

**VOLUME II**



**AMULYA KUMAR DATTA GUPTA**



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## Preface

*Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Prasanga* is a remarkable work. The writer was gratified in having the good fortune of coming in intimate contact with Ma for a long time in Dhaka, Varanasi and other places and through the Grace of Ma, he acquired the ability to make good use of that rare opportunity. Placed under the tutelage of a Sadguru in his boyhood, he had spiritual enquiries aroused in his mind. Having raised various thought-provoking questions before Ma, he could elicit from her many subtle truths. He used to record in his current diary the accounts of his conversations with Ma. A part of the diary was published in book-form from Dhaka in his life-time. The first editions of both the first and second volumes of the book had been out of print about forty years ago. At present the second editions of both the volumes are being published almost simultaneously. This book is a priceless collection of Sri Sri Ma's words.

Sri Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta was a talented student and in his later life, he had distinguished himself as a Professor of Law in Dhaka and author of Law books. Towards the end of his life he lived in Varanasi in Ma's company. In 1973 A.D. he passed away in Varanasi, the land of Salvation (*Vimukti Kshetra*).

Ma reportedly made the following remarks on him, "As a householder Baba gave a demonstration of the lesson of how one can remain unattached in the midst of earthly enjoyments. He had settled down as an ascetic who dedicates himself to good works in his humble cottage. His good works over, he passed away to his heavenly abode.

He was free from the three-fold bondage of diffidence, abhorrence and fear. Believe it or not, 'this body', was always with him." (*Ananda Varta*, Twenty-first year, volume one, page 72).

Swami Paramananda,  
*Dol Purnima*, 1387 Bengali Era  
Ma Anandamayi Ashram, Vrindaban.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Seven days at Navadweep

It was December, 1936. The Christmas holidays were ahead. But I had no plan to go anywhere during the holidays. Even before the holidays I had an intimation of Sri Sri Ma's arrival at Navadweep, yet I did not feel any strong urge to meet Her. For one thing, it was trying to move out with my wife and daughters in mid-winter; besides, I was not sure of Ma's stay at Navadweep for the whole of my holidays.

Later I heard that my friend, Sri Jatindra Mohan Dasgupta, had set out for Navadweep with his wife. I had some doubts about the propriety of such a course of action without previous permission of Ma. However, in the morning of 9th Paush, Thursday (24-12-35), Sri Bhupati Nath Mitra came to our house with a letter. It was written by Jatin Babu from Navadweep. It contained among other pieces of information the fact that Sri Sri Ma was likely to stay at Navadweep till the first week of January. It was a news that moved me intensely and I thought that I had rather have a trip to Navadweep. It would be two-in-one — seeing Ma and visiting a new place. Moreover, the letter seemed to be a call for me from Sri Sri Ma, though nothing in it led to that supposition. But one thing was clear; seeing that Ma's itinerary was so uncertain, Jatin Babu's information that She would stay at Navadweep for 10-15 days was a sufficient incentive for my going. After Bhupati Babu left, I consulted my wife and at once decided to depart for Navadweep the very next day.

On 10th Paush Friday, we set out by the Calcutta Mail. After we got to Ranaghat at 3 a.m., we had to wait for two hours before we boarded the train for Navadweep. We

changed at Krishnanagar and reached Navadweep Ghat Station next day at 8.30 a.m. Crossing the river in a boat we made for the *dharmashala* of the Maharaja of Hetampur. I cheered up as I caught sight from afar of our people collected at the *dharmashala*. Even as we were in the meadow, I saw Ma coming out of the room and washing face at the veranda with Buni, Jatish Babu's daughter, helping Her do it.

On reaching the *dharmashala*, I met Jatin Babu and Radhika Babu.\* Radhika Babu said, "Seeing you coming, Ma got out of the room and said, 'Looks like Amulya Babu, isn't it so?' But I could not recognize you."

I kept standing on the staircase while Ma washed Her face. When Ma got up we made our obeisance to Her. Ma said "I was already wondering, if Babaji would just while away holidays." I also said in my mind, "Ma, I am today here, only because you thought of me." Ma added, "You set out from Dhaka at 12 a.m. yesterday. You should regard yourselves as still being on the way, for we are going out on a boat-trip right away." I thought, "let it be so."

Ma went into the room. I exchanged a few words with Jatin Babu and Radhika Babu and arranged for our luggages to be stowed away in a room. Then having washed my head and face with water drawn from the well of the *dharmashala*, I took a hasty breakfast and went to Ma to sit close to Her. Hardly had I spoken a word or two to Ma when Triguna Babu,\*\* Jatish Babu and others came up. Ma told them to hire boats. Triguna Babu said, "Ma, do get up, I am going to hire the boats." Ma said, "Proceed. I will follow you. I cannot go anywhere, can I, without carrying you in a tow?" With that She

broke into a laughter. Triguna Babu and Prankumar Babu went out for hiring boats. I kept sitting near Ma. Ma said, "Look here, all of you from Dhaka, keep together in a boat. Let Jatish and the members of his family board the same boat. In this way, all would be able to keep watch on their children. Otherwise there may be trouble over the young ones."

Ma again asked me, "Have you taken your bath?"

I : Yes, Ma.

Ma: For how long is the bath good? You take bath now and then have to take it again. One bath is not enough.

With that, Ma began to laugh. I tried to get at the inner meaning of Her words. Ma very often talks figuratively. I thought that She might have in view our impure hearts. It was true too. Now I am seated near Ma with no impurities finding their way into mind. But after a time when I shall move away from Her, my mind will be troubled by diverse thoughts and polluted by materialistic ideas. One glimpse of Ma cannot leave me purged of dirt and enlightened for all times. So we require repeated "baths" and have to make repeated attempts for mental purification.

### The Secret of *Pranama*

At that moment, Sisir and many others came into the room and took their seats. Sisir started arguing with Ma over something, but finding Her more than a match for him, bowed down and began to scratch his head. At that, Ma said, "You see, how beautifully everything is arranged. The moment one realises his mistake, his head hangs low. And when he is at his wit's end and begins to scratch his head, it is bent on one side. This is the secret of *pranama*. Why does a person bend down his head while making a *pranama*? This is due to his realization of his insignificance. He comes to understand how

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he is a mere non-entity in comparison with the one to whom he is bowing. And so long as his ego dominates, his neck is stiff and erect. A head held high denotes pride and egotism, while a head bowed down implies meekness. The gesticulations that went with these words of Ma sent us all into furore of laughter.

A little while after, we got into boats. For some reason or other, Sisir went back to the *dharmashala* in a huff. A man was after him twice, but he would not come. By this time Radhika Babu came and joined us. The boats were unmoored and we proceeded up the stream. Cooking was arranged for inside the boat - *dal puri*, *payas* etc. Triguna Babu began to sing a kirtan, with Jatish Babu and others joining in. Four or five boats were tied alongside. Sri Sri Ma walked from one boat to another to keep all in good humour. In this way we went upstream till about 2 p.m. or half past, when the boat was fastened at one coast of the Ganges, we got down. Some bathed in the Ganges. Ma was offered *bhoga* in the sandy beach of Ganga and we sat down on the sands to partake of the *prasada*.

#### **Serving is a very difficult job.**

Meals over, we sat around Ma. We had talks on sundry subjects. There is a place called Dharasu on the way to Uttarkashl. Ma said, "I noticed there large boulders lying across the stream of Ganga. Their upper surfaces were fairly broad and even. The water of Ganga was purling along round them. Seeing this I got into the river and began to skip from boulder to boulder. Then having come to spacious and smooth boulder, I said that it would be convenient to knead flour on it and make *chapaties*, for the stone-face was plain and Ganga water could be reached out by the spread of the

arm. Jyotish took me at my word and down to prepare *chapaties* on it. But apparently clean, the slab was a site for the passengers to pass stool and urine frequently. However, Jyotish washed it thoroughly with Ganga water, before kneading flour on it. Then he lit fire on it and began to bake the *chapaties*. There was no dearth of wood there, for logs of wood came floating down the stream -- one had only to pick them up. When the stove was heated by the fire, I found faeces clinging to the small dents on the surface. So long they were invisible as the stone was wet, but as it was heated, the marks of the faeces stood out in every vein. I watched them sitting but Jyotish observed nothing. He prepared *chapaties* on that surface stained with excrement and offered them to me for eating. I also ate them without any protest." So saying She laughed a lot and we joined in. Perhaps Ma took this occasion to teach us how one, in serving, has to be exceedingly observant. At the same time we realized the truth of "*Bhavagrahi Janardana*" (*Janardana*, the Lord, accepts the spirit in which service is rendered, irrespective of the quality of the thing offered).

#### **Once gone astray, one cannot be restored to the flock as before.**

It has already been said that Sisir had taken offence and gone back to the *dharmashala*. We all thought that he would not return. But it so happened that he came in a boat a little after our meal was over. All started poking fun at him. He was evidently ashamed at heart and, not being able to mix with anybody freely, began to flit this way and that in his boat, all by himself. Seeing him in that plight, Ma said, "Once straying out of the fold, one cannot fall into his place as before. When he tries to be communicative, he feels a reserve. It is the same

in the path of religion. A person treading the religious path for a while can no longer take interest in worldly affairs as keenly as before."

I had heard about Ma's having sent Sri Abani Mohan Sharma to Calcutta to bring Bimala Ma and Nirmala Ma. They were due to arrive today. So Ma had given Her word for being present at the *dharmashala* in the evening. We all thought it impossible to get back to the *dharmashala* by the evening, for it was 5 p.m. by the time our evening meals were over. According to our estimate it should take an hour and a half to get to the landing place close to the *dharmashala*. But it so happened that even starting at 5 p.m., we reached the *ghat* by the evening. Many of us wondered how we could cover the distance in such a short time.

In the evening an ascetic came to see Ma. He was apparently 40-42 years of age. He was quite sedate and polite of disposition. Ma directed that a seat should be offered to him and asked him to say something. But he said very politely, "Ma, what do I know? You say something, we shall listen." Ma did not have much talk with him on religious topics. We heard that he belonged to Kailash Ashram, Hardwar. After a little talk in the veranda, we went into the room and were seated.

#### **Discrimination between pure and impure while touching a deity.**

After all were seated in the room, Sri Nitish Chandra Guha said to Ma, "Ma, where does the pure-impure discrimination come in while touching a deity? I am going to the mother, touching her — why should I bother about purity and impurity? My mother insists on such discrimination, but I find no ground for it."

Ma: If while going to touch a deity, you perceive it as your mother then of course, there is no room for discrimination. But how few have such perception? So the dictate of the scriptures has to be adhered to. If you have really attained to the stage in which a deity is completely identified with mother, you should not stop to discriminate. Otherwise, such discrimination must be made.

#### **The arrival of Nirmala Ma at Navadweep.**

When all these talks were on, Nirmala Ma came to the *dharmashala* along with Hem Bhai, her husband. Abani Babu also came. He said that Bimala Ma would come the next day.

Nirmala Ma, on coming, leapt right into Ma's lap. Ma also caressed her fondly. Sri Hem Bhai was offered a separate seat. They had come from Adyapeeth, Dakshineswar. What I heard about Nirmala Ma may be briefly stated as follows:—

Nirmala Ma was the housewife of an average family. She had four children of whom only one is alive at present. They were fairly well-off. One day at noon she went with her husband to Adyapeeth on some festive occasion. As she saw there Annada Thakur in a state of *bhava* (emotional induction) she was seized an utter dislike for worldly life. She could not return home that day. She remained lost whole day and night in a sort of intoxication. When she was back home the next day, the obsession had not worn out yet, she fell into an ecstatic fit every now and then. After some days passed in this way, she gave birth to a son. All her time would be taken up in attending and caring for the child — she could spare no time for religious practices. At this she was afflicted with sorrow and with tearful eyes prayed to the *Guru*, "Thakur, this child is a gift from you — do accept him for your own. With him by my side, I cannot repeat your name." Sometime after, the child



died. At this Nirmala Ma came to regard herself as freed from a bondage. Erecting a structure over her son's place of cremation, she came over to her *Gurudeva's* Ashram in Adyapeeth with her husband. As she was fond of seclusion by nature, Annada Thakur had a cottage built at some distance from the Ashram temple of Adyapeeth and directed Nirmala Ma to reside there. She had been living in that cottage so long. Recently her husband had started going places with her. Perhaps the objective behind it was spreading the glory of the *Guru* and furthering the cause of the Adyapeeth Ashram.

Nirmala Ma looked of a very quiet nature. Her words were extremely sweet and full of simplicity. Abani Babu appeared to be one of her closely attached devotees.

After they had breakfasted, kirtan started. The kirtan induced on Nirmala Ma a state of emotional sway and she began to weep. At this, Ma stopped the kirtan. It was about half-past-eleven at night and we went to bed.

#### A mark of hurt round Sri Sri Ma's eye

12th Poush, 1343, Sunday (27-12-36). Rising in the morning, I went to make my *pranama* to Sri Sri Ma. Jatish Babu's daughters were singing kirtan. After it went on for a while, all went to their respective duties. For my part, I washed my hands and face and took my seat near Ma. Nirmala Ma did come to the *dharmashala* on that morning. She was staying at a small house near the *dharmashala*.

We were sitting with Ma when a *Vaishnavi* came. She was dark-complexioned and rather tall. She had in her hand an *ektara* (a one-stringed musical instrument). Ma had named her "*Ektara Ma*".

Observing a dark mark like that of an ointment round the right eye of Ma, I had asked Her the previous day, "Ma, what

has happened to your eye"? Ma said that immediately on coming to Navadweep, She had a fall from the staircase and was hurt on the forehead. I saw a scar also on Her right temple. Ma had said, "After my arrival one day I went out for the toilet late at night. Buni was with me. Though out of the room, I did not open my eyes to the full, because a strange thing about me is that if I do so, I cannot close my eyes again. Buni was following me. She is a little girl and cannot be expected to understand my ways. When I stayed at Raipur (Dehradun) temple, Jyotish was with me. The staircase there was far worse than that of this *dharmashala* — yet I did not have a single fall while there. That was because, whenever I had to go anywhere at night, Jyotish went before me and I followed him. Even with my partially-opened eyes, I could take in the lay of the path from Jyotish's mode of walking. However, that day while walking along the veranda in the dark, I treaded the air and fell down on my face, precipitely from the veranda. I was severely hurt on the hand and forehead. As I felt the forehead, I found it already swollen up and there was abrasion at the elbow. I pressed my hand against the forehead and getting back to the bed, lay down, lest anybody should observe it. Nobody came to know of the hurt in my hand. Next day the swelling on the forehead was seen to have decreased, but there was a deep dark bruise round the eye. On coming here, I had a fall before anybody else did have one."

A devotee: Ma, perhaps that was exactly why nobody else fell down from the staircase.

Ma: You mean, not till today.

Observing the dark-mark round Ma's eye, the *Vaishnavi* said, "Ma, what is wrong with your eye?"

Ma: The Supreme Lord of Navadweep has laid collyrium round my eye as a part of His make-up (All laughed).



*Vaishnavi*: But the left eye is untouched.

Ma: Yes, He chose the right eye for applying His make-up.  
With that She laughed profusely.

### Judgement according to *samskaras*(tendencies developed by past Karma)

Sri Atal Bihari Bhattacharya, Swami Shankarananda, Nirod Babu and others were sitting in the room. Nirod Babu had come to Navadweep that very day. He was in service at Rajshahi. A quiet-natured gentleman, he was known to Ma. Ma said, "This time on going to Rajshahi I looked for you. But I could not meet you." By way of introducing Nirod Babu, Atal Babu said, "He is a pupil of mine."

Ma: Is it so? You taught him, yes? Formerly, hearing Sanskrit *slokas* from me, your students used to say, 'Our teacher (i.e. Atal Babu) associates with her. He must have taught her these *slokas*.' "

So saying Ma began to laugh heartily. Then She added, "Not only this, they also said 'she must be given to taking intoxicants. Look, how Her eyes are red and Her face like that of a drug-addict.' "

Ma again said, "I cannot blame them. All judge according to their inclinations(*samskaras*). No wonder that the way I am dressed make the people talk. Once Bimala Ma and I were waiting at the Howrah Station. We were bound for opposite directions. Both had dishevelled hair and forehead stained with vermilion. You may guess how it was. We were sitting apart. I went up to Bimala Ma and said, 'Come, let us sit together.' We did so and saw two English ladies looking at us askance, and smiling slyly. They were walking past the place where we were sitting and whispering something with their eyes towards us every now and then. At this I said to

Bimala Ma, 'Come, let us laugh aloud in one voice.' And we burst into a guffaw. What a laugh was! They were dumbfounded."

The way Ma said all this made us, too, laugh freely. Ma again said, "They (the English ladies) cannot be blamed either. They also judge according to their *samskaras*."

### Ma making merry with her devotees.

After sometime Nitish Babu came and said to Ma, "Ma, Shankarananda Swamiji has given away his *nima*(apron) to somebody and is standing bare-bodied in the cold."

Ma said, "Babaji has done the right thing. It is a Swami's duty to sacrifice."

Hearing this Swami Shankarananda said by way of making light of his sacrifice, "It is easy enough — this giving away. I have lost an old garment, I can have a new one for the asking." Hearing this, Ma said, "You are a Swami of new things, are you?" (All laughed).

At this time a devotee, fresh from the bath, brought some Ganga-water in a *Kushi* (an elongated copper vessel used in *puja*) and got it touched by Ma's feet to drink. Sri Sri Ma's *padodaka*(feet-wash). Ma said to him, "Baba, have you eaten anything? Go, and have something." The devotee was melted, as it were, at this loving concern from Ma. "Little do I care for food", he said and holding the *kushi* high, pointing to the *padodaka* it contained, he added, "This is enough food for me. I do not need any other." Ma said smilingly, "Only *charanamrita* (the nectar washed out from the feet — *padodaka*) will not fill your belly." All laughed aloud and the devotee was a bit put off.

As the day was advancing, we bathed in the Ganges and had our meals at a hotel. On coming back I was taken to task

by all. From then on we took meals at the *dharmashala* with the others. The boarding expenses of so many people were mostly borne by Sri Sachi Babu.

### Sri Dhananjay Bhattacharya and Sri Sri Ma.

This afternoon Sri Sri Ma did not go out for an outing on the Ganges. Many persons assembled in the *dharmashala*. Ma sat on the veranda facing Ganga. At this moment an elderly gentleman named Dhananjay Bhattacharya came to see Ma. He was once professor at Behrampur. Now he was living in Navadweep as a pensioner. He was a disciple of late Shyamacharan Lahiri, the eminent Yogi of Varanasi.

Swami Shankarananda having introduced Sri Bhattacharya, he said to Sri Sri Ma, "Ma, I have earned a lot of money in my life time. I have several children. The sons are all in service and well off. The daughters are well married. So I have very little to desire from the worldly life. Besides, my life is also drawing to a close. Now my desire is to pass away with the Mother's name on my lips. Will not the Mother's grace come down on me?"

Ma: The very fact that we can call upon the Mother presupposes Her Grace.

The old man: The Mother is stone-hearted. I call upon Her no end of times, but She keeps away.

Ma: Stone also wears out, can the Mother help appearing with all the waitings around? Have you not seen a mother rushing to the spot leaving aside her works when her children cry? But the cry must ring true. She has always her eyes and ears directed towards us. She appears and reveals Herself when we are really eager.

In passing, Sri Bhattacharya said, "Ma, once I asked my *Gurudeva* how one can get rid of the vitiations of the mind. His

reply was that for it one must regard a beautiful woman as his mother and worship her.

"Once I went to meet late Bhaskarananda Swami at Varanasi. He rarely ever allowed anybody to approach him. When I went to him and made my *pranama*, he raised a cudgel and was about to thrash me. I took hold of his feet and said, 'Baba, if I am beaten to death by you here at Varanasi, what can be a greater bliss to me? Do what you will, I will not leave your feet.' At this Bhaskarananda Swamiji was highly pleased and asked me who I was. I told him and also related to him the Yogic practices I was passing through. He taught me one or two modes and instructed me to meditate on the *Sahasrara*. While in meditation according to his instruction, once I visualised a large orb of radiating light. I have sight of such lumination at intervals. Well Ma, will the Mother not be kind towards me?"

Ma: She appears before you in the form of radiance. What have you to worry over?

Sri Bhattacharya visualized deities too at times. Referring to it, he said to Ma, "Do these deities communicate?"

Ma: These are sages — they help in the fulfilment of our desires by appearing.

The old man: I sometimes hear sounds.

Ma: Is the sound any special kind?

The old man — It is a continuous sound.

Ma: It is called *Nada*. One who has such visions and hears such sounds is fortunate indeed.

Sri Bhattacharya continued, "Once my son was severely ill. The doctors had despaired of his life. I started worshipping the Mother. After the worship was over, the boy sweated off the fever. After that he did not have a relapse. Another time, guests had been invited on the occasion of a marriage, when

the sky came to be overcast with clouds. My sons knew something of my practices. They asked me to try one and I did so. I called Ma wholeheartedly. At last it was found that the clouds had yielded to broad sunlight. Such things happened from time to time. Having heard of you, I came today to see you. Your sight has given me a great satisfaction. Today I shall meditate on you and see what happens.

Ma: You too are the image of the Mother.

The old man : How?

Ma: How else can you worship the Mother?

The old man : That is true.

Saying so the old man laughed and we all joined him.

#### **To attain the One, stick to one utterance.**

Sri Bhattacharya went on, "The mother comforts in sorrow. I want solace from the Mother."

Sri Sri Ma made no answer to it but sat silently.

The old man : Today I am very happy, for I am with Anandamayee Ma. Be kindly disposed to me. With advancing age, I am somewhat worried. But the assuring thing is that Ma will not be unkind. Give me some advice.

Ma: There is only one advice to offer. A man should hold on only to the One as long as possible.

The old man : Why should I not be able to do so? I am convinced that I will.

Ma: It is all that is needed.

The old man: I have come with the hope that I shall get some instructions from Ma.

Ma: Baba, can this girl say anything? She can only reiterate the same thing — keep to one utterance to attain that One. What is needed is to be single-minded.

The old man: A bird repeats the same thing, but it cannot

see Him.

Ma: Man can see Him by repeating the same thing. When He intends to appear, He makes a man repeat the same thing, do the same work. There is no need to bother about what I have and have not. It is our job to hold on to the One — to be directed to one aim, with one name, one meditation, one contemplation. We must make our faith firm. Firm faith is needed, yet it is sorely lacking. By performing action desire cannot be brought to an end. Even more desires spring up one by one till they proliferate ad infinitum. If we stay with only one single desire, that of attaining God, all other desires become extinct. If we take no heed of the branches of a tree, but go on watering its root day in and day out, it is found that the tree has shed all old leaves and put forth new ones. In the same way if a man simply goes on repeating the Name unmindful of any other things, he is freed from the previously acquired tendencies and attains a new life.

The old man: By seeing you I have the impression that you have attained Him.

Ma: (pointing to the old man) I have got you, have I not? It is the same image that you are seeking.

So saying Ma laughed merrily.

Ma continued, "One must be eager. Eagerness is in our nature. Eagerness for attaining Him comes to us by itself. When we acquire the treasure which is our legacy, this hankering passes away. Money also is a treasure and not a bad one at that, if one works one's way to the real treasure. If a man has his eye on God, it is not a sin to spend money on nourishing the body.

"Attachment cannot be got rid of by conscious efforts. An increase in longing for Him can alone expel all other attachments. Why worry over renunciation? The worldly

things, by their very nature are parted from us. All desire joy and peace. They are within all. They are not to be given up. All that are fit to be renounced are given up.

The old man: I get a new instruction from you. "To be preoccupied with the One", "to be single-minded". It is a hope that He can be attained. But the path to Him is yet hidden. My days are running out. Now I must go.

Ma: Where will you go, Baba? Is there a coming and going?

The old man (smiling): It is going from one room to another.

Ma: Which room is yours?

Sri Bhattacharya could not understand the question and kept gazing at Sri Sri Ma's face.

Ma: Your room is the room of breath. So long as you breath, it is your room. When the breath is out, the room crumbles down. Then, if it is necessary you must move on to a new room.

The old man was very pleased at Ma's words and said, "What you say is true and is sanctioned by the scriptures." On the peaceful, grave face of the old man expressions of joy and wonder appeared simultaneously. Seeing that evening was approaching, he made his obeisance to Ma and went away slowly. We also entered into the room from the veranda.

