said laughingly : "No, *Baba*. At Calcutta there are some families who, in their loving kindness have built a separate room or cottage for this body. Those rooms or cottages are never occupied by any householder, and this body does not have to pass through a householder's home in order to get to those rooms or cottages. You must have seen this body in a place of this type."

The conversation went on in this strain for a little while, then Mataji addressed Dilip Kumar thus : "*Baba*, you have such a beautiful voice. Won't you sing to us ?"

Dilip Kumar at first objected, remarking that nowadays he would sing only before the consecrated image of a deity, and that he would not make any exceptions even in special cases. However, Mataji Herself had requested him to sing. Therefore, after consulting Srimati Indira, it was decided that they would today sing their evening *bhajan** in Mataji's presence. They stayed for a little longer and then took leave.

* *Bhajan*—religious songs.

Before dusk a car arrived from Dilip Kumar's residence. At 7:30 sharp he started the *bhajan* together with his party. He first chanted the *Guru Pranama*, then the *Nirvanastakam Stotram* and the hymn to *Bhavani* with an extremely sweet voice. Then he sang his own compositions of songs about Sri Krishna's *Lila*.

At 8-45 p.m. silence is observed for 15 minutes wherever Mataji happens to be. The *bhajan* ended exactly in time for the silence. Dilip Kumar sat down near Mataji's feet, saying : "This short time I shall spend at Ma's feet."

After the silence, he said, pointing to the women who had come with them : "They are all Indira's disciples. They do their *bhajan* together with her."

A little later they all left by car.

31st May, 1957.

After dusk we all sat in Mataji's room. The conversation was about some *Siva Linga* that Yogibhai (the Raja of Solan) had brought from the banks of the Narmada river. One of those *linga* had been consecrated in Yogibhai's *Siva* temple at Hardwar. The remaining three had last year been installed in our Vrindaban Ashram. In this connection we also talked about the *Mahatma* whom Mataji had seen in his subtle body at Rameshwaram, during Her tour to South India. While this conversation was going on, a wire arrived announcing the death of Yogibhai's stepmother at Solan. Mataji

remarked : "Look, the *Mahtama* who had been seen in his subtle body on our pilgrimage to the South, was the son of the priest of Chidambaram. Fifteen or sixteen generations ago, one of Yogibhai's ancestors had been born in the family of that priest."

After saying this much, Mataji remained silent. The thought entered my mind that the *Mahatma* who had been seen in his subtle body was related to Yogibhai's family. Mataji does not always make things clear. When the time is ripe some more may be disclosed.

I remember something else : Mataji was lying on Her bed. I sat by Her side, fanning Her. Mataji opened Her eyes and said : "Look, Didi, I am seeing a very large open space with a number of houses scattered over it. These houses are all occupied by sick people. In the centre a spacious hall is to be erected, and for this purpose Swami Paramānanda has been sent for. He is standing there with a copybook in his hand." This was all that Mataji said. The significance of Her words has so far remained unexplained. But I wondered whether in future a hospital or something of the sort would not be built in Mataji's name, of which Mataji had seen a vision today.

At night Mataji was sitting on Her couch in silence. Kaniabhai* asked Mataji hesitatingly : "Mataji, please tell us what kind of a life a householder should lead !"

* Sri D. I. Kania is the son-in-law of Sir Chunilal Mehta of Bombay. Kaniabhai and his whole family are greatly devoted to Mataji.

Mataji replied with a very soft voice : "You see, the *Brahmacharya* Ashram is not observed anymore, and for this reason all the other Ashrams cannot either be lived as they should be. Unless the foundation is solid a house cannot be built. Ashram means "*a-shram*" absence of strain. Again, everything except God causes strain. Where else can one be at ease but in Him ? Even a householder, provided he does all his work as a service to the Supreme Being, lives in a regular Ashram. The husband should be regarded and served as the Lord of the Universe, the son as *Balgopal* (the child Krishna), the wife as a manifestation of *Mahamaya*. You say, do you not : 'Wherever a man is, there is *Siva*, and wherever a woman, there is *Gauri*.' Rather than being the master of this world, be its servant. For one who is the master there will be endless complications and quarrels, but if you can become its servant, there will be none. Thus, feel that this world belongs to God and you are but his server, acting according to His commands. If you live in this spirit, then even while in the *grihastha ashram* no new bondage will be created by your actions. You will only reap the fruit of your *prarabdha karma*.* What fear can there be for a family man who ever keeps this in mind ? The Almighty will take care of everything."