### Scriptures and the ultimate truth.

Two ascetics came to see Sri Sri Ma. She directed seats to be offered to them. One of them had come the previous day also. He was not communicative but silently listened to Ma's words. He spoke only a word or two if pressed by Ma. The other ascetic was from the western part of India. He had studied philosophy and was at present studying Nyaya at Navadweep.

Conversations were carried on in Hindi. The ascetic said, "Ma, what is the cause of birth and death?"

Ma: There is only one cause. All are originating from the One, resting on the One and again dissolving in the One.

The answer did not satisfy the *sannyasi*. He entered into an argument. Ma told him a word or two and then fell silent. To every question the *sannyasi* put, Ma said, "Baba, all words do not come out of my mouth at all times. I have no knowledge of scriptures to make me answer your questions. I do not know anything. I say what you make me say. You could not play on me and so obtained no answer. It is your fault. I always say, elicit good words from me, so that both you and I may listen to them."

Atal Babu and others who were present said to the ascetic, "Ma never studied scriptures. Whatever She has known is derived from Her intuition. So it is no use holding scriptural debates with Ma. Also, the knowledge of the ultimate truth can be gained by intuition and not by inferences from the scriptures." At this the ascetic said, "I have come to Ma just to hear Her realisations so that I can compare and see how far they conform to the scriptures." He again said to Ma, "There are many statements in the scriptures. Many of them are mutually contradictory. Which of them should be followed?"

Ma: All scriptural utterances are true. Those striving for spiritual achievements have tried to record in the scriptures their realisations in course of *sadhana*. But how much has been expressed? (Smiling) I call scriptures time-tables. You see, if you have to go by rail from one place to another, you find recorded in the time-table all the stations that come in between. But they are only the names of those places. You can form no idea of what the places are like merely by reading

the names of the places. Besides, the time-table does not show the names of all the places on the way from one place to another. Only the names of some important places are there. In the same way, the scriptures do not contain all the details of the domain of spiritual quest, they set forth only a few selected phases. But you do not find in them the mention of the experiences that come to a person who has attained one of those phases, nor of the infinite multitude of feelings of different degrees of definiteness dawning upon him during his passage from one phase to another. So it is wrong to think that what are written in the scriptures are the last words relating to the realm of *sadhana*. Moreover, the varying statements in the scriptures are due to the different personal predilections (*samskaras*) of the strivers. Spiritual realisations are coloured by these predilections. They are not the same for everyone. That is why it is said that what we find expressed in scriptures are as true as those that have not been expressed. Suppose after eating a *rasgulla* you are asked how it tastes, all you can say is that it is sweet with different qualifying words added to it, but it does not express the taste of *rasgulla* in its entirety. In the same way the ultimate reality, when realised, cannot be expressed in full.

The ascetic: Then what should we do? What should we do for reaching the Supreme State?

Ma: In order to attain God, the only thing to be done is to go along the path marked out by Guru. Once you make a start, the rest takes care of itself. Suppose you want to go to the coast of Ganga. You ask one about the route leading to it and he tells you. Even if while walking you go astray, the passers by on the road bound for Ganga will put you back to the right track, or you may seek direction from some other persons on the way and get there. The main thing is to be on

the move. The first man to direct you may not accompany you to the *ghat* of Ganga, yet you will be able to get there through your own efforts. The same thing holds good of religion. Once you get started along this path, helps would keep pouring in.

After all these talks Ma went in to have a snack. The two ascetics left.

### The coming of Bimala Ma to Navadweep.

Ananda Bhai \* reached Navadweep with Bimala Ma past this evening. Sri Sri Ma sat down to supper with them together with Nirmala Ma, Hem Bhai and others and indulged freely in jokes. The supper over, She sat down with all in the room. Ma took the central seat with Bimala Ma and Ananda Bhai on her right and Nirmala Ma and Hem Bhai on her left. All were in a highly jovial mood. Ma quipped, "Pure joy in the clear sky." (Pure = 'Bimal' from Bimala, joy = 'Ananda' and clear = 'Nirmal' from Nirmala). Seeing them thus seated in state, Jatish Babu's mother said, "Today we are gratified to have a view of the Durga image. Lakshmi, Saraswati, Durga are all in their places." Ma laughed and said, "But where are the *Asura* (demon) and the lion?" Swami Shankarananda said, "The lion has gone to Dwaraka." This brought out a loud laugh from all. Baba Bholanath was then on the way to Dwaraka.

Ma (smiling): So, you liken Bholanath to a lion? Wait till Bholanath comes to hear of it.

Shankarananda — I have spoken the truth. Who other than Bholanath is able to bear your heavy weight? Those who laughed at my word are not aware of the true significance of

\* Ananda Bhai — husband of Bimala Ma. They were both disciples of Sri Sri Annada Thakur of Adyapeeth. At first Ananda Bhai renounced the world and began to stay with his Guru. A short time after, Bimala Ma also followed her husband in renouncing the world. Recently they were staying at Adyapeeth.



the lion as the carrier of *Devi*. I can affirm that Bholanath will not be displeased on hearing it. He will understand the inner meaning of my statement.

Ma (laughing): Well, who is *Asura*? Shankarananda (distending his bosom): Why? I myself am the *Asura*.

It was followed by another burst of laughter. Ma again cut jokes with Bimla Ma and Nirmala Ma. Hem Bhai sat silently. Ananda Bhai was talking incessantly. He recited poems of various kinds past all recounting. One could not simply help admiring his memory. I sat for a time listening to Ananda Bhai. I am not sure I understood all he said. Then I went away to sleep.

( 2 )

13th *Paus*h, 1343 Monday (28-12-36). In the morning I sat down with Ma. Jatish Babu and others had left for Calcutta the day before. There was no matinal kirtan. Ananda Bhai and Nirmala Ma were sitting with Ma. Nirmala Ma sat almost silently all the time. Ananda Bhai made many remarks relating to her.

The morning was passed in listening to all these talks.

Shaktipada Laliri, an income tax officer had invited us the previous day. He had arranged to offer *bhoga* to Ma at his house. His house was at Maheshganj on the other side of the Ganges. We had to go there by boat. He had also arranged for the boats. A minor *bhoga* was offered to Ma at the *dharmashala* before our leaving for Maheshganj. We too had *prasada*.

**Serving with *bhava* (spirit of service) is the real service.**

When the *bhoga* was being offered to Ma, a gentleman came with his wife. We were told that he was the Inspector of

the Co-operative Societies at Katwa. He had ordered the images of Gaur (Sri Gauranga) and Nitai (Sri Nityananda) being constructed for him. He had come to Navadweep to take delivery of the images, and having heard of Ma, was there to have a sight of Her. The gentleman appeared to be very simple and his wife also seemed to be of a quite devout nature. When the *bhoga* of Sri Sri Ma was over, the gentleman made his *pranama* to Ma. Ma said, "I feel I have seen you somewhere." But the gentleman could not recall having a previous meeting with Ma. He apprised Ma of his reason for coming to Navadweep. Ma was highly delighted.

The gentleman: Ma, give some instruction about the ideal conduct of householders.

Ma: I have only one thing to tell you. You have come to collect the deities—there is no need of instructions so long as the deities are with you. The main thing is to keep His company. Problems arise when the company is parted. Always try to serve the *Thakur* (God).

The gentleman: Tell me something about how I must serve Him.

Ma: Instructions come from within so long as the *Thakur* is with you. Try to put your heart into the service, then the spirit will be drawn in by itself. People talk, you know, of serving heart and soul — here lies the secret of how it is done. Always try to keep your heart directed towards Him. Besides, it is one thing to serve and quite another to have service automatically performed. You should set about it after collecting the rules and regulations of service from those who know how to serve. As you proceed, *bhava* (the spirit) is awakened. From then on, you shall be serving through *bhava*. Serving in spirit is the real service. Such a service has no hard-and-fast rules. It is quite personal and admits of no instructions. Once, in

the course of conventional service, *bhava* comes into the picture, all subsequent directions about how the service should be conducted come from the *bhava* itself. You see, though all are educated, reading the same set of books, yet some can deliver speeches while some others can compose poems. Neither the speeches nor the poems were in the books they read. These come out from within them. The same thing is true of serving. Real serving, serving through spirit is independent of teaching. It comes from within. (Looking at the gentleman's wife) All should serve as Ma serves her husband. We are all women. There is only one husband. God is our common Husband. He alone is male, all else are female.

It was time for our setting out for Maheshganj. The boat also was in waiting. We proceeded, Sri Sri Ma leading and we following Her. On the way a woman said to Ma, 'Ma', how much longer must I continue these works (i.e. worldly works)?'

Ma: So long as you have *samskaras* (tendencies produced by *karma*). This bundle must be untied. This is the cause of all troubles.

The woman: How long still will my *samskaras* persist?

Ma: You must wait for sometime more.

The woman: But I cannot bear any more.

Ma: Not so. You have still some power left. At least you can still say, 'I can't.'

So saying Ma looked at us and smiled. I felt that Her words implied that reliance on God does not emerge so long as even a little of personal initiative is left. We got into the boats and reached Shaktipada Babu's house in two or two and a half hours. There Ma was offered *bhoga*. We had *prasada*. We were on our way back a little before evening. Getting to the bank of the river we found all already seated in the boats. The heaviest crowd was in the boat reserved for Ma. In one boat

there were only a few passengers such as Prankumar Bahu, Atul Babu's brother-in-law and some others. I boarded it. A little before the boats were on the move, Ma walked across three boats, took her stand in ours and said, "I have come to this boat, for it contains all easygoing men, who would never say, in so many words, Ma, do come to our boat." An uncalled for grace, if ever there was one!

A little after the evening we reached Navadweep and found that Khukuni Didi, Swami Akhandanandaji and Sri Binoy Bhusan Sen with his wife were at Navadweep, waiting at the bank of the Ganges, desirous of meeting Ma. As we got back to the dharmashala a little late at night, there were no outsiders on that day. Only we ourselves sat near Ma.

### **Sri Sri Ma's instruction to us through the incident involving Ananda Bhai and Nirmala Ma.**

At the arrival of new devotees, our group had gained in size. But though there were so many of us, there was no provision for kirtan. This was because Bimala Ma and Nirmala Ma were invariably spiritually affected by kirtan and while in that state they were said to be under excruciating pain. So Ananda Bhai was always opposed to kirtan. We therefore only sat in the room and had talks.

A few days before Nirmala Ma had gone to Jamshedpur as the devotees there had been fervently requesting her for a long time, and there she had also been emotionally carried away by a kirtan. Referring to that incident Ananda Bhai rebukingly told her not to go about making a parade of her emotional reaction. His words bore a touch of taunt, which pained Nirmala Ma intensely. All present realised that Ananda Bhai's censure was unjust and unreasonable. But Nirmala Ma's husband was sitting quite unaffected. Among those present,



Triguna Babu said some words which, though not rude, were clear enough to bring home to Ananda Bhai the fact that he had taken undue liberty in criticizing Nirmala Ma in the presence of her husband, Hem Bhai. While these controversies were going on, Sri Sri Ma seemed not to hear any part of it so long. She was sitting silent and unmoved like an image of stone. But the moment Triguna Babu said those words to Ananda Bhai, Ma objected to it and told Triguna Babu to apologize to Ananda Bhai at once. Triguna Babu complied. The controversy came to an end and Ananda Bhai went away to sleep. Nirmala Ma's bed was made near Ma's and she lay down. Hem Bhai retired to bed.

After Ananda Bhai had gone to bed, Ma said to Abani Babu "Well, Baba, you promised to treat us to a kirtan tonight, didn't you?"

Abani Babu : Yes, Ma. I shall keep my word.

Ma: When?

Abani Babu said "Just now" and he began to sing kirtan. The kirtan went on. At the sound of kirtan Ananda Bhai came leaving the bed and sat by Ma. Ma did not say a word but went on listening to the song. Abani Babu gradually raised his voice and from time to time cast his eyes at Nirmala Ma. Ananda Bhai wore a solemn look. After the kirtan had gone on for a time, Nirmala Ma fell to sobbing. At this, Ananda Bhai, chafing with anger, went away from the room. And at that very moment, the kirtan came to a stop. Ma took Abani Babu to task.

Abani Babu : I cannot be blamed. Did you not ask me to sing the kirtan?

Ma: I told you to sing it softly — why did you raise your voice by degrees? Besides, you were interested in dragging Nirmala Ma into an emotional unrest so in the intervals of your singing, you had been looking at her from time to time to

measure the influence of your kirtan on her. Your crescendo was evidently calculated to bring her into this pass.

It made us laugh to hear Ma speak. A fine shape of things, really! Here was Ma Herself asking Abani Babu to sing kirtan and now She was taking him to task for doing so. Of course, it was Ma's censure, with not an iota of bitterness in it.

At Ma's words, Abani Babu began to weep. At that we stopped laughing and fell into silence. As for Nirmala Ma, she was removed to another room. Ma said to us, 'Ananda Babu cannot be blamed for being offended. It is quite plain to you how he is affectionate to Nirmala Ma. He objects to kirtan so strongly because it causes physical affliction to Nirmala Ma. He loves Ma and with the right that accrues from this love, he says those things and seeks to control her activities. True, it is painful to you but before you say anything in protest, you should consider if you have any worldly right to interfere. If you make any statement on the spur of the moment, it is sure to land you in discomfiture. Under the circumstances, you should think that all these are the ways of God. While He stirs up religious sentiments in one, He again throws in obstruction through another.'

A devotee: Ma, if someone maligns our Guru in our presence, how should we react?

Ma: It is better to accept such defamation in silence. You should think that it is through the will of the Guru that you have been compelled to hear him defamed. It promotes the discipline of patience.

### **Name leads to *Hathayoga* .**

After this Ma started interpreting Nirmala Ma's case. "You see", She said "as soon as Nirmala Ma listens to kirtan she suffers physical imbalance — It seems that her bosom

was being crushed out of shape. All these are similar to the effects of *Hathayoga*. These imbalances occur during the first stages of *sadhana*. They drop out afterwards. You must have seen people practising *Hathayoga* distorting their bodies in various ways through different postures. During the first stages of *sadhana* even by repeating the Name, one experiences these reactions occurring spontaneously in his body. The body is thrown out of gear on hearing kirtan or singing of Name and there are many kinds of physical pain. At this stage listening to a kirtan is painful and yet stopping it seems to cause a still greater pain. Did you not hear her say, 'True, hearing of kirtan causes me pain, but I cannot resist hearing such sweet Name. Not to hear it is more painful.' Such a condition calls for patience. This is called *tapasya*. So I call *tapasya 'tap sahur'* (bearing heat or pain). Though listening to the singing of Name is painful, the pain disappears through a patient listening to it for a few days."

Ma explained Her statement in various ways. Seeing it was close on 3 a.m. I went away to sleep.

### Offering fruits to Ganga

14th Paus, 1343 Tuesday (29-12-36). Ma had planned a morning outing on the Ganges. All of us were in Her company. Four boats were hired. On that day there was no arrangement for cooking on the boat. Ma said that She would return after a brief spell of boating. Sachi Babu had plenty of fruits brought from Calcutta for Ma. A basketful of fruits was taken on the boat. The four boats were attached close together without a gap and sailed along the Ganges. The wavelets on Ganga seemed to be playing wantonly, glistening under the morning sun. With the azure sky above, the sin-destroying, limpid Ganga flowing with a graceful ease below, there stood

our ever-smiling Ma in the middle, clad in white. Her face like the autumnal moon, Her hair dishevelled — an embodiment of spiritual bliss. It was a sight of sights! The devotees were singing kirtan sweetly, with rapt self-abandon. At this sight, the bathing women along the ghats of Navadweep kept looking at us picture-like, spell-bound. Seeing them standing like that, Ma expressed her joy.

Ma was offered fruits as *bhoga*. She ordered Sachi Babu to pick up fruits, one of each kind, and consign them to Ganga. She also showed him how to do it. Sachi Babu took them one at a time in folded palms and threw them into the Ganga-water in the posture of offering oblation during a Yajna. Oranges, apples, guavas drifted along the Ganges. The boatmen found it difficult to contain themselves at this seeming misuse of precious fruits. They were making a bid for recovering them, but Ma forbade them and kept gazing at the fruits for a long time.

Sitting in the boat, we partook of the *prasada*. Bimala Ma, Nirmala Ma and others were with us. After a short rambling about in the boat, Ma again made for the *dharmashala*. Hearing a controversy last night between Nirmala Ma and Ananda Bhai, a question had arisen in my mind. I was looking for an opportunity to put the question to Ma. Finding Her alone for a short span of time on the way to the *dharmashala*, I said to Her, "Ma, when religious sentiments wake up within a person, obstacles appear on the way of their development. Are these obstacles accidental, or are they a regular feature of the realm of *sadhana*?" Scarcely had I put my question across, when Ananda Bhai came up and stood beside Ma. Ma said, "I cannot answer it now. Raise it some other time."

We all got back to the *dharmashala*. Ma sat in the veranda. Many talks were on. At this moment Sachi Babu came with a

telegram from Baba Bholanath and said, "Ma, Bholanath is ill, here is his telegram. What should we do now?"

Ma: Perhaps this telegram is against the non-receipt of the letter you wrote to Bholanath. Wait for his reply to that letter.

Sachi Babu: Baba sends a telegraph being ill in an out-of-the way place and we shall sit still doing nothing? Is it not our duty to send a telegram?

Ma: Nothing to worry over. But you may do what you think fit.

Ma said these words in a way as if Bholanath was no relation of Hers. Old Dadamahashay and Didima were with Bholanath; She did not express Her anxiety even on their accounts. The indifference of Sri Sri Ma is something to take note of. But we being weak, Her indifference only adds to our uneasiness. Sachi Babu sent a pre-paid telegram. In the afternoon the reply came, intimating that Bholanath was well.

#### Nirmala Ma's departure from Navadweep.

Today Nirmala Ma and Hem Bhai were due to depart from Navadweep. Hem Bhai expressed his desire to leave the day before, but Ma would not hear of it. If they had left then, the Incident of the night would not have taken place. Theirs as well as our days at Navadweep would have passed peacefully. But Ma willed otherwise. Seemingly, She Herself led us into a quarrel and then as a dispassionate spectator instructed us on the occasion. Coming to Navadweep I saw, this time, this peculiar way of Ma.

At noon Sri Sri Ma said to Nirmala Ma, "Ma sing me a song." Nirmala Ma said, "Ma, I cannot sing at will. My songs are spontaneous. When I feel like singing I cannot suppress it, nor can I sing at the request of somebody." Ma said, "But you must sing me a song." Nirmala Ma remained silent.

At about 3 p.m. Ma told everybody to get ready. She would go with us to the temple. She sent for Nirmala Ma. After sometime we found Nirmala Ma moving in a circle, singing. It was an amazing sight. Her face beaming from excess of emotion and tears trickling down her cheeks, with arms thrown up, she was singing lost to the external world, treading the ground to the measure of the song:—

Sri Krishna Chaitanya Prabhu Nityananda

Hare Krishna Hare Rama Shri Radha Govinda.

It was such a sweet song fit to melt even a stone. As I listened to it, I thought that perhaps Sri Gaurangadeva also sang such songs at the doors of Navadweep rousing the audience to a religious frenzy. All who listened to the song of Nirmala Ma had their eyes bathed in tears. All were speechless. Sri Sri Ma was eyeing at Nirmala Ma, with a smile on Her lips. Nirmala Ma again sang:—

Jai Radhe Radhe Krishna Krishna

Hare Krishna Hare Hare.

A nam balo badane shunao kane

Bilao jiver dware dware.

(Sing the praise of Radha and Krishna and distribute the name among the people from door to door.)

Thus singing she walked out of the *dharmashala* and went towards the Ganges. Many among our group followed her. The sound of that divine song was wafted to our ears from the bank of the Ganges borne by the dew-drenched gentle breeze of the afternoon. Reverberated from shore to shore of Ganga, the refrain gradually thinned away into the distance:—

"A nam balo badane shunao kane

Bilao jiver dware dware."

A mood of detachment fell on all. It seemed as if a scene from heaven flashed across our tear-stained eyes like one projected

on a screen, and dissolved that very instant.

Nirmala Ma was to go to the station in a boat from the landing place of the Ganges and from there set out for Beharapur. We had all been charmed by the shy and modest behaviour of Nirmala Ma. The way she parted from us left on our mind a deep impression of devotion and love. Whenever we think of Nirmala Ma, our heads are bowed down to her feet from sheer veneration. Perhaps that is how an object of purity has an attraction.

After the departure of Nirmala Ma, Ma, as they told me, had remarked, "It is pity you did not join in the song of Nirmala Ma, for if you did, you would have seen something unprecedented." We lost what we were destined to lose. There was no use grieving over it, but as for what I saw and heard — who can doubt that they were the effect of a pile of virtue acquired in some previous birth?

(3)

#### Lalita Sakhi and Sri Sri Ma.

A little before the evening, Ma went out from the *dharma-shala*, accompanied by all. Not far from the *dharma-shala* was *Samaj Bari* (Community House). Ma entered into the *Samaj Bari*. Directly on entrance through the main door there was on the right a spacious "*Nat Mandir*" (a hall for religious and cultural ceremonies). A pandit was giving a religious discourse sitting in the *Nat Mandir*. A small group of audience attended it. Instead of entering into the *Nat Mandir*, Ma stopped at the gate for a while and then proceeded keeping the *Nat Mandir* to the right. After advancing a little I found that a lady belonging to the western part of India, inclined to obesity came up and bowed down to Ma. From the

way she was dressed up, I took her for the proprietress of the temple. After the *pranama*, she led us to the veranda of a building and offered us seats. I sat very close to the lady. Then I had a chance of scrutinizing her face. From the face and voice I came to understand that the person I had been regarding as a woman all this time, was really a man engaged in *Sadhana* of Sri Krishna in the guise of a *Sakhi*. Then suddenly I was reminded of Lalita Sakhi,\* and understood that we were in Lalita Sakhi's Kunja (a garden abode).

After we all were seated, Lalita Sakhi said to Sri Sri Ma, 'Ma, I was displeased with you. This morning somebody said that you had left Navadweep. I sulked at the news of your leaving without meeting me and kept brooding over that mood. I made no further enquiry about you.'

Ma: You sulked, and lo, here I am before you.

Lalita Sakhi: You look rather emaciated this time.

Ma smiled a little and asked Lalita Sakhi to sing a song. One of us said to Lalita Sakhi, "Ma, we heard about your kirtan at Calcutta. Today you must treat us to one."

Lalita Sakhi: Ma, as a knower of our heart's secrets (*Antaryami*), you know that I cannot sing.

Sometime passed in silence. Ma said to us, "Put some questions to her."

Lalita Sakhi: Ma, what shall I say. I am a bird trained up to speak by Ma. I can only repeat what you have taught me.

Ma: Those who do not know their "lesson" are eager to listen to that much.

We had among us a Swamiji, who was a devotee of Ma. He was first acquainted with her at Vindhyachal, since then he

\* It is the name of one of the eight confidantes of Radha. The *Sakhi Sadhana* originates from the idea that Shri Krishna is the only male. All others are females, with Krishna as their beloved.

had become a devotee of Ma. He had gone even to Dehradun to meet Ma. I was told that he had been to England. Swamiji said to Lalita Sakhi, "Instruct us according to our mental states." I thought it quite a good proposal. It would kill two birds with one stone. Besides listening to her instructions, we would be able to know her capacity for sounding our mental states, if any. But Lalita Sakhi did not step into the trap laid for her. Very softly she began to say, "The organ of this heart emits no sound unless struck. Played on by an expert, it gives out pleasing musical notes (*Ragas* and *Raginis*)". Being at a disadvantage, Prankumar Babu said, "What are a *jiva*'s resources? What are his duties?"

Lalita Sakhi: Do not talk of a *jiva*'s duties. The duty of children is to attend to studies, that of a husband is to maintain his wife and so on. Different classes of people have different duties. Inspite of this difference according to positions, there is a common duty pertaining to all. It is to meditate on the Self, that is, to make introspective enquiries such as "who am I, wherefrom have I come? what is my nature?" etc., and then try to be identified with the self.

Prankumar Babu: Is the emergence of the sense of duty everything? What about the obstructions in the way of obtaining what seems to be desirable according to the sense of duty?