June, 2nd, 1957.

This morning, after the reading of the Scriptures, Sriman Tapan asked Mataji :

* That portion of one's past actions, which is bound to fructify in the present life and cannot be averted.

“Please tell us something that will be conducive to our spiritual welfare ! ”

Mataji : To endeavour to know himself is man's bounden duty. To know oneself means to know God, and to know God means to know oneself. Not until one has found God can there be an end to sorrow. In order to realize God one should be exclusively engaged either in the repetition of His Name, in singing His praises, or in the contemplation of Him. Apart from this there is no path to salvation.

A little later Mataji continued : *Satsang** and the study of Scriptures and books of wisdom are also helpful on the Path. This body maintains that sense objects (*viṣai*) are poison (*viṣ hai*). By indulging in sense enjoyment one gradually advances towards death—it is comparable so what is called 'slow poison.' And moreover one has to purchase a 'return ticket' and come back to this world. Therefore this body tells you again and again that you should give as much time as you possibly can to the thought of Him. Time does not stand still.”

Soon after this discussion Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, Srimati Indira and their party arrived. They had been invited to have their lunch here to-day.

5th June, 1957.

At Mataji's request I sent some sweets, which our

* *Satsang* The company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth; also a religious meeting, or in its widest sense the practice of the presence of God.

Ashram girls had prepared, to Dilip Kumar house this afternoon. In the early evening, Dilip Kumar and Srimati Indira came and said to me laughingly : "Didi, you have made yourself unforgettable. How many delicious things you got prepared and sent to us. Can one forget this easily ?" This evening we have been invited to their place together with Mataji. They had come to remind us once again of this.

At 7-30 p.m. we all arrived there punctually. Sitting arrangements had been made in the open air. On the top of a staircase a solitary *asana* had been placed for Mataji. They had invited many distinguished personalities of Poona to have Mataji's *darśana*. Sādhu Vasvāniji was also to be present, but due to illness was unable to come. Sri Vasvāniji had Mataji's *darśana* some time ago at Varanasi. He is well known in many parts of India.

In expectation of Sri Vasvaniji's visit, the evening programme started with some delay. As soon as Srimati Indira came and sat down, Dilip Kumar started the *bhajan*. First of all reciting the *Guru pranāma*, a song to Sri Krishna, then one to Siva and again one to Sri Krishna followed, after which he sang one of Indira's compositions in Hindi that had been translated by him into Bengali. The words, the melody and the rhythm of the song were in complete harmony with its idea. It was quite uncomparable. Then *Nāma kīrtana* was performed for five minutes, followed by *arati*.

After *arati*, Dilip Kumar spoke in English about Mataji.

The gist of it was : Mataji is now very renowned, both in India and in many places abroad. Many men and women have been helped by Her to tread the path that leads to Peace. So many years ago when he met his *Gurudeva* Sri Aurobindo for the first time, he had heard him say that many had attained great heights by doing *sadhana* and had for themselves realized Supreme Bliss. But to find a Being who could communicate this Bliss to others and bring them real Peace was difficult indeed. Among this type of supermen or superwomen Mataji is quite unique.

In this strain he talked very beautifully for about 15 or 20 minutes. When after the silence at 9 p. m., Srimati Indira began to perform Mataji's *arati*, Mataji objected with the words : "Do *arati* to your *Guru*." But Indira did not listen and completed Mataji's *arati* with much devotion.

On taking leave, I said to Srimati Indira : "We have not yet heard you sing !" Dilip Kumar exclaimed : "Yes, all right. Indira will sing to you and Didi will give us sweets !" With great mirth and laughter Mataji was seen into the car.

With Mataji on the Bank of the Gomati River

(II)

KRISHNANATH

It now seems appropriate to mention some of the anecdotes from Mataji's life, which She Herself related from time to time when reminded ; some of these have a miraculous quality, but Mataji told them as if they were ordinary happenings.