Lalita Sakhi: Obstructions there will be, for our sense organs are all externally oriented. It is these sense organs that hinder at every step, and they would continue to do so, till they are internalized. But if our efforts are whole-hearted, help also comes our way. It is God Himself who helps us in the form of Indwelling spirit and Guru. But we are not ready to work hard. We are eager of wages in advance. But the path, we have to tread, is uphill. God says—

*Jattadagre vishamiua pariname amritopamam*

*Tat sukham satvikam proktamatmabuddhi prasadajam*

(Pure happiness is said to be one derived from the awakening of one's own intellect. It is like poison in the beginning, but like nectar in the long run).

But we are not prepared to undergo privations, nor have we the ability for it. Being thus circumstanced, we have just one hope. (pointing to Ma) Fasten you tiny boat to this ship in the form of Ma and rest contented. Then wait in the hope of Her Grace. What more can I say. This organ gave out the note as played on by Ma. I have nothing to say on my own.

Ma (to Lalita Sakhi) : But the organ being of a good quality rings true. (All laughed).

Lalita Sakhi went on, "We describe ourselves as wooden puppets in the hand of God. But it is not true. A wooden puppet has no will of its own—it is completely at the mercy of others. But we cannot surrender ourselves like a wooden puppet. We are better described as dolls made of desires."

Seeing the crowd swelling up gradually, our seats were transferred to the courtyard. We cleared out from veranda and took our new seats. We were surrounded on all sides by about a hundred people. Now I was at some distance from Lalita Sakhi, but had no difficulty in hearing her words.

The afore-mentioned Swamiji asked Lalita Sakhi to interpret a *sloka* from the Gita beginning with "*Sarvadharmam parityajya*" (discarding all duties .....). Lalita Sakhi explained it in very easy and simple words. Not that she said anything original, but it was a pleasure to hear her. In the course of explaining the *sloka*, she said, "A man can gain his objective from anything he adheres to as God without any ulterior motive. It is folly to make a mess of everything through desire for a return. Everything is in disarray the moment desires creep



in. Otherwise it is possible to get to the goal even by worshipping one's husband as God. This is the way in which householders can acquire religious merits. I tell you a story in this connection. A chaste woman had a husband stricken with leprosy. As he was completely handicapped by the fell disease, she could not leave him behind when going elsewhere, lest he should be exposed to the attacks of birds or beasts. She used to put him into a basket and went with the basket on her head.

One day her husband saw a prostitute of exquisite beauty and was enamoured of her. Though being stricken, he had not the potency to fulfil his desire, yet he was possessed by a strong lust for the harlot. As he had no hope of having her, he began to pass his days languishing with sorrow. The chaste woman observed her husband pining away, drew out the cause of his sorrow through sheer importunity and in order to satisfy his desire undertook serving the prostitute at her house. Some days passed in this way. The prostitute, pleased at the service of her new maid-servant, wanted to know her wish, desirous of rewarding her. The woman then told her the desire of her husband. Hearing this the prostitute said, 'I have served many men with this body for money. I shall feel gratified if I can today do the same to fulfil the desire of chaste woman like you. You just bring your husband to me.' At this the woman was delighted and prepared to bring her husband to the house of the harlot. At that moment Narayana in his abode, Vaikuntha said to Lakshmi, 'I must go to the earth just now, because I must be personally present at the spot to witness how the Sati is going to serve her husband.' Lakshmi said, 'Why should you go alone? Take me also with you, so that I with my presence, may pay homage to the Sati.' Narayana consenting, they both went to the house of ill fame.

Mahadeva, the God of gods, also made ready to leave Kailas for the prostitute's house and when Parvati knew the cause of it, she said, 'One of my names is Sati. If I do not pay respect to this Sati, who else will?' So the Husband of Uma also set out with His consort, Uma. Brahma and Brahmani were not to lag behind. The harlot's den, which is like a hell on earth, was transformed into heaven, thanks to the Sati. So you see, serving her husband without desire for a return, not only did the chaste woman have the fortune of visualizing Narayana and other Deities, but her husband and the prostitute were also emancipated through her greatness.

By the time the story ended, it was evening. Sri Sri Ma asked the girls of our group to sing kirtan. The elder daughter of Jatish Babu sang:-

Sri Krishna Chaitanya Prabhu Nityananda

Hare Krishna Hare Ram Shri Radhey Govinda.

The other ladies also joined in. Many people listened to the song standing. Bimala Ma wept her heart out, carried away by religious emotion. Weeping she said to Lalita Sakhi, "O Mother, give me devotion, give me devotion." Seeing her weeping, Lalita Sakhi's heart overflowed with emotion. In an effort to contain it, she kept repeating "Jai Guru, Jai Guru". Pointing at Ma, she said, "She, whom you have resorted to, will draw you along. Keep your boat tied to this ship. Nothing else is required." Bimala Ma, with her bosom drenched with tears, began to repeat, "Ma, be sure to draw me along." Amidst such sheddings of tears, all hearts were deeply moved. All eyes were big with tears. Only Sri Sri Ma's face was quiet, smiling. No worldly smiles and tears seemed able to disturb her Himalayan calm. Ma's affectionate eyes seemed to be shedding benediction on all like a light-house on a storm-tossed ocean. Seeing the weeping and wailing of Bimala Ma,

Lalita Sakhi was somewhat astonished and said, "This is not due to any mental depression. So far as I see, it has arrived, arrived!" Perhaps her remark was directed by her observation of a pre-dawn glow of the development of divine love in Bimala Ma. Then to comfort Bimala Ma, she said smilingly, "No fear, there is no cause for anxiety. It is in the nature of this Anandamayee to drag backwards at times, preventing forward motion."

Now we took leave. With Ma and Bimala Ma leading, we slowly returned to the *dharmashala*. The whole day seemed to have passed through divine elation. It seemed that having come to Navadweep, the place sanctified by Mahaprabhu, I had my life blessed. The mind was replete with a feeling of gratitude.

On arriving at the *dharmashala*, we sat around Ma. Different topics were touched upon. Ma said to me, "You asked me a question on the way back from Ganga, did you not?" I said, "Ma, as God-consciousness starts awaking in someone, obstacles are found to come in opposing its development. Are they a regular feature pertaining to the world of *Sadhana*, or a mark of individual misfortune? For example, Nirmala Ma is on the point of developing an admirable realization, but she is having to encounter hindrances at every step, seeking to block it up. In your case also as I have heard, you were obstructed by Baba Bholanath. From all these I presume that such obstructions are the rule of this path.

Ma : Bholanath did not obstruct me in the way Nirmala Ma is being obstructed. But while discussing these matters, you should leave out the case of 'this body' (of Herself).

So saying, Ma entered into a discussion of my question. But after She had said a word or two, She said, "Words do not

flow in. This discussion must wait for the present; raise it when the night has advanced farther."

I : That is a good idea. Khukuni Didi will also be present then.

While speaking of Nirmala Ma's situation I quite unconsciously compared it with one of the past stages of Ma and Ma instantly protested against it. Even before this I had noticed that whenever such a comparison was suggested, whether by myself or by someone else, She was not slow to oppose it with the remark, "Do not refer to 'this body' while discussing these things." In fact from Her very birth, Ma's life shows a speciality which is not found in the life of any other saint. Untutored and without any *sadhana* from her birth, She was conversant with all the theories of the spiritual world. None of the processes such as *asana-mudra* *Hathayoga* and *Rajayoga* were unrevealed to Ma. One day she had told me, "There is no *asana* or *mudra* which I do not know. When someone shows me an *asana* under *Hathayoga*, it seems that this body has been subjected to it". When some stage of *sadhana* is referred to, She at once says, "This body has, passed through no end of stages, so I understand which stage is being spoken of." Yet none of these postures or yogic activities has been deliberately performed by Ma. As stages like childhood, youth etc. appear spontaneously in the human body as a course of Nature, admitting of no personal option, so was the development of Ma's spiritual life. Hence the life-history of Ma is a striking phenomenon in the world of *sadhana*. Is this the reason why Ma objects to being compared with others or does it hint at Ma's being an incarnation of God? Similar things can be compared. How can comparison come in between things that have natural dissimilarity?



### How can one have devotion and faith in God

Seeing that our discussion was held up, a gentleman said, 'Ma, how can a man easily have devotion and faith in God?'

Ma : For devotion and faith in God, a man must be single-minded through his actions. He must follow the path marked out by the Guru unquestioningly. What help is needed comes by itself while he is proceeding under the guidance of the Guru. It is no use regretting that mind is not stabilized. The mind is restless, being starved of its natural food. Feed the mind, nourish it - then it will calm down by itself. The food of the mind is perfect joy. The mind is tossing about for that joy. Through different objects of the world, the mind is looking for joy, but failing to come by the object of its search - perfect joy - it is restless. This perfect joy is inherent to our nature, and the mind is aware of its taste. For this the partial joys of the world cannot satisfy it. I liken the mind to a child. As a child looks for the mother and is not quiet till it gets her, so is the mind seeking its mother. Its mother is perfect joy. To me the mind also is like a great seeker of Truth. Just as the seeker cannot be contented till he gains his object and constantly strives for it, so is the mind hankering after perfect joy. Nourish it with holy ideas. It will be calmed through practice. Attend to your daily chores of the household. I do not call them useless. But always have an eye on God. If you keep that in view, you shall one day attain the supreme objective! "So'ham" (I am that) and "Aham" (ego) are inter-related as tree and its shadow. Our ego is also a shadow—a projection of So'ham, the sense of identification with Him. As one gets to the foot of the tree by walking up its shadow, in the same way one can attain God through the performance of worldly duties, if he has an unwavering eye on God.

Ma went on instructing in this key for a long time.

### Hindrances in the way of spiritual developments.

As the night deepened, Ma reverted to my previous question, namely, why obstructions arise in the way of spiritual developments.

She went on, "You see, fire once ablaze will come a full cycle. No one can choke it up midway. When God-consciousness arises in the seeker and subjects him at once to joy and pain, no man has it in his power to stem its course. As a seeker suffers pain on hearing a kirtan, attempts are sometimes made to keep him away from it, but it is of no use. For when the time is ripe for the burgeoning of God-consciousness in a seeker, he is exposed to kirtans or religious songs through some unthinkable coincidence, and he is carried off his feet by an upsurge of religious emotion. It is beyond a human being to hold them in check. You may ask why at all efforts are made to keep a seeker away from kirtan, as instead of furthering his spiritual uplift it merely proves a hindrance to it. Here, you have to bear it in mind that the oppositions coming from friends and relatives proceed from the *samskaras* acquired by the seeker in his previous birth or his *karma*. The relatives and friends that a seeker has, are in conformity with his *samskaras* the way he has been conditioned. Some of them hinder him, while others help him on. As in the case of Nirmala Ma, you see while Abani Babu is eager to stimulate religious emotions in her, Babaji (Ananda Bhai) is always vigilant that no such emotions might be stirred up. Babaji, from his attachment for Nirmala Ma, opposes kirtan being sung in her presence, because it causes her pain. Again Abani Babu also loves the mother and so is desirous of boosting up Ma's religious sentiments through the singing of kirtan. All these are as scheduled by the *samskaras* acquired in the previous birth.

"You may ask why Ma feels so intense pain on hearing kirtan. My answer to it is that these laughs and tears, weals and woes are also derived from desires. Feeling happy on hearing God's name is also a kind of desire. Did you not hear Nirmala Ma declare yesterday, 'I cannot keep away from hearing such sweet name either.' The hearing of name causes pain, again refraining from hearing it is also as painful. Weals and woes are invariably correlated with desires and attachments. One has to attain equity through such experiences of pleasures and pains. The sufferings must persist so long as equity is not gained. They have their need. Those who proceed along the path of *sadhana* must necessarily undergo these experiences."

### Cosmology, Meditation.

I : Ma, how are the initial *samskaras* formed?

Ma : These questions pertain to cosmology. These questions arise in your mind, as you have in you the concepts of creation, continuation and annihilation. You do all your works from motives and so you ascribe motives even to God. But in the domain of ultimate truth, these have no meaning. That is why the vedantist calls them *Maya* (Illusion).

Triguna Babu: Ma, shouldn't one increase the time of meditation?

Ma : Yes, it adds to concentration. And then meditation wears itself out during its own course. What is left behind is unspeakable.

I : If meditation itself increases concentration, then we can meditate on worldly affairs as well.

Ma : Meditation on worldly affairs no doubt increases concentration, but it creates bondage. Only meditation on real thing breaks down the bonds.

It being half past three at night, we went away to sleep.

15th Pous 1343, Wednesday, (30-12-36). Going Ma in the morning. I found Her door closed. I was told that some people were closeted with Ma to have private talks with Her. Many people were also waiting outside to meet Her. I saw many new faces, some Manipuri boys among others. Seeing that those within were taking a long time, I had a peep through the window of Ma's room and found Ma talking with Akhandanandaji and Khukuni Didi. It seemed that Ma was talking about *Yajnakunda* (sacrificial pit) of Vindhyaachal. I heard that the *Yajnakunda* had developed some flaw. The Swamiji had come from Vindhyaachal to have a talk about it. Understanding that it would be sometime before the door of Ma was opened, I moved away elsewhere for a time.

After the secret consultation was over, we sat with Ma. Ma was speaking about Bholanath's illness. Bholanath had come to Calcutta for treatment four or five months ago. Denam White had come to Jatish Babu's quarter and examined Bholanath. Ma also had been taken there. She was waiting in the puja-room of Jatish Babu. Denam White had been much impressed by Ma. His remark was, "I have never seen a person laugh like this." Ma had distributed *prasada* among all. Denam White came to Ma and stood agape waiting for the *prasada*. Ma also dropped a *sandesh* (a sweetmeat) into his mouth.

### *Purushakara* (initiative) and Grace.

After a while Nirod Babu said, "Ma, in *sadhana*, how much effort is needed and how much depends on Grace?"

Ma : So long as you have power, you must act. As you are exerting yourselves for different domestic duties, so should you in religious matters. But bear it in mind that these

religious strivings so far are done in ignorance and God is the acting principle behind them. While doing these works, a stage comes when a man realises the futility of his ability. When he comes to the realization that there is nothing he can do on his own, self-surrender and reliance on God take over. Even then action does not come to an end. Actions at that stage are born of knowledge. Now he realizes that it is God who is getting these works done by him. These too, come under the category of work as the ego still persists. The work done at this stage is *Purushakara*. They are the works of the Supreme *Purusha*.

I : Ma, where are you going to mark the end of *sadhana*? Knowledge is attained, self-surrender comes in, but works are yet to fade out. Where does *sadhana* or action end?

Ma : In the union of the pair.

Many smiled at this answer.

I : Ma, I could not clearly understand the meaning of *purushakara*. Does it consist in our all-out attempts to attain God or does it come in when in the course of self-exertion, we lose faith in our own power and refrain from action looking forward to the Grace of God? Is *purushakara* an effort to go up the stream or is it just submission to the drift of the stream?

Ma : When you submit yourself to the drift of the stream, it is the real state of *Purushakara*. The act done then is verily the act of the Supreme *Purusha*, the act of knowledge. All acts done before are acts of ignorance.

I : When will the *sadhana* come to an end?

Ma : In the union of the two when one becomes "*bedanta*" (toothless).\* At this time Khukuni Didi said, "A little before this, Ma discussed Krishna Lila. She said that Krishna

\* At a later stage, this term used by Ma has been explained.

Lila is not fit even for the ears of *jivanmuktas* (men, emancipated during their life). The term "emancipated" implies that they were once in bondage and are freed afterwards. Only those who have risen higher than this are fit to listen to *Krishna Lila* as they alone can understand it. *Krishna Lila* begins where *Vedanta* ends. This is inexpressible in words. In this *Lila* there is only one *Purusha*. He is *Radha*, *gopinis* (the milkmaids of Vrindaban) and the cowherds all in one. The self-same Krishna enjoys Himself in many ways". It seemed to me that it was an arrogance on my part to try to understand *Krishna Lila*. So I put no question to Ma regarding it. I said to Her, "Ma, now that I understand *purushakara*, tell me what is Grace."

Ma : Grace is the reward of acts outstanding from previous birth. The good works performed by you in previous birth come back to you in the form of Grace.

I : If it is the reward of my acts, I am entitled to it — it is my wages.

Ma : No doubt you are entitled to it, but as you are not aware of it, you take it for Grace. Besides, in the course of his *sadhana*, a seeker comes to a stage when everything appears to him as Grace. It is as if whatever is happening on earth is due to the Grace of God. It is free from the *sadhya-sadhana* (achieving and the object of achievement) relationship in it. This is the stage of Grace. The stage above it transcends Grace. There remains only one Existence. Who will show Grace and to whom?

It appeared from Ma's interpretation of Grace and *purushakara*, that they are two aspects of the same thing. What appears to be *purushakara* when looked at from one view point is Grace from another viewpoint. All that we do in the hope of attaining God-realization, such as meditation,

concentration etc. were described by Ma as ignorance-born acts. When in the course of such actions, the seeker realises his insignificance and submits himself to the Supreme, All-embracing One, the real *purushakara* begins. The seeker now realises that all the activities of the universe are being directed by the will of that Supreme Being — God. This again is the stage of Grace; because then the seeker realises that nothing in the universe can take place except through the Grace of the Lord of the universe. This is called the stage of Grace perhaps because the ego still persists. When the ego dissolves, what remains is unspeakable and that is the Highest Truth.

For the last few days Bimala Ma was eager to go back to Adyapeeth. During Ma's *bhoga*, she entreated Ma to permit her to leave. But Ma continued to oppose her. Bimala Ma, with almost a tearful voice said, "Ma, you do not understand what an ordeal it is for me to be staying here. My bosom is being racked to the point of bursting. I seem to have reached the last limit of my toleration." Ma said, "Well, you stay for this day. If you want to go tomorrow, I will not stop you. It is agreed then, understand?" Bimala Ma consented very reluctantly but marks of agony were still visible on her face. In the afternoon, Ma went with Bimala Ma and others for a boating on the Ganges. Ma had also asked Sri Binoy Bhushan Sen to join the boat-party with his wife. They were due to depart for Calcutta on the same day. Ma gave them some instructions in the boat.

#### *Ahaituki kripa* (unmerited or causeless Grace)

As Ma was seated in Her room after the evening, we too sat at Her feet. Today, *arati* was offered to Ma. Abani Babu performed the *arati*. All sang the songs of *arati*. The *arati* over, Abani Babu, Swami Shankarananda, Ananda Bhai and others read out the *Adya Stotra*. After that Ma was taken away for a

snack. We sat on in the room. I started a conversation with Swami Akhandanandaji. The talks we had in the morning on Grace and *purushakara* were gone over again. At this time Gyan Brahmachari said, "Ma has said that Her talk on Grace in the morning has not been concluded. Nothing was said then about *ahaituki kripa* (unmerited Grace). *Ahaituki kripa* is also there. If reminded of it, She would say something about it." We sat waiting to hear what additional things Ma would say about Grace.

After the *bhoga*, Sri Sri Ma came into the room and took Her seat. Khukuni Didi also sat near Her. Bimala Ma went to another room to lie down. As soon as Ma was composed on Her seat, I said, "Ma, you spoke of a kind of Grace called *ahaituki Kripa*, didn't you?"

Ma : Yes.

I : What is it?

Ma : Grace without any cause.

I : If there is such a thing, we would be justified in calling God capricious.

Ma : God has His share of caprices, too. He is perfect in all respects. So why should He be without caprices?

I : Well, Ma, the causeless Grace you speak of — for whom is it causeless?

Ma : For God.

So saying Ma passed into an attitude indicating that She was not inclined to proceed with this discussion. So we were obliged to stop. Other talks went on.

After a time Ma asked for a kirtan to be sung in a low tone. But as the tone of the kirtan slowly mounted up, She had it stopped. Ma said, "If you sing kirtan so loudly, Mataji (Bimala Ma) will be put to pain and she may even come over to this room. Bimala Ma was lying in the room adjoining to the one



in which we were talking. On the Eastern wall of our room there was a cleft so wide that anything spoken in our room was clearly audible in the next. A little after the stopping of the kirtan, Bimala Ma came to our room with visible marks of pain on her face. She said that she was made restless by the note of kirtan and that she was going to rush into this room on hearing it, but somebody seemed to have fastened the door from without with a chain fastener. So she was writhing with pain all the more, not being able to come here. At this Ma said smiling, "As they were singing kirtan so loudly, I was thinking that it would be nice if someone had kept Ma's room bolted, lest she should be coming over to this room."

The incident provided another proof of the fact that a work was accomplished through the mere wish of Ma. After some conversation with Bimala Ma and Ananda Bhai, Ma sent them both to bed. We kept sitting with Ma.

#### **The main thing about *sadhana* is the learning of patience.**

Sri Sri Ma began to describe the state of Bimala Ma — "Her body falls into disorder when she hears kirtan and there is a feeling of intense pain. It is *Rajayoga* mixed with *Hathayoga*. This happens on reciting and hearing the Name. Ma is eager to leave Navadweep — this eagerness too is concomitant to her particular stage of *sadhana*. So I am holding her back as often as she is insisting on going to Adyapeeth. It is a healthy obstruction for it makes for practice of patience. If one is allowed to go the way his mind in its restlessness seeks to go, he cannot have any discipline in patience. To a person going in for *sadhana*, maintenance of patience is of paramount importance. It is for her getting practised in patience that I offered resistance to Ma and took her out in the boat this afternoon. If I had allowed her to keep

lying down instead, it would have done her an injury."

Ma, as a rule, never says anything contrary to one's wishes. I saw Her depart from this rule only in the case of Bimala Ma and Nirmala Ma. Now I understood the reason of this exception.

Ma went on, "*Tapasya* of the right kind consists in patiently containing the physical pains caused by the upsurge of emotions. If one submits to such upsurge in silence for a while, his body lies still tired out and benumbed. You regard it as *samadhi*, but it is not really so. It is a kind of physical weariness. *Samadhi* and physical langour have to be discriminated between by effects and attitudes. They cannot be distinguished at the first sight.

#### **Sri Sri Ma's education and early life.**

"Those who are literate can understand it to some extent. But I was not educated either by observing others or reading books. Literary education was not in vogue where I was born. On all sides there were houses of Muslims and at that time they did not care for literacy. Besides, I could not associate much with them either. Though all loved me and caressed me, yet I could not go to a Muslim's house except before bathing as your grandmother would not allow it.

"During my early years, your grandfather gave me early education and taught me the alphabets and a few alphabetical complexes. In one day I learnt the alphabets and took another day to learn the same in the reverse order. After that a remotely-related maternal uncle of your grandfather got me admitted into the Lower Primary class of his school. He had a *pathshala* (school) in which education up to the Lower Primary was taught. I was admitted into the Lower Primary class right after I had completed my first book of reading. This

was because the reputation of my being a Lower Primary student was expected to improve my chance a little in the marriage market. Besides, my grandfather's school had few girl students. Another reason of his eagerness to get me admitted might be a desire to add to the roll of girl students in his Lower Primary Class. He got for me old text books for the Lower Primary Class by raking them up from different places. I had no slate. I used a small piece of a slate. Thus started my education in the *pathshala*. True I was enrolled, but I could not go to school everyday. The school was at some distance from our house. Your grandmother would not allow me to go to school alone. I could go to school only on such days when she could find somebody to accompany me. On other days I stayed away at home. When I went to my uncle's house, my school-going was stopped altogether. In all, I read at school only for a days. What I read with the girls one day was found to have been far exceeded on my next visit several days after. In order to overtake them I needed to read the pages in between. But I could not do so. I brought myself into a line with them merely by turning over the pages. But surprisingly enough, I was first in the class in spite of all these lapses in my studies. The teacher asking the questions, could not put me in discomfiture. The reason was that when I sat down to read my book at home, my eyes fell on a few words, and their meanings were revealed to me by themselves. As for example, suppose while reading the book I caught sight of the word 'hasti'. A little reflection over it made me conclude that its meaning would possibly be 'elephant'. Thus I marked a few words and thought out their meanings. There were in the lesson many other words and their meanings equally unknown to me, but I would never notice them. Appearing for the test at school, I found that the teacher was asking me about

only those words that had come to the notice. I did not take even a moment's thought to answer them. My answers came pat. At this the other girl students were surprised, for when they asked me the meaning of any word, I could make no reply, nor could any part of the lesson they might ask me to read.