Once a young woman of about 20 or 22 asked for Ma's help in her devotional practices. As there was a large crowd at the time, Mataji told her to see Her in private afterwards, but did not get a chance to talk to her. After a few days the girl came and said Mataji had appeared to her in a dream and whispered a Mantra into her ear. She repeated it and it was in pure Sanskrit though the girl was illiterate. When she dreamt, Mataji had been thinking of her. Mataji then asked her not to eat meat in the months of वैशाख, श्रावण, कार्तिक, and माघ. The girl said she had already given up eating meat, though everyone else in her home ate it.

In another place Mataji said to a very dark girl of 12 or 13 who came to see Her, 'You want the necklace, don't you ?' and asked Udas to bring that. When it was brought and given to the girl, everyone was surprised to see that it was a string of valuable pearls, which had been presented to Mataji a

few days previously by the Rani of Sirmur ! When Mataji was wearing the pearls on Her wrist, She had seen this little girl in the crowd, whispering to her mother that she wanted them. Mataji wanted to give them to the girl at that time, but she had disappeared. Mataji knew that she would come after a few days and had told Udas to keep the string with her and to bring it whenever Mataji would ask for it ; that is how the pearl necklace was brought and given to the girl. Later on the girl had come again to show how nice the white pearls looked against her dark skin. Mataji said that when She was living in Ashtagram, there used to be *chamaras* (low caste people who clean dead animals' skins) dwelling nearby and a little girl of theirs used to come and stand at a distance looking at Her. This was about 40 years ago. The little girl who got the necklace was the same low caste girl in a previous birth.

This habit of Mataji' to give away whatever valuable presents She receives, is well-known. I have already related in a previous article how the costly Banaras sari and ornaments received at the end of the Bhagavata Saptah were bestowed on the sweeper woman. As for smaller gifts like sweets, fruits, flowers or garlands, they are given away immediately. Referring to this, Mataji once humourously remarked that She noticed how the face of the donor becomes smaller and smaller as She started distributing his offering. "To placate him I ultimately leave one and say, I have kept this ; but it is only for the time being." Dr. Pannalal told us two stories in this connection. Once some students had brought an expensive garland for Her and as usual She immediately gave it away. The students said, 'We wish you had worn it at least

for ten minutes to please us.' Mataji replied, 'If I am to wear it for ten minutes to please you, will you do whatever I tell you to please me?' There was dead silence—nobody dared to say, yes, for fear that She might ask them something they would not be able to fulfil. On another occasion, when Mataji was going away by train, Dr. P. had brought for Her some very costly choice oranges and told Gurupriya Didi to hide them under the berth till the train started, so that Mataji might not give them away. Mataji was not told anything about this, but just as the train began to move She put Her hand under the berth, took out the oranges and started throwing them to the people on the platform. Those who often go for Mataji's *darsan* are familiar with Her way of throwing fruit and other things into the crowd for people to catch, and they know how good She is at it.

We learnt one day from Gurupriya Didi that Mataji's munificence had earned for Her in Naimisharanya the reputation of being the Goddess of Wealth incarnate. A lady who arrived at the camp that day had heard the coolies at the station saying that a Mataji had come who was an *Avatar* of Laxmi—She gives away gold thrones and *ashrafies* (gold coins)! Mataji laughed when She heard this and told us that for the Bhagavata Saptah She had enquired what was prescribed in the Scripture to be given as *Dan*. On hearing that it was 12 tolas of gold, She had asked one fourth of it, i. e. 3 tolas to be used to give a gold polish to a silver throne on which the sacred book was to be placed for reading. This was given away to the *purohit* at the end, and people thought it was a gold throne. I forget what Ma said about another

three tolas, but the remainder was given away in the form of a gold *ashrafi* to each of the 108 readers. No wonder Mataji seemed Laxmi incarnate to poor people who had never seen so much gold being distributed.

In the course of his discourse on the Narada Bhaktisutra, Dr. P. was once talking about how महापुरुष (great saints) come to the help of their devotees and in this connection he told two stories about Mataji. She had once gone in a boat to the other bank of the Ganga and a devotee on this side wanted to join Her. He jumped into the river and started to swim across, but when he had reached half way, began to drown. There was no one to rescue him but he cried out to Ma and suddenly, apparently from nowhere, a boat appeared and saved him. On another occasion, Ma's great devotee, Bhaiji, while drowning in Banaras, was pulled out by an old woman who waded into the river. At that time Ma was actually in Dehradun and those near Her saw, to their surprise, that Her clothes were dripping wet.

Another story was told by Mataji Herself about how one of her devotees had once made up his mind to die at Her feet and for this purpose taken a very large dose of opium and eaten sweets thereafter to make the poison more deadly ; when he was quite sure he could not be saved, he came and lay clinging to Mataji's feet. Even though nobody was aware at the time that he had taken poison, Mataji somehow kept him awake through the rest of the night. In the morning there were all sorts of difficulties in transporting him to the hospital and getting medical aid, but these were all somehow surmounted and he was saved against all odds.

One morning while Dr. P. was talking about the relinquishing of the fruit of action, Mataji laughed loudly at some idea that had struck Her. She would not say what it was that made Her laugh; but quoted the saying, "प्रशंसा प्रतिष्ठा, सूकरी विष्ट" which condemns hankering after praise and position. Dr. P. said there was nothing he did, which was not for earning praise; Ma remarked it required courage to admit this, but somebody pointed out that what Dr. P. had said might itself be for the sake of evoking praise!

One evening Didi Gurupriya gave us a leaflet in Hindi issued in the name of Ma's devotees entitled, "The Perpetual Remembrance of God." It is a scheme for continuous round-the-clock meditation by a relay of persons, each choosing a fixed period of 15 minutes any time, night or day, for engaging in meditation wherever he or she may be. Ma explained that about 20/25 years ago when the Harijan uplift movement was started a great *yajña* was performed. At that time Ma thought that while performance of a *yajña*, as laid down in the scriptures, was all right, something more should be done for the general public. She realized that it was impossible for any-one to give all 24 hours to the contemplation of God, not even 3 hours, and for a गृहस्थ (house-holder) even one hour might be difficult. So She decided upon 15 minutes, and began asking everyone, whatever his caste, creed or religion, to give 15 minutes every day to God, observe *Maun* (silence), and take God's name, wherever and whatever condition he was in. She would demand this from Her followers and from strangers ask it as charity. Some people selected a particular time and observed *Maun* (silence). Later the

practice started of everyone observing silence between 8.45 p.m. and 9 p.m. and this is now the rule in all Ma's Ashrams and wherever Ma is. Recently Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj had suggested the present idea of having people join in a regular scheme of a chain of continuous unbroken meditation. In such an arrangement the weak would also get help from what the others were doing. We were asked to join the scheme and when I expressed the fear that one might sometimes forget the time, Mataji narrated the following true story: There was a man who himself was the disciple of a great Saint but whose daughters were followers of Mataji. He did not like their talking about Ma and said, "Why do you say Miao like a cat?" He had a favourite cat which used to sleep in his bed. One night this cat scratched him badly in the face. After that he came to see Mataji and agreed to observe the 15 minutes' silent meditation at a particular time. Once when Mataji was sitting with several people round Her asking questions, this man who was present, suddenly felt disinclined to ask or say anything or even to listen to what was going on. He looked at his watch and found that it was his time for *Mauna*. And so, Ma said, if you make up your mind, you will be reminded somehow. (In spite of this assurance I must admit that I have not yet had the courage to join the scheme by taking up a fixed time, as I find that my time keeps on changing. Mataji's devotees may be interested and get a copy of the leaflet from Shri Panu Brahmachari, Sri Ma Anandamayi Ashram, Bhadaini, Varanasi).

The time was approaching when I would have to leave

for Bombay and it was also getting colder and more uncomfortable in the tent every night. So I decided one morning to ask for Mataji's permission to go, but before I could say anything, Mataji Herself said to Sri Pragnarain's wife that She would leave for Sitapur on the 23rd November, and after spending the night there, go to Lucknow on the 24th. The Pragnarains wanted to arrange for a 24 hour continuous reading of the Ramayana at their home in Sitapur and had requested Mataji to come. So Mataji asked them to start it on the 22nd, so that Ma could be present at its conclusion on the 23rd. Now all this suited me exactly, as I could accompany Mataji up to Lucknow and leave the next day, so as to be in Bombay in time for my business. I almost felt that Mataji had fixed not only the time of leaving, but the whole programme in Naimisharanya and on the bank of the Gomati for my special benefit and to suit my personal convenience. Such is Ma's *Lila*.