"Once an Inspector came to inspect our school. On that day I had almost committed to memory a part of my text through repeated reading. The Inspector came and asked us severally what we read. He asked me to read a portion from the book. I found it the same as I had almost committed to memory in the morning. I quoted it from memory fluently. At this the Inspector concluded that I had learnt the whole book by heart and asked me no more questions. Thus my education came to a close.

"As in education, I had no book learning, in the same way I had not learnt anything in religious matters from others. There was a *Thakur-ghar* (a room with a shrine) at home. Directed by your grandmother, I did some works relating to the *Thakur-ghar*. Your grandmother used to call me 'atela' (clumsy), *bedisha* (absent minded). One day she told me to wash a stone vessel and by way of warning added, 'See to it and bring back the vessel broken if you can.' I took the pot to the pond to wash it. There while I was talking to a tree, the pot fell down from my hand and was broken before I was aware of it. I picked up the fragments of that broken pot and went back home. Your grandmother said, 'What is it that you have brought?' I said 'You told me to bring back the broken pot, so I have come picking up the pieces.' Hearing me, instead of being angry, it was all she could do to keep her laughter suppressed.

"Once your grandfather prepared to go to Sonarqon for initiation. Their Guru's house was there. Your grandfather

was to accompany her. Your grandmother refused to take with her this awkward girl. I was left in the house. Before boarding the boat, your grandfather once came back to the house and finding me sitting silently said, 'You want to go with us, do you?' With that he got into the boat with me. Later, the boat was stopped and preparations were made for cooking. As soon as the cooking was done, a bird voided excrement and spoilt the whole food. Then I heard that it was the place where others also had their cooked food spoilt. Going there I once cast my eyes upwards."

Khukuni Didi said, As you looked up, what did you see there?

Ma made no reply and kept silent. We began to laugh. Ma cannot be easily prevailed upon to disclose anything supernatural. Here ended the tale of grandmother and grandfather.

### Sri Sri Ma and Swami Purnananda.

After this Ma began to speak about Purnananda Swami of Rishikesh. Ma said, "When I was at Rishikesh, Purnananda sent to me one of his disciples with a question. Perhaps he was curious to know if I could answer his question. The disciple on coming said, 'My Gurudeva asks you what things appear in a dream.' I said, 'A dream implies sleep. It is ignorance. Who can recount the things that appear in a state of ignorance? Again, to a man of knowledge everything is a dream.' Perhaps, Babaji was very pleased with the answer. After this he came to meet me. I also went one day to meet him. Babaji was skilled in many things. His cooking ability covered a wide range. He said, 'If I treat you to many-course meals of my own cooking for a whole week, yet I shall not run out of the repertory of my recipes.' He cooked many kinds of meals for me; I also prepared *rasgulla* and *payas* of orange and sent

them to him. Thereupon he enquired to me as to how I had cooked them."

Perhaps Sri Sri Ma wanted to bring home to Swami Purnananda the truth that inspite of his versatility as a cook, there were some culinary skills which he had still to acquire. Perhaps he needed this lesson. For surely enough, Ma's sending him those specimens of Her cooking was not an exercise in courtesy. She did not send him anything again.

### Visitations of incorporeal beings.

In the course of conversation this evening, Ma said, "Do not think that you alone are present in the room. There are many other beings here. As you come to listen to my talks, so do they."

A disciple: Ma, did you not meet Gauranga Mahaprabhu and others at Navadweep?

Ma did not give a direct answer to this question. But She said, "When I go somewhere I meet the special *bhava* (governing spirit) of the place."

As the talks went on, it was almost 3.30 a.m. so we withdrew for the night.

16th Paus, 1343, Thursday (31-12-36). Today Bimala Ma and her husband were to leave for Calcutta. Ma had said that if Bimala Ma wanted to go today, She would not say no. But Bimala Ma did not say anything about leaving.

### Whether Sri Sri Ma's words were ever belied.

In the morning sitting with Ma, I said, "Ma, one day you said to me that words spoken by you never come untrue not even, if it was spoken in jest. But Khukuni Didi has said that sometimes your words are found to be belied. When Nandu Babu went to Dibrugarh on service, you told Khukuni Didi to



ask him to meet Sri Shrish Chandra Chakravarti. Nandu Babu found out on enquiry that Shrish Babu had died before that."

Ma: I told Khukuni that Nandu should meet Shrish, provided he was there. I did not say he should meet Shrish. When I make such a statement I always qualify it with words such as an 'if'. Khukuni Didi came up at that time. She did not protest against what Ma said. At night Ma went back to the statement and discussed it at length.

Ma said, "Whenever one speaks something at the worldly level, there must be both truths and falsehoods, as they both exist at this level. When I speak at the worldly level and indulge in jokes, you should take my words as such. As for example, suppose I tell you to fetch a glass of water from that pitcher. You go and find it waterless. Then you may think that my word did not come true as I must have given the direction assuming that it contains water. But from the worldly point of view it is not a falsehood. Nor are you guilty of falsehood, when you make such statements. It only proves that you thought that it contained water, but your guess comes out to be wrong. If I am to speak to you, I too have to make such statements.

"On the other hand if you assume that I know all, there can be no communication between you and me. For knowing all, what can I have to ask you? Such questions as whether you have bathed or eaten cannot then arise at all, the answer being already known to me.

"Besides, there is a stage, where truths and falsehoods have no meaning. But from this stage one cannot stoop to worldly communications, as it would bring disorder into the world. The world has been planned on the dichotomy of truth and falsehood. If someone tried to use here an absolute mode of speech independent of truth and falsehood, the outcome

would be a chaos.

"Between these two extremes, there is a third state. In that state whatever is said to someone comes true. When I say something under this state, it must come true."

I: Ma, suppose somebody under the impression that your statement cannot be false, accepts whatever you say as true?

Ma: Yes, if someone has such firmness of conviction, to him all my words shall turn out to be true.

### **An account of Sri Sri Ma's childhood and married life.**

In connection with the question whether Sri Sri Ma's words could ever be false, I had referred to Shrish Babu. Ma began to tell many things about Shrish Babu. They were related to Sri Sri Ma's childhood days. Shri Shrish Chandra Chakravarti was not a relation of Didima (the grandmother). But he had a very tender heart and he was a very good man. After the birth of Sri Sri Ma, Didima had several sons who died soon after birth. Finding her aggrieved for the loss of sons, Shrish Babu made up his mind to behave with her in such a way that she should take him for her son and forget the loss. Ma said, "Shrish really began to project himself as my brother. He was very fond of me. He called me "Nim" jokingly. Nim was meant to be an abbreviation of Nirmala. When he mocked me in this way, I made faces at him. At that he would say, 'Grand! well done. Let me see it again, do let me.' He entreated me to dine with him, but I never did. It was in deference to your Didima who had forbidden me to do so. She had forbidden me to take meal with anybody as I had grown up. A long time after these events, I met him at Vidyakut. Then I called him to our house and ate with him. Ma also said that She had hinted to Khukuni Didi that She knew about Shrish Babu's death, but the hint was lost on Didi.

While telling about Her childhood days, Ma said how She had befooled the brother-in-law of Upen Babu. Upen Babu was the son of the elder brother of Sri Sri Ma's husband. Upen Babu's brother-in-law had come to the house of Upen Babu, on the occasion of his sister's "second marriage" (a ceremony performed a few days after the marriage of a girl). To make fun of him, Sri Sri Ma had said that according to the custom of the place, a holy pitcher must be carried on head to the brink of the pond where women would duly perform some rituals. As directed by Sri Sri Ma, a small earthen pitcher filled with cowdung dissolved in water was placed on the yard, with a small grinder close to it. Upen Babu's brother-in-law was told that he should carry the pitcher on head to the pond, with the women following him with the grinder. Upen Babu's brother-in-law must have some doubts, for before putting the pitcher on his head, he surveyed it briefly; but it was so completely covered up with banana-leaf and a twig of mango-tree, that he could see nothing of what was inside. Being assured, he put the pitcher on head and Sri Sri Ma took up the grinder in hand. Before he had moved a step or two, Sri Sri Ma broke the pitcher on Upen Babu's brother-in-law's head with a stroke of the grinder. How it fared with him after that can easily be guessed.

After this story was ended, Ma further said, "Once I have taken it into my head to play a trick on somebody, he played into my hand surely enough, however cunning he might be. Once on a festive occasion, a boy was teasing me very much scattering on me. To drench him with water, I took a pitcher full of water and went up to the roof. Guessing what I was after, he ran to escape me. But in running he strayed to position of no escape. It was an easy thing for me to pour water on him from above and drench him to the skin."

Though Didima regarded Sri Sri Ma to be a foolish girl, Her words and manners were by no means like one. She was good at joking. Sri Sri Ma had a relative, who though quite bulky in appearance, had a very high-pitched voice. One day, coming to Sri Sri Ma's house, he was saying something when Ma said from inside the room, "Mark, someone is giving out a thin speech through a thick throat." This threw all into a roar of laughter.

Innocent pleasantries with Sri Sri Ma were as much a source of joy as an evil approach to be jesting with Her was dangerous. Once on the occasion of a marriage, Ma had gone to the house of a relative. At that time She was in the prime youth. To an onlooker, She gave the impression of an exquisitely beautiful image of a goddess. On the same occasion, two relatives, young men both, had also come. Ma said, "I had gone to the marriage house fully dressed up, draped in a black wrapper. Seeing me in that attire, one of the young men began to say, "You look like this one, you look like that one." When he had said so for the umpteenth time, my eyes suddenly fell on him. It was a somewhat abnormal gaze. At that time I was a typical housewife and did not look at "other" men. When honey was put into the mouth of the newly married bride, the second young man came to me with some sugar in hand, and said, "You are also a new bride, let me put some sugar into your mouth." I backed away, but everytime I did so he brought his hand close to my mouth. As he was misbehaving like that, suddenly my eyes fell on him. This time also my gaze was somewhat abnormal. But on neither of these occasions I had deliberately cast my eyes on them. However, seeing me look like that, the boy desisted. The day after the festival they went back home. But scarcely two days had passed when I got the information that the young man

who had cut immodest joke at me had received a sound thrashing for nothing, and the other who had sought to put sugar into my mouth had died of cholera. Their death like this seems to have been predestined."

Then Ma passed into the account of Her married life. As already said, She had been admitted into the Lower Primary Class, to ensure Her a better prospect in the marriage market. The tale of Her studying Lower Primary had gone into circulation. When Ma had gone to their Gurudeva's house with Didima and others, then also referring to Her education, it had been said that She was studying Lower Primary. Hearing this somebody asked Her the meaning of Lower Primary. At this Ma frankly said, "No one has told me its meaning."

However, hearing that his wife had studied Lower Primary, Baba Bholanath, the day after the marriage, expressed a desire to see the hand writing of his wife. It was his intention to find out if She would be able to write letters to him. But Ma insisted on not showing Her handwriting. In spite of various threats from Didima, She could not be prevailed upon even to sign Her name. Then they all made Her put Her signature by sheer force, and it was shown to Bholanath. Ma continued, "After the marriage, Bholanath wrote me a long letter. In our house, the delivery of a letter was a sort of novelty. Before the letter was delivered, the word went round, that a letter addressed to me had come. The letter fell into the hand of your Didima. Out of delicacy she could not give it to me herself; instead, she began to put it in places where I was likely to notice it easily. But I ignored it. Not being able to pass the letter on to me, your Didima was in a fix. At last she passed it to me through someone else. But even when it was in my hand, your Didima was not relieved of her anxieties, she began to press me constantly to answer it. It is customary for girls to be serious

from modesty, when such topics are discussed. I also assumed a mock seriousness to prove that I was bashful. Then quite a number of persons lay their heads together and drafted out a reply. I copied it and it was posted.

"When your Dada Mahashaya (grandfather) left me at Shripur, he left some written-out specimens for me to use in replying to the letters Bholanath might write to me.

"Hearing that I had read up to Lower Primary Bholanath bought me a book the day after the marriage. One night he said, 'Read the book while I hear it lying down.' I have already told you the way I read. I have to spell out every word before I pronounce it. Besides, I had been told that once I started reading a sentence, I should not take a breath before I came to the full stop. What with my spell-out-and-read method and what with holding the breath till the end of a sentence, for me it was a veritable killer. Lying on one side Bholanath was listening to my breathless reading. Listening for a while, he turned over in the bed and said, "So, this is your Lower Primary! Why, you cannot have been through even the first book of reading."

The gesticulations which went with these words of Ma, made all laugh profusely. This record has not been able to capture even a trace of the sweetness of Sri Sri Ma's speech. Ma was telling the story lying down. She demonstrated with precision how Bholanath made the remark — the way he rolled over, and the expressions of his face at the time. Khukunl Didi said, "How can you recall all these details?" Ma said, "Now I am inspired by the mood of that time, so everything is coming back from memory." This time coming to Navadweep I realized to the full that our Ma is truly Anandamayee — an embodiment of joy. I never laughed so much in my whole life as I did on this occasion in the presence of Ma.

### Going from temple to temple to see images of Deities

At about 9 or 10 a.m. I heard that Ma would go out with us to make a round of the temples. Perhaps She had noticed our unwillingness to visit the temples which would mean parting from Her and so decided to conduct us to the temples of the Deities. At first we went to the temple of Bhavataran and Bhavatarini. Bhavatarini's image was that of Kali, but here She was seated. It was of a large dimension. I had never seen an image of Kali like that. From there we went to the temple of Jagai and Madhai. Here Abani Babu fell at Ma's feet and began to weep. After this we went to the Mahaprabhu's temple and saw the golden Gouranga. Going to the 'Chaturbhuj'(four-armed) Gouranga temple we saw a series of images relating to Krishna Lila. While coming out of the temple, I heard Ma singing half-audibly:

*"Harir Name Sari geyo parapare jay"*

(One crosses over to the other bank, singing the ferry-song of the name of Hari).

Lastly, covering Sribasangan,\* we returned to the *dharma-shala*.

When, after seeing the image of Sri Gourangadeva, we were coming back through the market, Ma suddenly entered into an utensil shop and picked up two pitchers. She gave one of them to Bimala Ma and said, "Come, let us balance these two pitchers on our waists." The shopkeeper was struck with wonder at Ma's strange behaviour, and began to laugh. Akhandanandaji made haste to walk up to him and said, "Do not worry about the price of these pitchers, we shall pay it."

With the pitchers lodged on their waists, Ma and Bimala Ma proceeded. We followed Ma closely enough so as not to

\* Courtyard of Shribas, an associate of Mahaprabhu. In this courtyard, Mahaprabhu and His associates used to hold *Nama Yajna*.

miss any part of the fun. Meeting two *sannyasis* (monks), on the way, Ma gave the pitchers to them. One of the *sannyasis* frequently came to our *dharma-shala*. The other at first declined to accept the pitcher, but it was passed on to him almost forcibly. Ma was said to have said to Khukuni Didli, "They did not ask me what they would do with the pitchers. If they had asked I would have said that when the pitchers were filled with water, I would drink off them."

### A theft in the house of the Police Constable.

Giving the pitchers to the *sannyasis*, Ma resumed her walk. She walked on, till She came to the Police post. In the yard of the Police post there was a big banyan tree. It had a cemented structure all round the lower stem. Ma sat on this structure, while we stood around, wondering what brought Her there. At last Sachi Babu said, 'Ma, why have you come to the Police post?' Ma said, "The person in charge of the Police post had his mind stolen for five minutes this morning. That has dragged me here." We could make out nothing of this statement.

In the meantime the Police Constable in charge of the post came out and made his obeisance to Ma. We heard from him that he too was present at Lalita Sakhi's house on the day of Ma's visit. He had heard how Lalita Sakhi was able to draw Ma to her house by her wounded sentiment regarding her. That morning he was thinking that if Ma showed him a similar favour, it would be a great joy. A little after such train of thought, Ma was there with Her devotees. I could detect an overflow of joy on the gentleman's visage, and now I understood what Ma meant by Her cryptic words. The Police Constable must have been a man of no mean virtue. Blessed indeed are such as he!



On my return to the *dharmashala*, I listened to an account of Ma's travel in Assam from Khukuni Didi. During this travel Didi was with Ma. Arriving at Shillong, Ma had gone to the house of Shri Hirendra Nath Sarkar, Health officer of the place. Sri Sri Ma was not previously acquainted with Hiren Babu. But the gentleman was reported to be naturally disposed to serve holy men. His wife too was highly devoted. Hiren Babu's wife had remarked on seeing Ma that she had seen Her two or three days before coming out from her puja room, but She was not then in a narrow-bordered cloth. She had a broad-bordered cloth on. Didi said, 'Two or three days before that, Ma had indeed been clothed in a red saree with a broad, prominent border. Perhaps one of the reasons of Ma's Shillong tour was Her desire to show special favour to that devoted lady.'

There was another event taking place in Shillong and I record it here. A few little girls stood in the path along which Ma, Khukuni Didi, Akhandananda Swamiji and others were passing. One of the little girls came up to Ma and said, "Oh you, please come this way, do." Ma, accordingly, went to her. She took Ma to her house and offered Her something to eat. Her name was Shobha Rani Ghosh. Ma called her "Sejo Ma" and named her "Narayani". I heard this story from Ma also. Up to that time Ma had three Ma-s. First, Baro Ma — Srimati Bhramar Ghosh, M.A.; second, Sejo Ma — Srimati Shobha Rani Ghosh; and Chhoto Ma — Srimati Lily De. Ma picked her up at Tarapeeth. All the three girls were *Kayastha* (by caste). On Khukuni Didi's mentioning it, Ma had said, "What more do you expect to fall to my lot?"

#### **Bholanath's Kali puja at Bajitpur.**

Didi also said that the account of Kali puja at Bajitpur as I

had collected from Sri Bhudev Basu was not correct. She (Khukuni Didi) got the true account from Ma during the recent Assam tour. It was as follows:— Once, during his stay at Bajitpur, Baba Bholanath had arranged Kali puja on the occasion of Dipanwita (Dipavali). It was the yearly Kali puja of his family. The rice used for this puja was prepared under strict condition of purity. That time, the rice prepared for the puja for the first time was put away, as it was pecked by a crow. Then the rice for *bhoga* was prepared anew. Ma could not Herself cook the *bhoga* for this puja, it was cooked by a neighbouring Brahmin woman. When she went away after the cooking, Sri Sri Ma sat in front of the kitchen, a stick in hand, to keep off cats and dogs. While She was sitting, She saw a fair-complexioned Brahmin brushed past Her right side into the room, took a little rice from the plate in which it was laid for the *bhoga* and left. Next when after the puja, Bholanath was approaching the Goddess with the *bhoga*, a large dog appeared from nowhere and went away polluting the *bhoga* in Bholanath's hand with a touch of its mouth. Bholanath poured the leavings on the root of a mango tree and took a purificatory bath. Lastly, the crow-pecked rice was used for cooking the *bhoga*, and it was offered to the Goddess. Ma concluded the story as related to Khukuni Didi with the remark, "Bholanath was by no means well-off. Every time he made modest preparations for the Kali puja, but he never noticed what a large number of people partook of the *prasada*."

#### **The end of an immoral servant.**

I heard today another event connected with Bajitpur from Ma. I had already heard it from Bhudev Babu. It goes like this :—

In 1335 (Bengali era) Sri Bhudev Chandra Bose went to Bajitpur as Assistant Manager of the Nawab State of Dhaka. At that time Bholanath also was serving under the Nawab State at Bajitpur. There was a servant named Shashi, acting as Bhudev Babu's body guard. The man was dissolute, but nobody knew it before. During Her life as a housewife, Ma used to get up at the holy pre-dawn hour (*Brahma muhurta*), sprinkled cowdung water on the courtyard and started the domestic duties before sunrise. At that time most of the inmates were still in bed, and so Sri Sri Ma was all alone. One day after leaving the bed Ma was sprinkling cowdung water on the courtyard, when Shashi, bent on mischief, touched the skirt of Her cloth. No sooner had he touched it, than he fell down on the ground unconscious, groaning. Seeing him in that state, Ma informed Bholanath. Baba Bholanath came and tried to restore him to consciousness. Though the man regained his consciousness after a time, he never again got back his normalcy and remained demented forever afterwards.

After lunch, we again went out for an outing on the Ganges in the afternoon. As on other days, three or four boats were fastened laterally and set afloat on the Ganges. Countless people had taken their positions along the bank to have a glimpse of Ma. In order that they should have a good sight, the boats were brought close to the shore. In the afternoon, it was rather cold on the Ganges. Ma directed the boats to be rowed westwards. A remnant of sunlight still lingered. Ma said that with the boats sailing westwards, each would have a bit of the sun and feel less cold.

We returned to the *dharmashala* towards the evening. That day a few Babajis (hermits) had come to meet Ma. They put a question or two to Ma.

Babaji: What are *Saguna*, *Nirguna* and *Nirvana*?

Ma: Baba, that is for you to say. What do I know?

Babaji: Ma, we have come to you to hear about them.

Ma: You make the beginning, then I can maintain the sequence adding a word or two of my own.

The Babajis themselves began to interpret *Saguna*. When they were done, Ma said, 'Baba, you yourselves have answered your question. *Saguna* is the attribute of one's own nature.'

The first Babaji: What is *Nirvana*?

Ma: Attempt yourselves.

The first Babaji: *Nirvana* is the state in which the ego is extinct.

The second Babaji: But a medicine can induce such extinction. Will it amount to *Nirvana*?

The first Babaji: How then do you define it?

The second Babaji: I say, *Nirvana* is getting completely lost due to dissolution. As a glass of water poured into river-water becomes one with it, in the same way during *Nirvana*, the individual soul (*Jivatma*) is dissolved in the Soul Absolute (*Paramatma*).

Seeing that Ma said nothing against the second Babaji's contention but approved of it to some extent, the first Babaji said: 'If the *Jivatma* dissolves into the *Paramatma*, where does Grace come in?'

Ma: Grace is meaningful only so long as there is action, a distinction between "you" and "I". But after the dissolution, who would show Grace and to whom?

Babaji: How can one attain devotion?

Ma: Beyond our usual motions of devotion and knowledge, there are pure devotion and knowledge. They are devotion and knowledge in the true sense of the terms. To attain them, we



must begin with what resources we have at our command. It is necessary to tread the way marked out by the Guru. Going on along this path of action, one comes by pure knowledge and devotion.

At this time Ma was called in for having a snack. The Babajis left.

### Sri Sri Ma dressed as Krishna

We began to talk sitting in the room. After some time had passed in this way, Khukuni Didi and Triguna Babu called me in and said, "Ma has been bedecked with flowers. You all go in and have a look". At this we went to the room in which Ma had been dressed up. It was a small room teeming with people. I found my way in with a good deal of squeezing and saw Ma dressed as Krishna with garlands of flowers. On Her head a garland had been tied into a peak of knotted hair. On Her arms were bangles and armlets of flowers and She wore on Her neck a necklace of flowers. Bimala Ma, dressed as Radha, was seated on Her left—she also was ornamented with flowers. The girls were singing bhajan very sweetly. Our Abani Babu, overwhelmed with joy, was dancing. Ma was smiling softly and occasionally looking askance at Bimala Ma. The way She cast Her eyes had charms of its own. She was swaying Her body keeping time with the bhajan. Invested in that unearthly beauty, Ma did not look like a woman. It was as if the Krishna of Vrindaban Himself was present today at Nabadweep with all His world-bewitching beauty. A soothing radiance seemed to be glancing off Ma's face and eyes. As I looked on this divine, radiant form of Sri Sri Ma and listened to the bhajan of the devotees sung in self-effacing ecstasy, I no longer regarded myself as a denizen of the mortal earth. I began to lose my eyes on that beauty with rapt attention. A

spring of unspeakable joy, spurting out from the depths of the heart seemed to be undulating all over my body. While I was in this state, I lost all count of time. Suddenly my eyes strayed out and I found Baby Didi walking up and down outside the door in a fruitless effort to enter into the room. The door of the room was so compactly sealed with men-folk, that it was beyond Baby Didi's power to squeeze her way through it into the room. I was moved to see her loitering so helplessly. Should she be excluded from the sight of the divine form of Ma, which the others had been enjoying? With this in mind I scraped out of the room for Baby Didi with great difficulty and called her. Finding her still hesitant, I said, "Didi, don't be so particular. Have a go at it and enter". Baby Didi also overcame her shyness and dashed in.

After a spell of bhajan and kirtan, Ma put off Her floral adornments. All seemed to be rudely shaken off from the enchanted state, all of a sudden.

After this we returned to our seats in the room. Ma also came. Almost all the outsiders had gone home at the long absence of Ma. Only a few still lingered on.

### The reading of the *stotras* (hymns) composed by the Seers and Gita Mahatmya (benefits accrued from reading the Gita).

Abani Babu read *Adya Stotra*. When it was over, he read some Sanskrit *Stotras* composed by Sri Ganesh Chandra Sen with the permission of Ma. When he had finished reading, I said to Ma, "Ma, can anything be fit for habitual reading other than the *Stotras* composed by the Rishis (Seers)?"

Ma: Restate your question a little clearly.

I: You see, the Gita is originally written in Sanskrit. It is also available in Bengali verses. If a person habitually reads

the Gita in Bengali verses instead of in Sanskrit, is it equally rewarding religiously?

Ma: Words of the Rishis have potency of their own. Yet if one can read the Bengali Gita with adequate faith, he is benefitted.

I: Am I to infer from your statement that the effect of reading *Stotras* composed by somebody other than the Rishis depends entirely on the faith of the reader, while the reading of *Stotras* by the Rishis is effective, at least to some extent, independently of the faith of the reader?

Ma: Yes, that is right.

I: If after reading the Gita, I do not read Gita Mahatmya, am I at fault?

Ma: After reading the Gita, it is customary for the people to end by reading Gita Mahatmya.

I: In the whole of Gita, actions with no desire for returns have been recommended. But in Gita Mahatmya, mentions are made of fruits. People read Gita Mahatmya with the expectation of fruits. So I think that the reading of Gita Mahatmya negates to some extent the high excellence of the Gita. Is reading the Gita not enough that I should also read the Gita Mahatmya?

Abani Babu: If you have no desire for fruits, why should you read the Gita either?

I: I can read the Gita with the expectation of attaining *Nirvana*, or for the purification of the mind. But the Gita Mahatmya promises the attainment of wife, money, curing of diseases and others.

Ma: A person having no desire for fruits will himself prefer not to read the Gita Mahatmya.

### **Saints assume different bodies at will.**

After all these talks, Sachin Babu was going to rise, saying

he was sleepy. Ma prevented him and said, "There is no sleep for us before 3 a.m. For us it is just evening". At this all laughed out for it was 11 p.m. In fact, for some days past, we were not turning in before three or half past three a.m. But this keeping late hours in succession left no fatigue in our body. This was undeniably the effect of Ma's Grace.

Abani Babu started a story. Once he had been to Sita Kunda. While going up the hill, he had seen a tiger, — a very big one. Abani Babu said, 'At the sight of the tiger, I had my heart in my boots. Not being able to decide which way to go, I stood stock-still. The tiger was lying. Seeing me, it rose up and gently went away into the woods.

Ma: On our way to Uttarkashi\* we also saw two tigers. They also left us alone. Perhaps they had not even noticed two of us going along the way.

Sachi Babu: They were gentle tigers (All laughed). I have read in the biography of Baba Gambhir Nath that when he was staying on the Gaya hill, a tiger used to come to him everyday. Once a few gentlemen were sitting with the Baba, when the tiger appeared. On seeing that the gentlemen were panicky, the Baba assured them. The tiger walked round the Baba and departed. The Baba said that the tiger was a saint.

Ma heard the story patiently. I said, "Ma, why do the saints assume the forms of snakes and tigers? What advantage do they derive from it? Hearing the question, Ma turned Her face aside. Sachi Babu smilingly said to me, "Ma would not answer this question." A little later, Ma answered my question in brief. Ma said, "The saints can assume bodies according to their will. The form of the tiger is not their real form. It is not wise to speak of these things now-a-days, as no

\* Ma had gone to Uttarkashi only once accompanied by Jyotir Babu

one would believe them."

I : Admitting that the saints can assume bodies at will, how is it that some saints abide permanently as snakes ? How is such a body more suitable for *sadhana* ?

Ma : Assuming of bodies is according to people's *samskaras* (psychic inclinations acquired through *karma*). Persons receive their bodies according to their desires. Perhaps those saints had thought when alive that if they were tigers or snakes, it would be easier for them to go through their religious practices. So in their next births, they are in the forms of these animals. It is just as King Bharata, concentrating on a deer, was reborn as a deer.

### The story of a dog at Shahbag.

In connection with these talks, Ma told a story of a dog of Shahbag. Ma said, "While we were at Shahbag a dog had associated itself with us. When during a kirtan, I sat in the 'Nachghar', the dog used to listen to the kirtan, with its head laid on my lap. When in an ecstatic state, *Stotras* came out of my mouth, it knelt down and listened to them. It was occasionally found to jump and bark when the kirtan was on. It seemed like a canine representation of performing kirtan with dances. During the *Hariloot* (scattering of a kind of sweets called "*batasa*") for all present to rush and pick up), it ran for its share and ate the *batasa*. It was not that the sight of the *batasas* to be scattered prompted it to go in for the sweets. For it was seen that it was lying with its head on my lap, but as the kirtan was ended with the shout '*Hariprite Hari Hari Balo*', it was on its feet with a shrug ready to partake of the *prasada* and right on the *batasas* being scattered, it ran for one. It scarcely if ever came to us by day. But every night it was present at the kirtan."

Khukuni Didi : Once in winter, the dog gave birth to pups. We all thought that it would not come to the kirtan leaving its pups on a wintry night. But as soon as the kirtan was on, it was there.

Ma : After some time a he-goat also was added to the party. One of my knees was the dog to lay its face on, while on the other the goat rested its head, listening to the kirtan. Once I covered up this goat with a blanket.\*

### The revival of old memories on wearing out of *karma*.

Sachi Babu told a story about another dog. He had heard

\* There is an incident relating to this he-goat, which I heard from Khukuni Didi and Sri Birendra Chandra Mukherjee, M. A. The incident is as follows. Once Biren Babu worshipped the image of Kali installed at Shahbag, being directed in a dream. Baba Bholanath officiated at this puja. Sri Sri Ma lay near the image of the Goddess covered with a red cloth. For sacrificing at the puja, a he-goat was procured. When Biren Babu was whetting the bill-hook, preparatory to the sacrifice, he had a finger gashed by the edge. On being informed of it by Khukuni Didi, Ma said, "Very good. You just bring some blood on a bel leaf". Didi brought some blood to Ma. She does not yet know what Ma did with it.

After the Puja, preparations were made for the goat-sacrifice. Having dedicated the goat, Bholanath took up the bill-hook ready to slay the goat. At this time, Ma suddenly came up and said, 'This goat is not for sacrifice'. Bholanath objected to it, but Ma passed the palm of Her hand on the neck of the goat and then kept Her hand across its neck. There could be no sacrifice. Then Ma bade Sri Ashutosh Chakravarti, the nephew of Bholanath, put on a red cloth—the same as Ma had so long been covered with while lying. Then a vermilion mark was put on Ashu Babu's forehead and a garland round his neck. Ma then directed him to take the goat on his lap.

The goat was carried in a body to the field of Ramna and set loose there. Before setting it free, Sri Sri Ma put Her blessed foot on its back. Having released the goat, when Ma came back to Shahbag with Her followers, it was found that the goat too had followed them. Since then the he-goat also stayed on at Shahbag. At times, it kept sitting on Ma's bed. Sometimes it brought its face close to Ma's lap to fondle Her. One day it was seen that Ma was covering it up with a blanket. On being asked the reason, Ma said, "He had a blanket on in his previous birth (implying, that the goat was an ascetic in its previous birth) and in this birth also he has got a blanket put on him."

it in the village of Suapur in the district of Dhaka. Many had testified to its truth.

A Mussalman had borrowed some money of a Brahmin. But he died with his debt outstanding. The Muslim had a son. It cannot be said if he knew about the debtor or not. He declined to repay the debt. His father appeared to him at times in a dream and enjoined on him to repay the debt, but he ignored it as a mere dream. Another day he dreamt that his father was telling him, "You are not repaying my debt to the Brahmin. This has brought a lot of sufferings on me. I have been staying as a dog at the Brahmin's house". After this dream, the son went to the Brahmin's house the next day. In lieu of cash, he took with him a cow and a calf — the cow for the principal and the calf for the interest. The Brahmin was satisfied on getting the cow and the calf. Then the son asked the Brahmin to call his dog to him. When this was done, the son put his arms round the dog's neck and said weeping, "Father, is your debt repaid now?" Then the dog also began to shed drops of tears. Thus weeping the dog remained on the spot for three days and then died.

When the story was ended, Ma said, "Well, tell me why the Muslim was reborn as a dog."

Different people gave different answers to this question. Some said, "The dog is devoted to its master, so it had come to repay the debt through service."

Sachi Babu : Well Ma, why did the dog weep?

Ma : The old memories had waked up in it. On the wearing out of *karma*, revival of old memories takes place. It is true of man also. When a man's *karma* is at the last stage of dissolution, the memories of his previous birth emerge within him. Probably the cause of the Muslim's being reborn as a dog is that he thought of a dog before his death. A man's subsequent

birth is determined by his thoughts at death.

### Pure desires do not form *samskaras*.

Talks went on along the line of birth being regulated by desires. Ma said, "This time during my travels in Assam, I saw hill-growing plantain trees. It bore flowers, red and very graceful. Then some told me that these plantain trees bore only flowers and no fruit. Later when I went to visit Parasuram Kunda, then also I saw those plantain flowers on the way. As soon as I referred to the flowers, the driver stopped the car and entered into the forest. He was a Gurkha, carrying a dagger. With his dagger he cut off a tree complete with fruits and flowers and brought the whole thing to us. Nobody had told him to do so — he did it at his own discretion. I had a desire to see the flowers at a close range — in a moment my wish was fulfilled. And the doubts which I entertained before as to whether the tree bore fruits was also removed."

Sachi Babu "Ma, your desire was easily fulfilled, but if we have a desire for these flowers, shall we have to be born in the forest for getting at them?"

Ma : Yes, strong desires give rise to complexes for tendencies and one has to be born for their fulfilment. So I tell you to purge your desires of dross. Desires, if pure, are fulfilled automatically. So all works should be directed towards God. Once Sadhana and Basana\* had made a garland of flowers to offer it to me. They had put it away, intending to bring it personally when coming to the Ashram. At that time the quarter of Nandu's\*\* was close to that of Sadhana's and Nandu used

\* They were two sisters both highly devoted to Ma. Shrimati Basana having passed B.A. was then serving as a teacher in a school.

\*\* The youngest son of Akhandanandaji.



to frequent it. That day he went to the house of Sadhana and returned with the garland. Being a little boy, he played with it for sometime and then threw it away. Another person picked up the garland, renewed it by introducing a few flowers into it and bring it to the Ashram, put it round my neck.

When Sadhana and her sister came to the Ashram they were astonished to find the garland on me. In this way their wish was fulfilled.

### Spontaneous development of yogic processes in the body of Sri Sri Ma.

After this, the cases of Bimala Ma and Nirmala Ma were brought in for discussion. Sachi Babu declared having noticed that during the exhilarated state, Bimala Ma's eyes became fixed, her limbs were stiffened, she felt unbearable pain in her and remained unconscious for a long time. At this time Khukuni Didi also said a word or two relating to the past stages of Ma. After this Ma said, "The modes of spiritual manifestations in me were of a special type. Just as a cloth carried away by the drift of the wind rolls on and nobody can easily catch it up, this body also in the state of *bhava*, rolled along and nobody could overtake it and arrest its motion. Once the play of *bhava* had started, various *kriyas* would start in the body. There was no intake of food, yet the body was well-nourished and the strength was like that of a lion. There was no telling from my appearance that I had ceased taking food. The body often got bent and the limbs appeared bloodless. Sometimes I would lie like a lifeless corpse. Though in the state of *bhava*, the body was thus played upon, there was no physical pain. This was because all these had their origin in the nature of the self. The curvature and stiffening of the hands and feet were also of a special kind. There was no rigour in the muscles. They re-

mained quite soft, but when the hand was touched it seemed to be a detached piece of wood, unrelated to the body.

"I passed many days on very scanty food or no food at all. I did nothing deliberately. All that happened was spontaneous. It seems that at the time a process of *Hathayoga* was operative within the body. But there was a balance between these yogic operations and domestic activities. All day I lay still immersed in *bhava*, but in the evening I got up, cooked food and served it to many persons. None of my domestic duties remained unattended to. Yet the yogic manifestations went unchecked.

### The cause of physical pain during *sadhana* and the aim of *sadhana*.

While speaking about Herself, Sri Sri Ma again started analysing the condition of Bimala Ma. Ma said, "The physical pain they suffer under *bhava* is due to bondage. Whenever there is hindrance, the pain makes itself felt. Yet it is necessary to be put to these obstructions in the *bhava* state, for it furthers patience. The physical pain felt in the state of *bhava* is due to the disruption of knots (*granthis*) under the pressure of the inducing force. All this happens, thanks to the Name. The old knots are disrupted, and a new body is in the making. So I say, feed the mind on the Name. But attachment to the Name is also a kind of bondage. The fact that one relishes repeating *Nama* and listening to it indicates that it contains a seed of desire. Where there is desire, there is bondage. It is necessary to be freed from this state. This calls for obstructions. Obstruction to the enjoyment of desired objects causes pain. While undergoing this pain, one acquires the habit of patience which finally brings equity. The aim of *sadhana* is to acquire equity. (Pointing to me) Babaji asked me the other day whether it is a normal course of things in the domain of religion to encounter



oppositions to the development of religious consciousness. My reply to it is that it is the rule. Oppositions lead to patience and patience again brings on equity. It is a state in which a person neither takes delight in gains nor is pained by loss. This is the stage of liberation while one is still alive (*jivan mukta*). It is in evidence to some extent in children. They freely pass from laughter to tears.

"Steadiness is not attained until one rises to the ultimate peak of patience. Pains attending *sadhana* are to be welcomed. One has to be burnt like wood to cinder and then to ashes. Then it is that equity comes. You must have seen that ashes dissolve in water and when smeared on the body, they spread over it indistinguishably. They adjust themselves completely with any circumstances under which they are put. Similarly once you attain equity through pains and sufferings experienced during *sadhana*, you will undergo no loss of energy, however you may be placed. During *sadhana* one has to fight against desires manifest and latent; this has been described in the scriptures as a fight between gods and demons. During the sufferings one should rely on the Guru. Obstructions to the development of spiritual consciousness should be regarded as ones offered by the Guru Himself, and any assistance that may come should be considered to be coming from Him. To one who holds out like this with patience, equity comes at last.

(To Sachi Babu) "Your observation of eyes being fixed during *bhava* is not of much importance. If one practises *Trataka*, the eyes may be fixed, even though he may not be religiously inspired. The repetition of the Name also may produce the same effect. Under the intensity of *bhava*, a person passes into a semi-conscious state; so his eyes become fixed. It is a state allied to that in hysteria. Just as a person loses his

consciousness under the impact of temporal sorrows and bereavements, similarly unconsciousness may be induced also in the religious sphere by the inability to contain upsurge of emotions.

The two states are similar, only their causes are different. When somebody lies exhausted under emotional impact, his body can still contain the seeds of desire, because he relishes lying like that. Then he dislikes touch or words of others. Likes and dislikes are also expressions of enjoyment. Such a state of languor cannot be called *samadhi* (the state of transcendental consciousness). Languor is a state of the body, but *samadhi* is not a physical state.

#### Different stages or states of *sadhana*.

"When a person repeats the Name constantly, his body passes through different configurations. Under the influence of the Name or by any other means, as soon as the faculties are directed to one goal, divine influences take over and toy with the body. As a result, the body seems to be segregated from the world. Then the person no longer perceives that he belongs to the world and has a household, consisting of wife and children.

"As a rule, a person becomes uni-directed through the help of the Name or images. Through repeating a name or meditating on an image, he develops an attachment for the name or the image. So each person is inspired by a name peculiar to him. During kirtan if there is a consonance of rhythm, image and *bhava*, the body starts reacting. The body undergoes various configurations under the influence of emotional charge. If for same reason, he is thrown out of rhythm, the body collapses, and remains lying on the ground, motionless. Again, if a single rhythm and song is continued for long,

the interplay of emotions will fall away as it is limited by the capacity of the body. After continuing for a while it stops. As it stops, the body falls down and lies motionless. It is not a trance, but an inert state.

"When after lying unconscious in this way, the seeker regains his consciousness, he begins to weep. This weeping is due to losing contact with the Deity. In a state of *bhava* he visualizes the image, but the vision is no more when that state comes to an end. So, as his consciousness comes back, he suffers from a sense of loss and weeps. When on the passing away of this sorrow of separation, the seeker is steadied once more, the worldly points of view come back to him and he behaves like an ordinary man. This may be called the first stage of *sadhana*. It is a general description and there may be some variations in individual cases.

"The second stage of *sadhana* approximates to the following. The Name or the image which helped the seeker to be single-minded, gradually loses its specificity. This implies that the seeker is inspired even without the help of a particular name or image. Any name or image can now inspire him. This denotes progress in *sadhana*. I call this state being '*tale betal*'—(off-beats in the rhythm). In this state, the external expressions of the body are also changed and attachments for worldly objects are on the decline. The seeker then visualizes his *Ishtamurti*—the sought-for image everywhere,—in water, land or space. This also is a gross stage, for, the Guru is still appearing in a limited form. You will not be able to realize well the implications of these stages. I also cannot explain them to you through the metaphors of rhythm, emotion etc. Only gross ideas can be expressed in words. The subtle ideas are difficult to express. They can only be felt. It can be briefly said that so long as the Guru appears in limited forms and this realization is

piecemeal, the gross outlook persists. It is followed by the realization of an all-comprehensive entity. As for example, I am my hands, my feet, my hair and at the same time the complex of hands, feet and hair. When this outlook emerges, *Guru samskara* (the idea of the Guru as a limited being) disappears.

"The physical pain resulting from listening to the Name or kirtan, marks the first stage of *sadhana*. It can be compared with the teething trouble. You see, when children begin to teethe, they suffer from fever, diarrhoea and many other ailments. After they have cut their teeth, the infinite variety of stages through which they pass cannot be recounted. Finally, the teeth begin to fall out one by one. I call this state, when the teeth drop out, *be-danta* (the state of de-teething or toothlessness) or the state of equity. *Sadhana* continues till *be-danta* is attained."

### Spiritual relationship is not a bondage

This evening something happened which I forgot to mention before. After evening, the ladies were making merry in the company of Ma, we were talking in the outer room, when Khukuni Didi called me in. When I was before Sri Sri Ma, Khukuni Didi said to me, "Today you acquire a new relation, Didi (my wife) addressed Prankumar Babu's wife as mother and now this relation has been solemnized." Hearing this, I kept standing silent. Finding me anxious Sri Sri Ma said, "Babaji, you are not expected to do anything in this matters. I said smilingly, "Far be it from me to do anything. I have taken my position as a son-in-law".

The beginning of forging this tie was perhaps at noon, when Sachi Babu inadvertently upset an earthen container full of curd with a thrust of his foot. At that Ma had remarked that

curd being split was a good omen. However, when the relationship was solemnized, very few people were near by. At little later it was circulated that something had happened to Prankumar Babu's wife. The eldest daughter of Prankumar Babu (the wife of Sri Jatish Chandra Guha) said to Sri Sri Ma, "Ma, what has happened?" Ma smilingly said, "Ask your mother". She, too, naively said to her mother, "Mother, what has happened to you?" At that all burst into a loud laugh. When all were in a jesting mood over these things, Ma rose up from the spot. Finding Her near, I said to Her, "Ma are you not here to free all from bondage? But I find you going out of your way forging new bonds." Ma said, "If that is how you take it, I say it is a spiritual link—instead of creating bondage, it would rather lead to freedom from bond. It will do you no harm". Hearing Her words, I was assured. I regretted at the thought that entertained doubts about the work of the One who is the doer of all good.

17th Paush, Thursday 1343 (1-1-37) Today I was to leave for Calcutta at 12 noon. But yesterday Ma had said that I could not go at 12 noon as Baby Didi would at that time offer *bhoga* to Ma in the boat. But I could go by the evening train. When I asked Ma clearly if I should leave by the evening train, She said, "Tie up your beddings in the morning, you shall go if possible; otherwise you can untie it then again."

Directly on getting from bed in the morning, I was getting ready packing my suitcases and beddings, when Khukuni Didi came and said, "Ma has said that instead of going with the others, you should today board a separate boat. I shall make some time to come to your boat with Ma. Then Ma will talk to Didi (my wife). I also heard that Ma would today go to a Vaishnavi, who has taken no food for the last 22 years.

### **Sevadasi and Sri Sri Ma.**

As we were to go by ourselves, we kept waiting long in the *dharmashala*. Most of us went in boats with Ma. Then getting out slowly from the *dharmashala*, we set out in a boat at some distance. After we had advanced a little, I saw the boats of Sri Sri Ma and Her followers fastened at the Baral Ghat. All had gone with Ma to meet the Vaishnavi. Having got a companion or two, my wife also went to Ma with the daughters. I had a headache, so I kept lying in the boat. After sometime I got out of the boat. Then a boatman said to me that Ma had directed through a man that all should go to the Vaishnavi's Ashram. Hearing this, I started, but I did not know where to go. I did not know the name of the Vaishnavi or the location of her Ashram. I enquired of a few at the ghat about the Ashram of the Vaishnavi living in Navadweep without taking any food for twenty-two years. The people to whom I made the enquiry appeared to be inhabitants of Navadweep, but they had not heard of the Vaishnavi. I took the road leading from Baral Ghat to the town. After I had gone some way I met a man of our acquaintance on the road. Though a Calcuttan, he was then staying at Navadweep and used to come to our *dharmashala* everyday and sing bhajan to Ma. Seeing me he said, "I am waiting for you. (Pointing to a house) Ma is in that house." If the gentleman had not shown me the house, it would have been beyond me to seek it out. However, entering it, I saw that it was a temple. The idols of Radha and Krishna were installed in it. The idol of Sri Krishna was a thing of beauty. On the veranda of the temple were seated Sri Sri Ma and some of our group. In front of the temple, there was a small yard. It contained a few flower trees and a grove of Tulasī. On the left were a few small rooms. The idol of the temple was called Govindaji, the deity worshipped by the Vaishnavi. Her name was Sevadasi. When I

got to the temple veranda, *prasada* was being distributed. I also got my share of the *prasada*. I congratulated myself on my good-luck, for the distribution of *prasada* might have been over much before my coming, seeing that I was the last comer and also that my coming did not depend on my will.

Khukuni Didi gave me the account of the Vaishnavi even in the presence of Ma and Sevadasi. Ma was looking at my face smilingly. Pointing to Sevadasi, Didi said, "Her home was in Manikgunj Sub-division, in the District of Dhaka. She has been living without any meal for the last twenty-two years. Twenty-two years ago, one day Govindaji appeared before her and said, 'From this day on I block up all your external doors and take over your charge completely on Myself.' Since then on she has not taken food, or answered to nature's calls. Even the *Charanamrita* of Govindaji is held by her on the head – she would not taste it. She communicates with Govindaji and never stirs out of the Ashram without His order.

From Khukuni Didi's account I understood why she was not known by the people of Navadweep. They had no knowledge of her as she seldom went out of the Ashram.

Didi continued, "Yesterday Govindaji said to her – 'The body in which Govinda resides is present at Navadweep. You go personally and welcome the One to the Ashram.' Accordingly she went to our *dharamshala* last evening and invited Ma. Even after coming here Ma asked her, 'Mother, what did Govindaji tell you?' She repeated, 'The body in which Govinda resides is present at Navadweep; so I was directed to approach you personally and welcome you here.' "

In our presence, Ma asked Sevadasi, "For how long has Govinda been residing in this body?"

Sevadasi : "Since childhood."

Ma : "Then you think this body is good?"

Hearing all these words, I kept looking at Ma amazed, and began to think within myself : has Ma now begun to give an account of Herself in Unmistakable terms? Is She today disclosing Her identity through Sevadasi – the same as She had set down before me at Dehradun rather vaguely through philosophical concepts? While at Bajitpur,\* In answer to a question of Nishi Babu, Ma had declared Herself as "Purna Brahma Narayana" and today She is revealing Herself as Govinda through the words of Sevadasi. All these thought filled my eyes with tears. Ma was looking at me at intervals and smiling.

Ma said to Sevadasi, "You speak to Govinda. What relation is He to you?"