After this announcement preparations for departure began in the Camp and some of the Ashramites started leaving in advance for other destinations. Mataji was going to spend some days in Lucknow with Sri and Srimati Rameshwar Sahai and seemed to be eager to ensure that only a few persons were left in Her entourage so as not to be a burden to Her host. It was a pity I could not stay on in Lucknow and accompany Mataji to Banaras and Rajgir, where also, everybody later told me, Ma continued to be in the same jolly mood and was easy of access. At Rajgir there was the additional treat of listening to Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj on the enlightenment of the Buddha and His teachings. If I

had continued with Ma, I might have derived more lasting benefit; the beneficial effects of Naimisharanya soon wore away, and it seems now as if I had then something within reach which I allowed to slip away.

The day before we were to leave the Gomati bank, Mataji, who generally speaks about spiritual matters only in answer to questions, said of Her own accord that she wanted to tell us some thing. 'You have lived in this holy place and you must take back with you something good from it. Decide not to tell an untruth under any circumstances. If the situation is such that you cannot speak the truth, keep quiet, but do not depart from your vow. God is truth and to reach God you must be truthful.' She then related a story of a man whose Guru gave him a *Mala* and told him to wear it and never to tell a lie. He observed this for one year. Then there was a quarrel between him and his wife and she went away to her father's place in a huff. When she did not return for a long time, he sent word to her that if she wished to see her husband alive, she should return by such and such a date. The wife asked the messenger what was the matter with her husband's health and was told that there was nothing wrong with him. So the wife thought she would go in her own time. When she did not come back on the day specified by him, the man died. By observing truthfulness for one year he had acquired the power that whatever he said had to come true.

Before I take up the last day's account, I might mention an episode that has led to my signing this article as

'Krishnanath'. One day as I was entering Mataji's cottage, I heard Her asking Dr. Pannalal and Mrs. Sahai, 'Why do you call him 'Ambe'? Hasn't he got a name?' I intervened and said, 'Yes, Ma. My name is Krishnanath.' Mataji then declared that I should be called Krishnanath, and so I have decided to use this name here also.

In a previous article I have described what a grand function the Bhagavata Saptah at Naimisharanya was, when the Bhagavata was read by 108 Pandits. When narrating the history of the events leading up to the holding of this Saptah, Ma also told us that She had desired that, since the Puranas were originally composed at Naimisharanya, some arrangements should be made for the reading of the Puranas during the Bhagavata Saptah. Brahmavarta Purana was selected for the purpose as it was thought that it contained a reference to Naimisharanya. Nobody had however remembered to bring the Purana and curiously enough not a single copy was found even at Naimisharanya where the Puranas had been compiled. Ma then asked Swami Avadhutji to make arrangements for the reading of the Purana and it was sent for from one of the Ashramas. Mr. Modi arrived providentially at that time and his car was available for this purpose. The man who went to get it looked only at the first part of the title and brought Brahmamanda Puran instead but, it turned out to be the right Purana in which Naimisharaya was referred to. Actually only a little while after Mataji had asked Avadhutji, a Pandit had turned up with a copy of the Purana, and if he had come earlier it would have been unnecessary to get it from the Ashram. Avadhutji gave the Brahmamanda Purana to Bharat

Bhai and, starting from the full-moon day when the Bhagavata Saptah was concluded, he read a little portion of it every day while Mataji was staying on the bank of the Gomati.

This arrangement would have come to an end with Mataji's departure, but the Raja Saheb of Solan and others had suggested that there should be some permanent memento of the great functions held at Naimisharanya and from this had originated the idea of setting up one Purana temple there. A beautiful site on the Hanuman Tila was selected, and after looking through the village records maintained by the Patwari and consulting the Tahsildar it was decided that it would be best to acquire the plot through land acquisition proceedings, so as to leave no room for future litigation by other claimants. It was suggested that a building should be constructed there for daily public reading of the Puranas, and that it should be called the 'Purana Mandir'. And thus Ma's visit and the functions at Naimisharanya were to be commemorated by a resuscitation of the ancient tradition and thus reviving the knowledge of the Puranas which are gradually being forgotten. As however it would take a considerable time before the project could materialise, Mataji suggested that in order to avoid a break in the reading, which had been started, it should be continued in the meanwhile in the cottage on the river bank which Mataji had been occupying. Accordingly, a Shastri was engaged for the purpose and a formal inauguration of the reading by him was performed on the morning of the 23rd November, the day of Mataji's departure.

As usual in the Ashram, everything was aesthetically