Finding Sevadasi silent, Ma said again, "Well, whisper it into my ears." So saying, Ma drew Her ear to her mouth. Sevadasi said something in whispers. Ma said, "She says, 'What can be the relation with the One to whom I have dedicated my body and soul? Now you understand how Govinda is related to her.' "

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\* While Ma was staying at Bajitpur, different yogic phenomena began to be manifested in Her body. Ordinary men, unable to understand their implications, assumed Her to be possessed or suffering from hysteria. Many of them pressed Bholanath to get Ma treated. At that time Sri Nishikanta Bhattacharya, Sri Sri Ma's cousin (the son of her maternal uncle) was staying at Bajitpur. He also was in favour of getting Ma treated by a doctor or a *kaviraj* (a traditional Indian physician "*Vaidya*"). One day Sri Sri Ma was sitting in Her bed room in a coiled posture, when She was passing through various *asanas* and *muktas*. Observing this, Nishikanta, somewhat annoyed, asked Bholanath why he was sitting unconcerned without arranging for Her proper treatment, though these symptoms were so plain before his eyes. He made this remark in the presence of Sri Sri Ma. Hearing this, Ma turned to Nishi Babu and said, "What do you think should be done?" Though Ma spoke the words in a matter-of-fact way, yet Nishi Babu on hearing them drew back in fear and somewhat unconsciously said to Ma, "Who are you?" Ma answered, "Purna Brahma Narayana." I heard this story from Sri Nishikanta Bhattacharya.



I could not see the face of Sevadasi, she was veiled. I heard that she was fortysix years old. She came to this state while her husband was still alive. After her husband's death, she left her place and came over to Navadweep where she had the temple constructed and the idol installed. Since then she was entirely employed in serving and worshipping.

I did not hear much more of the biography of Sevadasi, instead I looked at Ma again and again. Ma was today beaming over with joy. Shri Prankumar Babu's wife was sitting near Her. Putting Her arms round her neck, Ma said to Sevadasi, 'Ma, Ma, just look at my Yogini Ma'. Prankumar Babu's wife was abashed. Ma now looked at me smiling, as much as to say, "Yesterday you were anxious at my bringing you into a relation with her. You realise today, don't you, who it was I tied you up with?"

A little later She cried out loudly, "Where is my Basanti Ma?" When my wife was called in, Ma said to Sevadasi, "Look at my Basanti Ma-- having passed the night with Krishna her eyes are drowsy -- the eyes of my mother are drowsy." Put to shame, my wife drew back. I pondered, "What is this Ma is saying? I have never seen her pass the night in company with Krishna. All that can be said is that since coming to Navadweep we are keeping late hours in the company of Ma". While I was perplexed with these thoughts, Ma was smiling profusely looking at me. Ma was today all riddles.

After this spell of jesting, Ma bade all perform a kirtan. The girls sang --

Shri Krishna Chaitanya Prabhu Nityananda !

Hare Krishna Hare Rama Sri Radhe Govinda !!

Immediately on the song being started, Sevadasi fell down on the lap of Ma, overcome with an upsurge of emotion. Also, she held Ma with both hands tightly as with an iron chain. Her whole

body was thrown into tremors in rhythm with the song.

After sometime, the kirtan came to a stop. All were busy looking at Sevadasi. Pointing to Sevadasi, Ma began to say to us, "See, how tightly she was held me. (Pointing to the fingers of both her hands) Look at her closed fists, how in holding me, the fingers of one hand have sunk deep into those of the other. They cannot be parted by any means. You will be able to loosen the grip even if you tug at her hands." Then looking at us, She said smiling, "She, she is leading me away, do free me." Hearing Her I was apprehensive and had a vague feeling of an impending danger. I said to Khukuni Didi, "Didi, what are you waiting for, standing passively? Go soon and separate Ma forcibly." I did not think that anybody other than Didi was capable of rescuing Ma. Didi also, as if infected by my fear, went up and caught hold of Ma. She soon came back and said to me, "Ma said, 'Take your hands off me. I am coming presently'. This put my mind at rest". But Ma was smiling and repeatedly saying to Sevadasi, "Ma, let me off, let me off." The few devotees of Sevadasi present said to us to start kirtan. Accordingly, kirtan was resumed. Ma urged us to perform the kirtan standing, with our arms uplifted. Sachi Babu and Abani Babu intoned the kirtan dancing, while their cheeks were flooded with tears. A little away from this tumult, I stood with my eyes closed, repeating the Name. At that time we were all at the mercy of the waves of *bhava* rolling all over the place. At this moment, Khukuni Didi gave me a push and said, "What are you doing standing in this corner? Come and see how Ma is dancing." Hearing it, I once entered into the crowd and saw an unprecedented sight. Sri Sri Ma had one of Her arms round the neck of Prankumar Babu's wife while She was swaying the other in tune with the kirtan. The head of Prankumar Babu's wife was uncovered, while her hair hung loose in contrast



abandon. The eyes were dilated, and her face and eyes were lit up with a supernatural light. She was dancing in a frenzy, so to say. Whoever was touched by Ma was faring like that. What so long I had been regarding as the imagination of a poet appeared today as a stern reality. I looked on in amazement, how a human body inspired with divine emotion became unsteady like a boat in a chopping sea. Not for a moment could I suspect any simulation in it. I had been observing Prankumar Babu's wife for the last week. A very demure woman, she hardly ever spoke a word. Though old, the veil was never off her head and she went about her ministrations in silence. And today the selfsame body was dancing with the last vestige of decorum cast to the four winds of heaven, before so many menfolk, in the presence of her husband and sons. It was a spectacle which was to be seen to be believe. As for Ma, She was overflowing all over with smile. Her face was flushed with a divine radiance past understanding. Her hand, flung up and down to the rhythm of the song, had a grace of its own. But Ma was not swayed by emotion. In the mist of that human gathering carried away by the emotional eddies, Hers was the only form, that could retain its staid smilefulness.

Sevadasi still lay unconscious. When the dance and kirtan were on, I observed a Vaishnavi coming from God-knows-where; in a vigorous dance violently agitating her hands. With her eyes fixed on the image of Govinda, she danced on as if shaking the temple to its foundation, alternately approaching and receding from the image. At this time Khukuni Didi said to Sachi Babu, "Ma wants you to have a close look at the eyes of the Vaishnavi. Sachi Babu was standing behind me. I heard these words of Didi. Sachi Babu also had an eye on the Vaishnavi. Different kinds of gaze had been discussed only the last night. Ma had said that the fixed gaze of the eyes might be

due to the practice of *trataka* or repeating the Name. The fixed gaze of the Vaishnavi we were noticing was apparently the effect of repeating the Name. I said to Sachi Babu, "Here you have a demonstration of practising *trataka*, referred to last night". Sachi Babu said, "Ma has arranged for practical demonstrations of all the stages of *sadhana*. She spoke of yesterday." After the kirtan had gone on for a time, Ma prepared to go back to the boat. I heard Her say. "I am going; when Ma (Sevadasi) rises up, tell her that I am here, she may meet me if she so desires."

Ma left, for some reason or other, I was left behind. After sometime I saw that Sevadasi was up. Triguna Babu and others were bowing down to her. I also felt like doing the same and going to her, made my obeisance. The Vaishnavi Ma said, "Baba, never forget Govinda." I said, "Bless me to that effect." She passed her hand on my head.

On reaching the boat, I heard that Ma had gone to visit Banshidas Babaji. I had not know his *Akhara* (hermitage) so I made no attempt to go there.

### The reason of travelling on Ganga and offering fruits to Ganga.

On Her return from Banshidas Babaji's, Ma came direct to our boat. I was at the stern and bowed to Her from there. Ma took Her seat towards the prow and sent Khukuni Didi to me. Then She suddenly said to me, "Baba, why has Mataji (my wife) wept? Have you too wept?" I could make out nothing of Ma's questions. I did not think having any trace of sorrow on my face. Sri Sri Ma was in our boat. I was having chats with Khukuni Didi. My heart was overflowing with joy. Sorrow was out of question. Yet Ma said that I and my wife might be weeping. I said, "I do not know anything." At my answer, Ma

only smiled and said nothing.

Giving instructions to the girls, Ma sent them in and began to talk with my wife. She told her some rules to be followed, in *sadhan-bhajan*. From time to time the other boats also approached ours. As soon as they came near, Ma stopped talking and directed them to wait at some distance. Khukuni Didi and I were conversing at the stern of the boat. Didi was somewhat annoyed at the approach of other boats and sometimes smiling at the intense attraction of all to Sri Sri Ma. Thus we reached the bank of Ganga with a piece of land showing up. Here the *bhoga* was being arranged. Ma rose, ready to get down from the boat. At this time, Khukuni Didi said to Ma, "You have been speaking to Didi (meaning my wife) so long, but had nothing to say to Dada (myself)". Ma said, "I have said everything to Mataji. She can pass them on to Babaji. Besides, if Babaji has anything to say, he is free to do so. I am ready to answer him." She knew full well that I had nothing to day. Without replying to Her, I said to Didi, 'Ask Ma why She comes everyday to travel on the Ganga and offer fruits.' Didi and I had already discussed it, and she was looking for an opportunity, for such questions could not be put with the people around. Now, reminded of it, Didi came out with her question.

Ma said, "Whenever I come towards Ganga, the river seems to be calling me."

Didi : "Why do you offer fruit to Ganga?"

Ma : "You want fruits from me, may not others do the same?"

So saying Ma got down from the boat. Didi said to me, "Seeing us eager, Ma is now keeping nothing back."

#### Having *prasada* at Sri Sri Ma's hand

Along with Sri Sri Ma, all got down from the boat. I kept

sitting in the boat for long, musing on all that had happened in the Ashram of Sevadasi. Then getting down from the boat I went in search of Ma. At this time Sri Atul Brahmachari of our Dhaka Ashram said to me, "Where had you been so long? Ma fed all the *prasada*. Nothing now remains." I said to Atul Dada, "But there must be some of the *prasada* for me". However, I slowly proceeded and took my stand near Ma's boat. Ma took in Her hand a *sandesh* (a sweetmeat) to offer me as *prasada*. I bowed down to Ma and accepted the *prasada* on my stretched out palm.

Walking this way and that for a time I found Sri Sri Ma talking with a gentleman I did not know. I also went there and stood. The gentleman was from Atul Dada's native land. He was a legal practitioner. Having come to Calcutta during X-mas holidays, he came to know of Ma's being in Navadweep and so had come to meet Her. As soon as I came to stand near Ma I saw Baby Didi handing three sections of an orange to Ma. Ma said to her smiling, "You have been holding it so long in your hand?" Then turning to me, She said, "Can you tell me what I shall do with them?"

I : Baby Didi wants them to be made *prasada*. Make them *prasada* with a touch of your mouth.

Ma (smiling) : Not so. A little time before, I put *prasada* into the mouth of all with my own hand. Seeing you left out, Baby was sorrowful. Now I must feed you these.

I : Ma, last night I helped Baby Didi see you dressed as Sri Krishna. It has come as a reward for that.

I made my obeisance to Ma and opened my mouth for the *prasada*. Ma put a section of the orange into my mouth. When I was about to move away with that, Ma said, "I must feed you all the three". So saying, She put into my mouth the other two also, one by one. Today the Grace of Ma had gone so deep into

the heart of all, that Sachi Babu came shortly after and prostrated himself at Ma's feet, right on the moist sand. Seeing him at it, Ma said smiling, "Now, what is it you are up to? It will be a signal for the others to lay themselves, on the ground like this." Rightly enough, many others prostrated themselves at Ma's feet in imitation of Sachi Babu. I also felt like doing so, but my diffidence prevented me. I went on offering mental *pranamas* to Ma.

Some of us were to leave by the four o'clock train. So Ma expressed Her wish to take Her meal early. Sri Sri Ma sat down to Her meal on the sands with Bimala Ma and Ananda Bhai. Baby Didi had made a number of preparations for the *bhoga*. Ananda Bhai began to eat with relish. I was witnessing the scene from some distance when I heard someone making some remark on me. When I looked that way, Khukuni Didi said smiling, "It is a pity, Dada heard nothing." Then I was called by Ma. She said, "Then a sour *prasada* fall to your lot. Now I offer you some sweet *prasada*." Have this "*rasgulla*." When I stretched my palm for it, Ma said smiling, "If I put it on your palm, it may make Baby weep." I sat down near Ma and opened my mouth once more. Ma put the *rasgulla* into my mouth and said, "You have had both fruit and juice."

I only heard what Ma said. I had no power of reflecting on it. How could a vessel of limited capacity like me contain so much Grace and Joy?

After the meal was over, we came back and took our seats in the boat. In our boat, I was sitting with Atul Brahmachari. At first my daughters too were in this boat, but as Ma looked for them, I sent them to Her boat. I found a gentleman named Sri Basanta Kumar Ayon always accompanying us and taking initiatives in all sorts of work. I made acquaintance with him. Formerly he was appointed to the Forest Department, Agar-

tala; for the last seven years, he had been living in Navadweep. He said, "I shall be under the malific influence of Saturn for twelve years. I intend to pass this period in Navadweep in the company of holy men. I cannot recount the holy men I have come in contact with. Quite a number of saints I have so far lived with on this bank of the Ganges night and day, but I have not seen the like of Ma. Ma has renamed me, 'Mathur, the second'. I think She has jerked me out of the influence of Saturn by changing my name." I said to him, "You really look like our Mathur Babu and are quite as active."

Baby Didi had hired some 8 to 10 boats on the occasion of offering *bhoga* to Ma. All of them were fastened together and set in motion towards the *ghat* of the *dharmashala*. When in the evening we reached the *ghat*, Ma said to me, "Babaji, are you going to Calcutta by this evening's train?"

I said, "It will be as you say."

Ma : Think if it is urgent for you to go to Calcutta.

I : Ma, when I am in Dhaka, I act after due deliberation to the best of my power. But having come to Navadweep to meet you, I have adopted "*purushakara*". Now I shall do according to your biddings.

Smiling, Ma sent Khukuni Didi to me. Didi said, "Ma has sent me to discuss what you should do." I said to her, "Didi, I truly say I cannot decide what to do. Having come so near Calcutta, if I return to Dhaka without meeting my elder brother, he may take it to heart. Again, he may not mind it at all. I do not know how he will take it, but Ma does. So how can I say if I should go to Calcutta or not?" Didi said, "But Ma is not the one to give Her opinion about these domestic affairs. What shall I tell Her?" I said, "You go to Ma, if She asks you anything about my decision, say whatever occurs to you at the time." Didi said with a smile, "Ma sent me to you, and here you are sending me

back to Ma."

As Didi went to Ma and told Her about my dilemma, I heard Ma say, "Yes, considering from the worldly point of view, Babaji should go to Calcutta and meet his elder brother. Let him then start today by the evening train. I got Her order, but my heart did not respond to the idea of parting from Ma. But now there was no help for it. With my second daughter I went to the *dharmashala* to fetch my luggages. I took a boatman with me. Swami Shankarananda also went with another boatman to fetch Bimala Ma's luggages which were in our room. As the luggages had been packed, I did not think it necessary to take my wife along.

#### Hindrance to departure from Navadweep

When Swami Shankarananda and I reached the *ghat* with luggages, we saw only one boat. We heard that all the boats had moved to the station *ghat* with Sri Sri Ma. Our boat too was set in motion.

The wintry darkness with mist had descended on the river. There was no visibility ahead. The sounds of Ma's fleet were coming from afar. After some time we overtook them. From the side-boat I collected my other two daughters. I could not locate the boat my wife was in. I thought once we got to the *ghat*, I would find the rest there.

When the boats reached the *ghat*, I found a fanfare on this bank of the Ganga. Later I heard that Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Maharaj, the founder of Gouriya Math, had passed away. His body had been carried to Navadweep all the way from Calcutta for burial. This accounted for the demonstrations. However, as soon as the boat touched the *ghat*, Shankaranandaji took my daughters to get them in touch with Ma. I put the luggages on the heads of the porters, sent them off to the sta-

tion and set out for Ma. Shankarananda Swamiji had started 5 to 7 minutes back. But I could not notice in the dark which way we had gone. When I reached the *ghat*, I could not see any boat there. I called out the names of my daughters for a long time, but there was no response. I was annoyed with Ma not being able to determine where my wife and my daughters were and where Ma Herself was. It was darkness all around. I did not know the way to the station. I proceeded somehow led by an enquiry and soon reached the station. But there too I saw nobody of our group. What a mess, I thought. I saw our luggages on the platform of the station but there were no men near. I understood that the coolies came by themselves and had gone away, putting down the luggages. I once more went towards the *ghat*. But this time I found the way quite long. While going in the dark, I was about to topple down once or twice. Suddenly I found Sachi Babu in the dark, he said to me, "Where is your wife?"

I : I do not know anything about it. I have no idea where my wife is and where my daughters are.

Sachi Babu : Your daughters are with Sri Sri Ma. But where is your wife?

To me Sachi Babu was a lucky find. With him I went up to Ma's boat. When Sachi Babu asked Her about my wife, She said, "Mataji has gone back to the *dharmashala* by mistake. Shankarananda has gone to bring her back."

Sachi Babu : Will she be able to come back in time? There is not much time left.

Ma : You go to the station. If they come by this time, they would also go to the station. And if they cannot reach before the departure of the train, you should see off Bimala Ma and her husband and then come back with Babaji's luggages.



I felt it unseemly that I should keep sitting in the boat leaving a man of Sachi Babu's distinction to carry my luggages for me and said to Ma, "Ma, let me go along with Sachi Babu." Ma said, "You need not go. Sachi Babu will be able to bring back your luggages." But seeing Sachi Babu go alone, I was impatient of sitting on. I again said, "Ma why should Sachi Babu bear my burden? I had better go." Ma now said firmly, "No, you keep sitting where you are". The tone of Ma brought me to my senses. I thought that perhaps I was in for some danger and so Ma was so firm in Her forbidding. It gave me a shudder as I recalled the predicament in which I had found myself a little time ago. Without saying anything more, I kept sitting in silence. Ma bade my daughters go under the awning, to avoid exposure to the dew. Sitting in the dark, we waited for Swami Shankarananda.

A little later I heard the voice of Shankarananda Swamiji from the distance. By that time the train had left. Coming near, the Swamiji said, "Let me have a cloth quickly, Amulya Babu's wife had fallen into the water." At the same time I heard my wife's voice in the boat of Sri Sri Ma. I could not clearly understand what had happened. Ma directed a cloth to be given to my wife. All were busy looking for a cloth, but there was none. I said, "After Sachi Babu brings back the box, I shall take out a cloth from it." Sachi Babu came soon after. I took out the cloth. The incident as stated by my wife later was — Shankaranandaji, going in search of my wife, overtook the boat in which she was. Baby Didi and Prankumar Babu's wife were in that boat. When that boat touched the bank at some distance from where our boats were fastened, my wife who was in haste to get down, suddenly fell into the water. The water not being deep, she was not completely submerged. Seeing her fallen, Baby Didi and Prankumar Babu's wife both

shouted. But without heeding the shout, my wife scrambled into a boat adjacent to Ma's and said, "Ma, I fell into the water." Hearing this, Ma said, "I hinted at it to Khukuni in the morning. Well, tell me of your presentiments, if any." My wife said, "The other day when we had gone to see the temples, I inadvertently treaded on your foot. Since then I had a premonition that I was not going to be spared this time. I would be left behind in Navadweep for good. Whenever I came to the Ganga and got into a boat, the thought recurred to me. Today also when I was in the boat, I was haunted by the thought that I would find my permanent abode in Ganga. All others would land from the boats and go away, with me alone lying under the water of Ganga."

Ma: Getting up this morning, I saw Mataji running to me with fear writ large on her face and her hair in disarray. It was the first time I saw her in that form. I told it to Khukuni, but she could not understand.

I also heard that on that day Ma had repeatedly enquired of my wife and said to Khukuni Didi again and again, "Ask her to stay close to me." But as from the time She boarded the boat at Baral Ghat to landing at the bank of Ganga, Ma had been in our boat all the time, on the way back, my wife did not try to be near Her lest it should appear unseemly. From all these pieces of information, I had a firm conviction that Ma today saved us from a great calamity threatening us. Not only that, She must have dragged us all the way from Dhaka to avert the death of my wife as astrologically indicated. I mentally cursed myself no end of time as I remembered how I was annoyed at Ma a little while ago and begged Her pardon repeatedly in silence.

We went back to the *dharmashala* from the Navadwoop Ghat station. Jatish Babu's daughters had come to the boat



with garlands and all to dress up Ma as Krishna today also but due to these untoward events, it had to be dropped. We silently re-entered the *dharmashala* and putting back the luggages waited for the 3 o'clock train at night. Sachi Babu, Triguna Babu and Brajen Babu were also taking the same train to Calcutta. Having reached the *dharmashala*, Sri Sri Ma gave Her own cloth to my wife to wear.

Today also Ma was treated to *arati*. The *arati* was performed by Jatish Babu's daughters. Triguna Babu sang the *arati* song. It was a great pleasure to hear it.

#### **An account of Sri Sri Ma's Lila .**

After the *arati* was over, Ma spoke on various topics. Ma said, "Once I had laid down a rule that no one should laugh while feeding me. Khukuni had quite a job of it trying to abstain from laughter, while I was being fed. But she was forced to laugh in the end. At last Nandu succeeded in feeding me, suppressing his laughter with great efforts."

I: Ma, it is said that once you lived on a few grains of rice boiled in a *kouta* (a small tin pot). Is it true?

Ma: "Yes, once we went to Kashi. There going to a shop to buy some articles, I bought the smallest cooking pot they could offer for sale. I also bought a *kouta*, the smallest available. After we returned to Dhaka, Bholanath's food was cooked in the small cooking pot. As for myself, I directed that the few grains of rice that went into the *kouta* should be boiled for my meal. It went on in that way. The *kouta* was filled with rice and put into the rice which was cooked for Bholanath. It served as my food. Your Didima introduced into the *kouta* all kinds of vegetables cut into tiny bits to go with the rice. These also were boiled along with the rice." So saying Ma smiled. Ma mentioned this act of Didima to indicate the intensity of

affection the mother had for her daughter.

#### **External signs of *Samadhi***

Now the case of Sevadasi was raised. Finding her fallen into a swoon in the morning just at the beginning of kirtan, many of us had taken it for a trance. Ma said, "It was not a trance. It may be described as an emotional obsession merely lying in suspended consciousness due to the impact of emotion having risen above the limit of toleration. I showed you then how her two hands were clasped into rigid fists. During *samadhi*, the limbs do not stiffen like that. On being touched, they appear to be wooden, detached from the body. The rigidity of her limbs might be due to an attempt to forcibly retain the emotional charge. Besides, when Ma was lying overcome by emotion, I pulled out her eyelid and examined the state of her eye. I found that as soon as her eyelid was pulled up, the pupil flitted away. The eye of one in trance, instead of being restless like that, would give one the impression of an eye of stone set in the socket."

I: Ma, may I call it *jada samadhi* (inertial trance)?

Ma: No, it was not *samadhi* of any sort, only emotional obsession. As for inertial trance, it is that state when the bonds with the worldly stimulants have been disconnected, a few knots have been untied, but not all, so that relation with the spiritual world has not been established. In this state he cannot carry any information of the spiritual world. Many people die while in this state. If there is the seed within, a man may have spiritual progress even from this state.

I: Is it called *samadhi* due to the fact that one or two kinds of the heart have been untied?

Ma: "Quite so."

### The prophecy of Harakumar

The chain of talks brought us to Harakumar, the first disciple of Ma. Ma said, "It was Harakumar who first called me 'Ma'. Bholanath used to have a paternal affection for him. But I did not speak with him. He used to come both the times of the day, bowed down to me and asked for water. It was not because he was thirsty that he asked for water. To drink water at my hand was a mania with him. He said that drinking water from somebody's hand disclosed the predominating attribute of the giver — whether it is *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*. Once I went to his house and lived there for a time. He was always anxious to know what I needed and fulfilled all my wants though I did not speak to him. This made the people envious. He pressed me to speak to him. But in spite of such importunities, I did not speak to him, as I did not have a clear direction from Bholanath in this matter. One day he said to me from sheer desperation, "*Beti*, if I had served so long an image of stone instead of you, I could have coaxed responses even from it. *Beti*, you are stonier than a stone." Later, I spoke to him being permitted by Bholanath. After that he left, having got an appointment elsewhere. Before he went, he said to me, "*Beti*, nobody has understood you so far. But a day would come when everybody would call you Ma."

— "Harakumar could sing well. Kirtans were arranged at his insistence. The kirtan induced *bhava* in me."

— "From the very beginning he slightly suffered from a mental abnormality. At intervals he became unfit for service. Finally, he went mad. As a mad-man he once came to see me at Bajitpur. He brought with him a *Rudraksha* and some yarn of a net. He deposited the *Rudraksha* and the yarn with me and said, "Sanctify this *Rudraksha* for me; and this net-yarn— It is a symbol of bondage. Free me from this bondage."

Ma told the story laughingly. She said nothing about what She did and did not for Harakumar. Calling Harakumar mad at first, She gave the account of his coming with the *Rudraksha*. From this one can understand what type of a made man this first devotee of Ma was. Harakumar is no longer alive. Had he lived to this day, he would have found his prophecy come true.

### Incarnation and His *Parshada*

Triguna Babu said, "Ma, when an Incarnation is born, He comes along with the others who would make up his set (*parshada*). They are all high-level persons and they come as promoters of the Incarnation's *lila*. How is it then that all of them cannot properly comprehend the *lila*? When one belonging to Sri Gaurangadeva's set of associates was questioned about Sri Krishna *lila*, he is reported to have said that he had no knowledge of it. He had recommended the enquirer to Ramananda Ray as the sole authority on Krishna *lila*, who understood it himself and was able to impart the knowledge to others. Why is this difference?"

Ma: It is true that Incarnations come with Their group of associates. They recruit the members from different levels to assist Them in Their different actions. All do not belong to the same level. That is why all the devotees cannot understand the *lila* to the same extent. They taste the *lila* differently according to their competence.

Nitish Babu: We too are Ma's *parshada*. (Loud laugh from all).

### Sri Sri Ma Talks about Herself, of various Yogic *Kriyas* on Her body.

After that, the topic reverted to Bimara Ma. Like Nirmala Ma, she also was experiencing various obstacles from Ananda

Bhai. Having said so Ma passed on to Her own account. She said, "Bholanath also had a keen eye on me. He had employed an agent to spy on me and to inform him about what I did and where I went at Vidyakut during his staying away. But I never disobeyed him. I was very fond of playing at cawrie, but I stopped it the very moment he declared against it. I could have continued the play if I so liked without Bholanath knowing about it, but I never did it. For this my co-agers mocked me. I joined in the mocking in a good humoured way but was never disobedient.

"Though I always obeyed Bholanath, my mode of conduct was swept away under inspiration. Then things happened in spite of myself. If I was inspired to go out-of-doors, I picked up an opportunity, and out I was. If I was confined in a room, secured with a chainfastener from outside, I rolled about in the room so frantically that the door had to be opened.

"Manifestation of *bhava* in me started from Astagram and continued in Atpara, Bajitpur and other places. Different kinds of supernatural operations were on. While I was on a seat, I would be spinning, seat and all, like a spinning top. These were far from voluntary. During these supernatural *Kriyas*, Bholanath offered no resistance. Once in Bajitpur, I fell into an emotional disarray in the presence of all, while a kirtan was on. It earned me a lot of infamy. People spread the rumour that the wife of such and such Babu joined in a kirtan with a long drum (*dhole*) tied to her neck. After this, Bholanath used to keep me shut in a room, when a kirtan was going on. But the closed door was no remedy for it. Even in the room I rolled over from side to side with such frenzy that the conchshell bangles I wore were crushed and all my body shivered. I could not attend to any work. The muscles of my body were relaxed and at last I lay down in total numbness.

"When these things were happening to me and the people were loud in slandering me, Bhudeb Babu's wife came to our house one day and gave me some good counsels. She said, 'What is the good of all this (she meant my state of exhilaration during a kirtan)? It only makes the people wag their tongues,' so on and so forth. I said, 'I do not know anything. What happens is none of my doing'.

"Truly enough, actions when one is in a state of *bhava* are by no means deliberate. They are spontaneous. Suppose, I was sitting in a room; when I was urged from within to get out of the room, this body slipped out with the spontaneity of a leaf driven by the wind. The body seemed to have become light and levitated from the ground. Sometimes I danced balanced on the big toe of a foot while the other leg bent. The body sometimes rose up and sometimes touched the ground as lightly as the tip of a needle. *Asanas* and *mudras* were manifested in me for five months. But even in the midst of it, I performed my domestic duties. All these happened in Bajitpur. There I performed my domestic duties mechanically. I ate under the will of the Guru. There was no perception of taste. At this time I could not discriminate between what to express and what to keep back. This state comes from dependence on the Guru.

"The states I have just related carry a special lesson; it is that a complete self-surrender to the Guru is essential. One should consider himself to be a puppet of His hand. A deliberate preparedness for any particular state is ruled out. What is to happen will happen by itself as willed by the Guru. No one will be able to counter it. For an ordinary person, the practice of such dependence must be painful at the outset and it must involve smarts due to reactions of bonds. I, for one, did not undergo such pains.

"Sometimes, *stotras* came out of my lips. They would not be pronounced as when spoken deliberately. They came out from within. They would automatically come and automatically cease. It was to some extent like a door being opened and closed by itself. Sometimes I had an experience of the inner knots being untied followed by the gushing out of a language like Arabic from my lips. Then it stopped all of a sudden. Curious to know the cause of its stopping, I looked back and saw a man approaching. He was almost within the distance of hearing it all. In this way the *stotras* came out and stopped. Only he, for whom they were intended, could hear them. These languages of the Celestials are revealed to one only at the sprouting out of the *pranava* (the sound 'OM' in its purest form), which again takes place when all the knots of the body are untied. The *stotras* come out through the loosened knots. So, though the *stotras* are articulate, the words are indistinct. The *asanas* help in untying the physical knots. But the knots of *bhava* (thought complexes) also should be untied, or the *stotras* would not come out. Not only Sanskrit, but all languages came out of my lips. For, I communicated with the saints of different countries in their own languages."

Sachi Babu: Ma, I can accept your speaking of Sanskrit as probable, but how did you speak Arabic?

Ma : All languages have some common features. As for example, all the letters of our alphabet embody the sound 'a' (as in ka, kha, ga, etc.). For those who have been able to get at the fundamental frequency of sound vibrations, should not find it difficult to speak in different languages or to understand them. All that is needed is to get at the fundamental frequency.

Ma talked of some other things about Herself. She said, "When at Shahbag I gave up taking meals, I seemed to have

completely lost the memory of food. Once seeing a dog eating rice, I went to eat with it."

In 1339, when Ma was staying at the Shiva temple of Ralpur (DehraDun) with Bholanath and Jyotish Babu, Bholanath was under a vow of silence. He always stayed inside the temple employed in *japa* and other practices.

Ma said, "At that time all were under the impression that Bholanath was a saint of high order, who had renounced the world, and that I had followed him not being able to live alone without him. After this Bholanath one day disclosed to them how I had lived without food for six months. Since then people began to flock to me."

#### Farewell from Navadweep

We talked in this way till 2.30 a.m. Then we made ready for setting out. When the car came we arranged for putting the luggages into it. At the time of departure, I made my obeisance to Ma and stood apart. When my wife went to make Her the parting obeisance, She said to both of us, "This morning I found you sorrowful. There was anger, besides. Now they have cleared up and I see your smiling faces once more." I understood that Ma was referring to our past danger and also to my mental displeasure with Her. Also, in the morning, She had asked us in the boat if we had wept. At the time of Her enquiry we were in high spirits. And our smiling face She spoke of now — how was it possible either? I rather thought that on the eve of farewell, our faces were wan and saddened from impending separation. In which of our bodies did then Ma observe these smiles and tears? All of Ma's utterances were enigmatic. When my wife bowed down to Her, Ma said, "You are under the protection of a Sat Guru, come, let me pass my hand on your body" so saying, She passed Her hand on



her body. Khukuni Didi did the same. Sachi Babu, Triguna Babu, Brajen Babu and I got into one car. The ladies boarded another.

After we reached the station, Brajen Babu bought tickets for all. The train arrived half an hour later. We all boarded a third class compartment. Sachi Babu also joined us in our third class compartment. So long as we were in the train, we talked on Sri Sri Ma. This time when Ma went to Assam from Tara-peeth, She made a detour through Naihati. Sachi Babu went to Naihati to meet Her. Sachi Babu said, "Ma directed all to arrange meals at the *dharmashala* and went out for a walk. In course of walking, She went to the house of a gentleman named Shri Kshitish Chandra Ganguly. His ancestral house was in Mymensingh District. At present he was staying at Naihati, having set up a travellers lodge there. Sri Sri Ma went up to Kshitish Babu and said, 'Baba, can you not recognize me?' Kshitish Babu could not remember having seen Ma ever before. Ma again said, 'Do think of it and see if you can recognize me. You cannot recall it because it is a matter of such a long time ago.' But the gentleman could not recollect anything. Ma then said, 'Baba, give me some water to drink.' The gentleman said, 'Only water? Let me buy some fruits from the market.' He hurriedly came back with some fruits from the market. They were sliced and served in a large plate. Ma directed some of it to be put into a saucer and asked a widow of the gentleman's family to put into Her mouth the fruit out of the saucer. After eating the fruit in this way, She went back to the *dharmashala*. After Ma had left, Kshitish Babu recalled having dreamt the night before that Ma Kali had come to him. Was She not the Kali he had dreamt of, he wondered, and running to the station he bowed down to Ma and said to Her many things from the fulness of his heart.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The arrival of Sri Sri Ma at Dhaka.

23rd Paush, 1343, Thursday (7-1-37). In the morning coming back from the college, I heard that Sri Sri Ma Anandamayī would be reaching Dhaka today. It gave me a great delight to hear of it. I had some works in hand which could not be put off. I was a bit worried to think if I shall not be found wanting in either. However, I was out of the house at once and having extended the information to a few friends, finished my lunch and rushed to the station. There I met Sri Bhupati Nath Mitra, Sri Nagendra Nath Roy, Sri Jatindra Nath Dasgupta and others. We set out all together for Narayangunj.

As soon as the train reached Narayangunj, the ship from Goalanda was found to have got very close to the *ghat*. We took our stand on the flat and from there saw Khukuni Didi and Ma. Sisir also was notifying the arrival of Ma, by waving a handkerchief from the ship. In the same ship Mr. Jinnah, Khan Bahadur Azizul Huque, the minister and others were coming to Dhaka. Many Muslim volunteers carrying flags were present at the *ghat* to welcome them. After the crowd had thinned out a little, we went to Ma in the ship. By that time, Ma had stepped down from the upper deck. We made *pranama* to Her and Baba Bholanath at the foot of the staircase. Then we marched in a body towards the cars. On the way I heard from Sisir that after our departure from Navadweep, a "Nagar sankirtan" had been arranged.

In Navadweep we had been told that Ma would be at Vindhyachal on 30th Paush. So seeing Ma came to Dhaka on 23rd, I had a suspicion that this time She would not be staying for long, while yet in ship, I had asked Khukuni Didi about the



duration of Ma's stay at Dhaka. Didi's reply was, "Three days only". Later I heard that it was Ma's idea to come to Dhaka. Bholanath was against that all-too-short trip. Ma had said, "It is good to go to Dhaka, even if it be for a single day."

In the car the talk was centred on Navadweep. Jyotish Babu had arrived at Navadweep even before Baba Bholanath. Ma expressed Her desire to set out from Navadweep on the very night of the day that Bholanath arrived. Baba Bholanath had just reached Navadweep, travel-weary at the end of his long journey from Dwarakadham. He badly needed some rest. But Ma had already decided on leaving Navadweep that night; it was a settled fact that no one could unsettle. So all got ready for departure at about ten or eleven o'clock at night. It did not please Bholanath. I felt the sign of displeasure was still on the face of Baba Bholanath. However, Ma's sudden departure from Navadweep was a great blow to the local devotees. The people of Navadweep were getting more and more attached to Ma. During my stay there, I myself had heard many say, "There is no want of saints and holy men coming to Navadweep; but the like of Her has never before been seen."

When these talks about Navadweep was going on, I said to Ma, "Ma, it is said that you went on a Nagar kirtan (A kirtan-procession taken through the town). Is it true?"

Ma denied it, but Baba Bholanath said in a somewhat angry tone that the news of Her going out on a Nagar kirtan had reached his ears also. His manners clearly expressed that he did not approve of it. At this attitude of Bholanath, I was a bit disconcerted. Perhaps Ma also by way of comforting him said, "You may remember that when we went to the Ashram of Sevadasi, she had expressed a desire to feed me. But as Baby was to offer me *bhoga* on that day, I refused to take

anything. I left with the promise that I would go to her Ashram some other day and take food there. Later, one day to honour that invitation I went to the Ashram of Mataji (Sevadasi) with all. We were going along the bank of Ganga. On the way Nitish started singing a kirtan in a subdued voice and those with me joined in. In this way we arrived at Mataji's Ashram singing kirtan. Thereafter the *bhoga* was over, Brajen desired to see the golden idol of Gouranga and insisted that I should go to see it with all. So I started with all to see golden idol of Gouranga. This time also, as they went, they sang kirtan as before. Seeing them at it, some of the wayfarers also joined in the kirtan. The wayfarers singing kirtan along with us gave the whole thing the appearance of a vast kirtan party marching along the road. So that was that; we did not take to the streets with an express desire of singing kirtan. The kirtan on the road and the concourse of men joining it was a self-generating affair." So saying Ma fell silent. Later I heard from Khukuni Didi that after going to the temple of Govinda, Ma had encouraged the "*kirtaniyas*" by flourishes of Her arms, so that the kirtan had gained a high momentum. However, considering Bholanath's attitude, I made no further mention of Navadweep incidents and there was little more talk on the way from Narayangunj to Dhaka.

There was a great gathering at the Dhaka station for the reception of Mr. Jinnah and others. After detraining, we were trying to get into a horse-drawn carriage when somebody came with news that Dadamahashay was missing. I and Shib Babu combed the in and out of the station, but there was no grandfather to be seen. At last we went to Ma and said, "Ma, Dadamahashay is missing. Where should we look for him?" Ma said, "I observed your grandfather in the crowd on my way out from the station." We again went in that direction to

look for him. In the meantime, Ma's car left for the Ashram. After searching for sometime, we were in despair and set out for the Ashram. When we were near the Ashram, we found grandfather enter into the Ashram along with Ma. Bhupati Babu was in Ma's car. On asking him, I came to know that though Dadamahashay could not be found in the station, the car was started for the Ashram at the instruction of Ma. According to Ma's direction, the car was driven along a path different from the usual route to the Ashram. After the car had gone some distance, Ma said, "Mark him, does he not look like your grandfather?" Truly enough, it was grandfather going along on foot. Then the car was stopped and he was taken into the car. On account of the detour made by Sri Sri Ma's car, we reached the Ashram almost at the same time with Her, though She had a good start on us.

After evening, Ma took Her seat in the Namghar. The ladies sat on Ma's right while the menfolk were on Her left. The talks cut across diverse topics. Sri Kushari,\* the brother-in-law (sister's husband) of Bholanath, came in for discussion. Owing to the death of a well-placed son, both he and his wife had become overwhelmed with grief. Besides, Sri Kushari was himself ill. Recently when Ma went to see him, She found that he was able, to a great extent, to get over the grief for the loss of his son. He said to Ma, "You went to different places twice via Calcutta, but you did not meet me. It did not hurt me. I do not quite feel your presence even when you are near me. It is all the same to me whether you are near me or away from me under all circumstances, you are unattainable to me. Physical proximity does not make for true nearness. How can I really feel your closeness to me?" Ma said, "I found that the

orientation of his mind was good. But it did not endure for long. Immediately after it he said, 'Ma, so long as I am sitting with you, I feel I am quite secure.' But those who were present did not mark these words of Sri Kushari." With that, Ma smiled.

### "I am in Dhaka"

Shri Pramatha Nath Bose said, "Ma you are often heard saying, 'I am in Dhaka.' What does that mean?"

Ma: Thought draws persons near. I think of you and so I am with you.

Pramatha Babu: But you cannot be seen with naked eyes. Had you been with us, we could have seen you. I do not want such evasive answers.

Ma: Thinking and visualizing are one and the same thing. You see, if you now think of your house, an image of your house will flesh across your eyes.

Pramatha Babu: These are past our understanding. Say something that we can understand. You have understood my question, have you not?

Ma: I do not understand you as you do not understand what I say. If a little boy wants to know a subject prescribed for the Matriculation class, he must abide his time and read all the books he needs. Then alone he will be able to know the subject. Do you want me to uncover myself? Well, tell me what you make of my statement?

Pramatha Babu: To me, "I am in Dhaka" means "I am hidden" ("Dhaka" in Bengali means "covered up"). I say, now you reveal yourself.

Ma: Well, try to uncover me.

Pramatha Babu: How can we unveil you, unless you yourself stand revealed?

\* Sri Kafi Prasanna Kushari. He was a police Inspector.

Ma: Try to the best of your ability. He will do the rest. Get to the end of your tethers, what remains will take care of itself.

Pramatha Babu: Shall we be referred to *karma* even by you?

Ma: Yes.

Pramatha Babu did not like the idea of attaining God through *Sadhan-bhajan*. He was through and through a believer in Grace. He was not discouraged by Ma's laying stress on *Karma*. He continued, "Look here Ma. I am inclined to think that there is an easy and simple path leading to the attainment of God. You are our mother, we are your children. Why should the children be called upon to take pains for attaining you, their mother? The mother would take up the child on her lap, impelled by sheer maternal affection. This is what I understand. Is it true?"

Ma: Yes, it is.

"It is done then. I do not want anything more!" With that Pramatha Babu rose up.

Ma: Done, is it? For how long will you be able to sustain this attitude? Being a son, you should be obedient to your mother. Do as I bid you.

### Equity comes after suffering.

After that Srimati Sadhana's maternal aunt said, "Ma, I am burning in endless sufferings."

Ma (smiling): I call it good.

Whatever might be in the mind of the questioner, she said in the tone of one crossed in love, "you want it, don't you?"

Ma: (laughing) Assuming the mortal coil is for suffering. Hence one is afflicted with disease or grief; it implies the wearing out of a corresponding amount of suffering standing to his account. The body and pains are inseparable. One must

be burnt to coal and then to ashes. That will be the end of burning. You feel pain as you are still wood. When you are reduced to ashes, there will neither be fire nor burning. Then you will mix with any condition imposed on you. See, ashes smeared on the body become one with it and dissolved in water, go wholly into the solution.

Basana: Ma, you are no longer fond of us.

Ma: You may like me or not, but I cannot simply do without you.

With that She began to laugh profusely.

### Pure thought pleases and nourishes *Paramatma*.

Aruna, the daughter of professor Sri Satyendra Nath Bhadra, was sitting near Ma. Having passed B.A., she was serving as a teacher in the Anandamayee Girls' School. Ma said to her, "Are your studies over? What do you do now?"

Aruna: I am in service.

Ma: How much do you get from the service? How much have you laid by? You must keep me alive by feeding me.

With that She began to laugh.

Aruna: I do not understand what you are driving at.

Ma: What do my words mean?

Ma put the same question to all. Looking at me She said, "You sit silently at the back; can you tell me what my words mean?"

Ma (To Aruna): Knowledge and money you earn merely add to your wants. Such knowledge and money are of no avail.

Aruna: Should I give up the service, then?

Ma: Why should you? Devote some time to good works, as you find time for everything else. Take some time out of eating, sleeping and gossiping. Try to devote more time to the

repetition of the Name. The time you devote to the Name shall not be wasted. It will no less be stored up. So I was reminding you that you will have to feed me and save my life. Earning money is not useless. It nourishes the body. But the mind also must be nourished. So I say, store up some food for the mind. You serve in the School. It takes up, say, three or four hours a day. But excluding those few hours, the thought of your work at School recurs to you at all times. Similarly, if you increase your religious inclinations, your religious thoughts will be constantly present in your mind amidst all worldly preoccupations. This is how good tendencies have to be increased.

When Ma was saying all these, somebody came in and called Her away to communicate some secrets to Her. We rose up, thinking there would be no further talk with Ma that day.

Instead of going back home, I began to talk to Khukuni Didi standing in the Ashram. I heard from her that after our departure from Navadweep, Ma had one day performed a kirtan with the girls. It was held in Her room in the *dhar-mashala*. The men were not allowed to stay in the room. The doors and windows of the room were closed before the kirtan was started. While it was on, all were emotionally inspired to an appreciable extent. On that day, Ma instructed the girls how a kirtan has to be sung. She repeatedly said that it was not good to be boisterous during a kirtan. For a kirtan to be effective, a gentle tenor should be preferred.

I also heard from Didi that on the day Ma went to see the golden Gouranga with the kirtan party, a dog was continually finding its way to Ma's feet struggling through the thick crowd. No amount of driving could make it desist. At last Ma told them to let it stay at Her feet.

### Sri Sri Ma's *Sampradaya* (religious sect)

Didi said that at Navadweep a pandit came to see Ma. Among other things he asked Her what sect She belonged to. Ma said, "A sect implies a Guru. In my childhood my parents were my Gurus. After my marriage, my husband became my Guru. And now you all, not excluding the trees and plants are my Gurus. Now it is for you to infer which sect I belong to." The Pandit was not the one to accept defeat. He said, "If I could observe your activities from sunrise to sunset, I could certainly find out your sect."

24th Paus, 1343, Friday (8-1-37). In the morning, after my works at the college were over, I went to the Ashram and heard that Ma had gone to Siddheshwari. On hearing it Atul Brahmachari and I set out for Siddheshwari. After we had gone some distance, we heard that Ma had left Siddheshwari for the house of Sri Akhil Chandra Chakraverti. Akhil Babu's son was very ill. So Akhil Babu had persuaded Her to go there. Hearing it, we proceeded towards Akhil Babu's house. We met Ma on the way. As I was up from making my *pranama* to Her, Ma said, "It has been decided that we should leave for Calcutta tomorrow."

In the afternoon I could not see Ma or have any talk with Her. I heard that She was talking in Swami Akhandanandaji's room with some girl students of the University. I talked with Pramatha Babu till evening sitting in the field. Tonight Ma would perform a kirtan with the girls. All the girls had been asked to bring garlands and sandal paste. After the evening I returned home and having a light refreshment, went back to the Ashram with my wife and daughters.

On going to the Ashram I found Ma sitting in the Namghar. The room was packed to capacity with men and women. I went in and scraped out a room for myself. Sil

Nagendra Nath Datta had brought a *sadhu* of Navadweep. The *sadhu* was singing a kirtan to Ma. Being without accompaniment, it did not catch on, and it seemed rather long.

### Yogamaya and Mahamaya are the same.

The song over, the *sadhu* said, "Ma, your coming is for the deliverance of the fallen".

Ma: "It is from you all that I have heard of the epithet, the deliverer of the fallen."

The *sadhu*: Ma, do not delude us by quibbling.

Ma: "Where there is movement, there is delusion necessarily.

Ma's replies were very concise. Also, I could not clearly understand the meaning of Her words. However, I coaxed out of it a meaning to my satisfaction. Sri Nagendra Dutta said, "With you, it's a continuous act of deluding."

Ma: Where does deluding fit in? Your nature itself is a delusion. If He (God) had not been delusive, we could have derived no joy.

The *sadhu*: God's delusion is the delusion of a humorist. But you have your own way of deluding us.

Ma: One cannot be to the exclusion of the other. So I say, *Yogamaya* and *Mahamaya* are one. In our ignorance we discriminate between them. We do not know how to acquire knowledge either. Why, we cannot even press our demand or feel hurt in the proper way. It is because in all these there are desire and hankering. The ultimate Truth will not be revealed to us until we are purged of desire and hankering.

### Self-help in worldly affairs, Grace only in religious matters.

Nagen Babu: Who has kept hidden our pure Essence?

Instead of giving a direct answer to this question, Ma met it with a question of Her own to Nagen Babu, "How do you understand the dynamism of the universe? In the world nothing moves in isolation. All movements are interconnected. Creation, continuation and destruction— all are going on as a single function. But in leading your worldly life, you have made a mess of everything. So you are all twists and turns inside. What is needed is to keep the worldly affairs in neat folds. Then you have no problems. As you stow them away, so can you open them up.

Nagen Babu: I wish somebody had unwound the twists within you.

Ma: You are seers of the hearts of all.

Ma's answer came to Nagen Babu as a rebuff. He gave up all hopes of eliciting any spiritual truth from Her and said, "You have just returned from your travels abroad. What have you brought for us?"

Ma: I did not go to travel anywhere. I am just wandering about in the garden of the same house. When my wanderings are in the same house, what do you expect me to bring for you?

Nagen Babu: I shall have none of your tricks.

Ma: (smiling) You are not yet sure of your alphabets, and you are asking for the fat book youder, which you must read. You would not learn your lesson as guided, would not do what I bid you do, but are great at putting lofty questions.

Nagen Babu: Why don't you let us understand?

Ma: How do I prevent you?

Nagen Babu: Who else but you prevent us? If you just appear in our hearts in the form of intellect, we can understand everything. One of our scriptures (Sri Sri Chand) also says — "The goddess who is present in all creatures in the form of intellect."



Ma: We can use our own intellect in eating and attending to all domestic affairs — only in this particular matter, "*bud-dhirupena sams thita* — present in the form of intellect."

The way She made this statement sent all of us into a fit of laughter.

Even after repeated hits-out from Ma, Sri Nagen Dutta was not put off. He said, "Ma you know our heart's desire. Then why don't you give us what we want?" Ma only said, 'But where is Ma?'

#### How to get rid of the strong impressions of acts in previous births.

At this time, Sri Hari Prasanna Mukherjee, professor of our University, came. I got him seated next to Ma. After a brief silence, he said, "We often see that we play into the power of the instincts willy-hilly. What is the remedy for it?"

Ma: Yes, the mind is sometimes subjugated by the instincts in spite of itself. As a remedial measure, provisions should be made against the mind's subjugation. But when one is eager, both provisions and their implementation are taken care of.

Hari Babu: But good ideas and faculties will not be activated so long as there is a hang-over of the past.

Ma: You educate children against their will. Some such measure will have to be adopted here also. Children are averse to studies. They are more fond of play than studies. In their case, you do not wait till they have played themselves out of their fascination for games before undertaking their education. As you forcibly educate children despite their inclination for games, so it is with religious practices. "Even after being born as a human being — a rare gift from God — my days shall be frittered away in doing nothing. I shall not be able to realize

God and must submit to various sufferings, being ploughed back to the cycle of birth and death" — ruminating in this way one should acquire a relish for the Name. All aim at joy and peace. Worms and insects also desire joy and peace. But perfect peace cannot be acquired from any worldly objects. The mind is flitting restlessly from one object to another — that too, is in a bid for attaining joy and peace. The mind is in pursuit of worldly objects such as money, respect, fame and the like in the hope of obtaining joy and peace. But these imperfect bits of joy cannot make him happy. He wants perfect joy. The mind is restless because it does not get it. So I say, offer good food to the mind. Kirtan, meditation, repetition of Name and japa are food for the mind. If these are fed into the mind, it will one day settle down to peace. Whatever else offered to the mind will not appease it, for they are worldly objects having the property of keeping up the wants interminably. Suppose one owns four or five houses, but this does not satisfy his cravings and he thinks he would be happier with another house. Again, a few thousands of rupees saved makes one inclined to saving still more. It is true for every worldly object. Only acquisition of the supreme wealth, which is *Brahma-vidya* — the knowledge of Brahma — puts to flight all wants. This wealth installs a man on the broadbase of his true nature. Engaged in *sadhana*, one should not give way to despair. The mind should always be encouraged with the thought that if even a dullard can become a great scholar through studies, why should I not be able to attain Brahma if I strive?

Hari Babu: How can one profit by education if adverse propensities are strong? You have spoken of father's educating his son by force; but if it is the other way about, the son dragging the father perforce to games, then who would teach him?

Ma (satisfied) : You have raised a good point. Few can detect such snags. But, I tell you, a son cannot drag his old father into games.

Hari Babu : Strong impressions from previous births cannot be subdued. Please tell me the remedy.

Ma : In such a case my advice is to make a compromise between enjoyment and renouncement. As you cannot completely keep away from enjoyments, it is better to practise renouncement even in the midst of enjoyments. As for example, you may take rich meals for six days in a week, and take only rice and some boiled vegetables for the remaining one day. Keep it up and the desire for enjoyment will be gradually on the wane. Bear it in mind that the very fact of your being born as a human being presupposes a minimal amount of virtue to your credit, for without it human birth is not possible. Such a birth brings one into the line of self-knowledge. Now he has the option of elevating himself, or he may be degraded to a lower birth. So birth as a human being entails on one the responsibility of devoting some time to God though reluctantly, by way of *tapasya*. It is true that with a strong tendency brought forward from a previous birth pitted against him, a man cannot cherish his good intentions for long. There may be occasional lapses. But it is not quite correct to say that nothing can prevail against such strong tendencies. If one makes an attempt to proceed along the path of virtue, the mind is conditioned by it to some extent. It sends out an occasional pulse of repentance and urges the man along the right path. Similar is the effect of being in the company of the good. It also leaves an imprint on the mind. The *sannyasa* you so often refer to, has nothing to do with the wearing of saffron garment. It comes to a person as a logical conclusion to his nature. As a plant regularly watered

bears flowers and fruits as a matter of course in the fulness of time, similarly if a person sticks to the Name of God, he has the spirit of renunciation (*sannyasa*) activated within him naturally, when the time is ripe for it. Once the spirit of renouncement becomes truly active in a man, even the gods cannot tempt him away from the path of *sannyasa*. So I say, go on repeating the Name of God. It is not true that it is of no use. *Jiva* is such a frame of joy. He will not be satisfied with imperfect joy. Let your attempt be to offer him perfect joy.

Hariprasanna Babu was satisfied and making his obeisance to Ma, he left. Then Baul Babu put in an appearance. He sat near Ma and said, "When will you come to rest?"

Ma : There is no unrest for one who by nature is at rest.

Baul Babu : Does *Saguna* not change into *Nirguna* ?

Ma : Does it? Does a *Jiva* change into *Siva* ?

Baul Babu : You are a shrewd woman, there's no worsting you at an argument.

Ma : So, you have taken your position as a *Purusha*, have you ? (All laughed) where is your female consort ?

Thus began Baul Babu's verbal fencing with Ma. Being at a disadvantage, Baul Babu broke into a song —

"How will you know what a woman is like?" etc. This was followed by another :

"Stir up in me old memories,  
Let them come back renewed----"

In this way Baul Babu sang a number of songs in succession. Hearing the song of Baul Babu, Baba Bholanath took his stand on the North of the Namghar and made a sign to him. Ma said to Baul Babu, "Now go and take up pens both of you." Baba Bholanath was under a vow of silence; to communicate with him one needed pen-and-ink.

Baul Babu : What shall I do with pen, unless you serve as ink (a pun on the word 'Kali' which in Bengali means ink and also the Goddess so called).

Ma : Bholanath has both pen and ink.

Baul Babu almost gave up the hope of getting an edge on Ma in the exchange of words and before going to Bholanath said, "Do not be miserly, give away all you have."

Ma (smiling) : Baul is the custodian of all treasure.

Baul Babu again sang —

"Come on, heart, let's steal, etc.

Singing was an obsession with Baul Babu. I have heard people say that when he was engaged in *sadhan bhajan*, he did it with songs. Once Baul Babu was heard to sing at the Kali Bari of Ramna at the dead of night. Baul Babu was one of the first batch of Ma's devotees. After he had left, Ma said to us, "When I lodged myself in the Siddheshwari temple for seven days, Baul used to go there every day. You could not have done the same, for it involved a lot of pains. He worked at the School by day and at night he waded through water and mud carrying fruits for me. I lived on those fruits."

After Baul Babu's songs were over, Pramatha Babu also sang two songs to Ma. In this way it was 12 p.m. and our stay with Ma came to an end, since after that a kirtan was scheduled participated exclusively by ladies and conducted by Ma. We were not allowed to stay there at that time, we went back home. The few who stayed in the Ashram, vacated the Namghar and sought shelter in some other room.

25th Paush, 1343, Saturday (9-1-37). Today Ma was due to depart from Dhaka. Going to the Ashram in the morning, I heard the account of the last night's performance from Khukuni Didi. Last evening, a woman had come from Gendaria to meet Ma. When she was about to leave, she was asked to

stay on for the night in the Ashram. As desired by Ma, Khukuni Didi had told it to her. At night when the kirtan was on, this lady did a lot of rolling from emotional upsurge. Later she was identified as a disciple of Bholu Giri Maharaj.

At 3 a.m. the kirtan was at its peak. At that time, Ma roused everybody to a frenzy with Her own song. At the kirtan Ma under inspiration performed *arati* with incense and cloth. Ma had conducted kirtans elsewhere with girls, but the *arati* performed in this way was a new feature.

Ma had instructed the ladies about the procedure of the kirtan. She had directed them to keep silence for ten minutes before the starting of the kirtan as well as after it was over. When the ladies would perform kirtan at the Ashram every Sunday, they were to follow this new method. A month after they would compare notes on their visualizations during these lull intervals. The kirtan must be performed standing with the door of the room shut against the prying eyes of the outsiders.

Ma introduced some new dispensations regarding the conduct of the Ashram. On the way to the house of Didima, a discussion was going on between Ma and Bhupati Babu. I was a privy to it. Ma told us, "You should take part in the affairs of the Ashram. These are a part of household works. While performing your household works, you must do a bit more and do the day-to-day chores of the Ashram, such as making purchases etc. The Brahmacharis should not be troubled for these mundane activities so that they may devote themselves wholly to the worship of God. Why should they be encumbered even after they have renounced the world? Tell Kulada all these. However, we had no need to, for Ma Herself appraised Kulada Dada of Her message.

From Didima's house Ma went to the Kali Bari of Ramna and from there went back to the Ashram. It was close on 11

a.m. Ma Khukuni Didi and others took their meals and got ready. We followed Ma up to Narayangunj. Biddings Her adieu there, we returned to Dhaka at about 2.30 p.m.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Ma's arrival in Dhaka on Birthday Celebrations of 1344.

Sri Sri Ma went to Krishnagar and Barhampur from Dhaka. The next places She visited in succession were Vindhyachal, Chittagong and Cox Bazar. Ma stayed at Cox Bazar for a month after which She set out on a long travel. Her itinerary included Kashi, Delhi, Bareilly, Nainital and other places. I received a letter of Khukuni Didi from Nainital informing me that Ma might come to Dhaka at the time of Her Birthday celebrations.

From Nainital, Ma went to Barishal via Jamshedpur. Her visit to Barishal was in connection with setting up an Ashram in the house of Girija Babu.\* From there on Her way to Dhaka requested by Jyotish Babu and others, She stopped at Chandpur, and went to Kheora, Her birthplace. The village of Kheora was the native place of Dadamahashay's maternal uncle. Dadamahashay sold his uncle's properties and left Kheora. The place where Dadamahashay's maternal uncle resided and Ma was born was at that time the dwelling house of a Mussalman. Going to Kheora village, Jyotish Babu and others saw a big hayrick on the side of Ma's birth place. A project had been under consideration since long past on the buying back of the site.\*\*

5th - Jyaishtha, 1344, Wednesday (19-5-37). Sri Sri Ma arrived in Dhaka from Chandpur. Only Bhupati Babu had gone to Narayangunj for the reception of Ma. I could not go as my wife was ill. Going to the Ashram at about 6 p.m. I found Sri Sri

\* Sri Girija Prasanna Sarkar. He worked in the Agriculture Department and was one of Ma's earliest devotees.

\* It has been bought and an Ashram has been set up in Kheora

Ma coming out for a walk in the meadow, surrounded by women. I did not even have an opportunity of making my *pranama* to Her. I entered into the Ashram and bowed down to Baba Bholanath, Jyotish Babu, Swami Akhandanandaji and Swami Shankaranandaji. I did not have much talk with any of them. Getting to the meadow, I stood waiting for Ma. After a little walk, Ma drew close to the Ashram. She still was hemmed in on all sides by a thick crowd of ladies - I had to content myself by having a view of Ma from the distance. Suddenly, the eyes of Sri Sri Ma fell on me. She said, "Babaji, how do you do? In a hole, aren't you?" What should I say in reply? If I said anything at all, it would have to be in shouts to be within Ma's hearing.

#### Nothing is new to me.

Sri Motilal Roy had come to see Ma with his wife. For Motilal Babu's wife it would be the first meeting with Ma. Pramatha Babu was also with Moti Babu. As Moti Babu's wife bowed down to Ma, Pramatha Babu said, "Ma, mark her well, for she is new to you." Hearing it Ma said with a smile, "There is nothing new to me, all is old."

With a few words to each, Ma proceeded in another direction. Instead of following Her, I began to talk to Khukuni Didi. From Didi I heard that immediately after the celebrations, Ma would set out for Kailas. When Ma was at Almora. She had met several hill girls. Their native place was five miles away from Kailas. They had come to Almora for education. They were not previously acquainted to Ma. The handbills containing an imprint of Ma's portrait and enjoining a ten-minute repetition of the Name were distributed among her devotees and one of them fell into the hands of those girls. Though the portrait bore only a remote likeness to the present appear-

ance of Ma, yet they recognized Her at once as they saw Her passing in a car and stopping the car, bowed down to Her. Even at the first meeting they developed an intense attachment to Ma and ever since, they started worshipping Her in many ways. They expressed their genuine veneration for Ma by composing songs in Her praise and singing kirtans. Ma had consented to pay a visit to Kailas, persuaded by the importunities of these girls. Having talks with Didi on many other topics, I went back to my house a little after the evening. I returned to the Ashram rather late at night, fearing that I shall have no opportunity of having a talk with Ma so long as the crowd was there. Even then quite a number of people were with Her. As soon as I made my *pranama* to Her and was seated, She said, "How is Mataji?" I said, "All right."

Sitting near Ma, Ganesh Babu began to read out to Her a poem composed by himself. Khukuni Didi was feeding Ma. Didima also was sitting by. After Ma's supper was over, Didima gave me a big "*laddu*" (a sweet) as *prasada*.

Immediately after this, Ma went out of the room and walked towards the Namghar, and had a long talk standing on the yard of the Ashram. Ma said, that the women of Bareilly walked about much more freely than the women elsewhere. When Ma was there, they always spent their time in Her company after their domestic works were done. One day they dressed Ma as Krishna and made her stand at the threecurved posture *Tribhanga* with a flute in hand and took Her photo. I heard from Khukuni Didi that these women imagined Ma as Krishna and associated with Her as Gopis and delighted Her with songs and dances.

#### Sri Sri Ma and Srimati Aparna Devi

The talk led us to Srimati Aparna Devi. When Aparna Devi's



husband was ill, she reportedly saw Ma in her dreams frequently, and each time such visions occurred she knew that her husband would recover. Once her husband fell seriously ill. One night she dreamt that Ma appearing to her was saying that if she sat by her husband's sick-bed dressed in a particular costly saree she had in her box, he would get well. She had forgotten having in her possession a saree like the one described by Ma. But when she opened the box and looked into it, she found there the saree as described by Ma. She put it on and sat by the bed of her husband. The face of her husband, almost driven mad by the agonies of disease, clearly told her how he flared up seeing her dressed like that. She was touched to the quick not being able to tell him anything about her dream. Relating this story Ma began to laugh profusely and we also joined Her.

Ma also related some episodes of Jamshedpur. She said, "This time they in Jamshedpur put up a great show on my visit. They constructed a gate of flowers and leaves overhung with many-coloured electric bulbs. They put up a canopy and set the scene displaying a rich variety. We reached Jamshedpur at 4 p.m. As soon as I reached there, I said that the sky was overcast with clouds. Jyotish said, 'No, Ma, these are not clouds. It appears like that as the sky here is covered with smoke coming out of factories'. I said no more. They led us and made us seated on a decorated carpet under the canopy. As it was getting dark, they switched on the lights for a little time. But finding us unfed even at that late hour of the day, they conducted us into the room for bath and food. The moment we found ourselves in the room, a violent storm and rain broke loose. In a moment the canopy was torn into shreds and the place was changed into a slush-pool. When later they sorrowfully said, Ma, we decorated the place beautiful with a

festoon of light, but all is spoilt before we could show it to you.' I said that I had seen the illumination if only for a short while.

Khukuni Didi : Why speak of Jamshedpur alone -- wherever you went, it was rain and rain. When you reached Calcutta, people were groaning under intense heat. But as soon as you put your foot there, there was a heavy shower of rain, cooling the whole city. It was the same at Kheora and here in Dhaka it has begun to rain.

Ma : When this morning it was very cloudy, I stood holding on to the railing of the steamer. Akhandanandaji stood close to me. He said, 'Ma' when shall we get rains from these clouds, -- at Narayangunj or in Dhaka ? The rain came on before we were at Narayangunj. I said, "Make bed for me, as soon as I lie down wrapped, the rain will stop." It happened exactly like that. We did not get drenched either at Narayangunj or in Dhaka.

Ma now went towards Namghar. Her bed was made and She lay down. I also made my *pranama* and went back home. It was about 1 a.m.

6th Jyaishta, Thursday 1344 (20-5-37), Today it was 10 a.m. by the time I reached the Ashram. Going to the Ashram I bowed down to Bholanath. Preparations were going on for the construction of a small temple on the sacrificial pit, and another sacrificial pit was in the making at Panchavati. Bholanath showed it to me.

#### Playing of Satchidananda Cowrie by Sri Sri Ma.

After staying in Panchavati for a while I went to Sri Sri Ma. I found a dice-addict of Jamshedpur offering *bhoga* to Ma. After some time Ma started playing the game of Satchidananda cowrie. The first round was won by the eldest daughter.

ter of Sri Prafulla Ghosh. In an attempt to decide who else won with her, Khukuni Didi began to count heads over and over again. Ma pointed out those who, having won, would take part in the kirtan. Seeing that Khukuni Didi had still her doubts, Ma said, "Khukuni, what has come over you today?" Hearing it we laughed. The words of Ma were so affectionate and uttered with such sweetness and a note of complaint, that they fell on the ears with a pleasing concord. This time Khukuni Didi lost. So she closed her eyes and sat down to *japa*.

When the game was on in Ma's room, a Vaisnavi was singing kirtan very sweetly in the Namghar. Ma said, "Who is singing in the Namghar? I will go and find out." But Prafulla Babu's wife prevented Ma from going.

The game was resumed and this time Khukuni Didi won. The kirtan was started again. Ma was Khukuni Didi's partner. So She led the song and the others joined in. Ma sang in Her voice rare even in the celestials, with cymbals in hands—

"Jai Radhe Radhe Krishna Krishna

Hare Rama Hare Hare.

Say this name with your mouth;

Broadcast it among *jivas*

From door to door.

We listened spell-bound.

After the song was over, Ma told me the history of the Satchidananda cowrie game. Ma said, "When we were at Cox Bazar, many children used to come to me. What should I say to them and for how long? I gave them such instructions as, 'Attend to your studies', 'speak the truth', 'obey your parents'. Again, when we went out to walk on the sea-shore, they would pick up cowries from the beach and give them to me. At that I said to them, 'Come on, I shall teach you a new

cowrie game'. At this time the rules of the cowrie game were finalized\*, and the play started with the children. The wife of the Munsiff and other ladies also came. I played cowrie with them as well. They also had to perform *japa* if defeated for otherwise the children would not take their turn at it. This cowrie game had a wide circulation in Cox Bazar. Boys were prepared in advance with *khole* and *kartal* (drums and cymbals) and on winning they instantly fell to singing kirtan to the beat of drums. People could tell from the distance that the play was on, hearing the sound of kirtan. One day a boy who had never performed *japa* or repeated the Name, did *japa* for a thousand times conforming to the rule of the cowrie game.

\* Sri Jatindra Chandra Mazumdar M. Sc, a dear relative of mine went at that time to Cox Bazar to see Ma. He had the good fortune of playing the game with Ma. It was from his letter that I come to know about Satchidananda cowrie game for the first time. On my enquiring about the rules of the game, he wrote to me a letter, I quote here the relevant excerpts from it :—

"Almost the whole day Ma plays cowrie with boys and girls of different age groups. The School is near Ma's tent. The boys are with Ma for the greater part of the day. I set down below the rules of the Satchidananda cowrie game—

"In the game an even number of players have to participate. Two groups consists of equal number of players. The players sit in a ring with a space for the throw of cowries in the middle, the players of the two groups sitting alternately.

"Seven cowries are used in the game, care is taken that there are no "*matha-paglia*" (Crazy) cowries" which falling on their backs, spin and come to a stop upside down.

(1) In a throw, a face-up cowrie scores one and the player gets another throw.

(2) Two face-up cowries at a single throw score nil and do not earn an extra throw.

(3) Three face-up cowries score nil and do not earn a throw.

(4) Four face-up cowries score Sat (*satya*). An extra throw is conceded.

(5) Five face-up cowries score Chit (*Chaitanya*) with an extra throw.

(6) Six face-up cowries score Ananda with an extra throw.

(7) Any one of a group winning is a win for the whole group.

When after the second round of the game, the third round started, Ma said, "I will not play any more. Now, I will act as the referee".

Ma has learnt quite a few English words such as, "silent", "unnecessary", "fine" etc. She even speaks a few short sentences in English.

After the game had continued for a time, Ma rose up and proceeded towards the Namghar. I also followed Her. I saw that She appeared before the Vaisnavi, listened to the song for a while and then turned towards Her own room. On the way, a man handed over two lotuses to Ma and bowed down to Her. He was wet all over. Apparently he had plucked the flowers from the pond and at once run to Ma. Seeing it was getting late in the day, I made *pranama* and left.

At 3 p.m. a heavy shower of rain started and continued up to 5 p.m. After the rain subsided a little, I went towards the Ashram. Getting there, I found Ma in the Namghar. The ladies were singing kirtan with Ma. We stood listening to the kirtan.

(8) *Satya*, *Chaitanya* and *Ananda* scored in due order makes a win.

(9) Four, five or six in separate throws scoring one at a time or in single throws will make for *Satya*, *Chaitanya* and *Ananda* respectively.

(10) *Chaitanya* or *Ananda* scored before *Satya* becomes ineffective but it is entitled to an extra throw. First *Satya* has to be scored.

(11) If *Ananda* is scored after *Satya*, bypassing *Chaitanya* in a single throw, it will mean victory, but not so if it is scored in six separate throws. In the latter case it will be counted as *Chaitanya* with one score to be carried over, which means that in this case *Chaitanya* cannot be bypassed.

(12) If with one score to be carried over, a throw shows all the seven face-up cowries, it will also be counted as a victory. There is no question here of '*Satya*', '*Chaitanya*' or '*Ananda*'.

(13) Seven face-up cowries at a throw gives an extra throw.

(14) Seven face-down cowries at a throw nullifies the carried over scores and earns an extra throw. But *Satya* or *Chaitanya* scored previously are not nullified. For example, suppose some one has scored *Satya* or *Chaitanya*; after that he

After some time Ma was called to the room of Akhandanandaji. We came out of the Namghar. I was told that Mrs. Jennings had wired to Ma asking for Her permission to return to America. This American lady had come to Calcutta to take part in a world religious conference and made a tour to different places of India associating with holy men and devotees. At Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondichery, she heard of Sri Sri Ma and went to Nainital where she met Her. She was charmed by Her incomparable personality. We were talking about these things when somebody came in said that I was called by Ma. I at once went to Ma in Swamiji's room. Khukuni Didi said, "Ma just now commissioned me to have you here at once and show you these photographs. So you have been called." They were Ma's photographs; each one had come out fine.

7th Jyaishta, 1344, Friday (21-5-37). I went to the Ashram at about 10 o'clock in the morning and saw there Moti Babu, Pramatha Babu, Sachin Babu and others. Ma was seated in the

scores three at three successive throws; after this, he has seven face-down cowries at the next throw. In that case, it will not spoil *Satya* or *Chaitanya*, but the three carried-over scores will be spoilt.

(15) *Satya*, *Chaitanya* and *Ananda* scored by three players of a group separately does not make for a win. Thus there is no intra-group addition of scores. Each one has to play separately.

(16) After scoring two or three, which are nil-scores, a player has to give the next throw to the next player on the right. Thus the game moves in a circle. Any score other than two or three entitles the player to an extra throw.

(17) If one scores two or three at separate throws one by one, they are carried over and not spoilt, when the turn comes back after completing the circle, those carried-over scores are added to the score at the next throw.

(18) The winning group in the cowrie game should sing Kirtan 'Hari bole, Hari bole' while every one of the losers must repeat the '*ishtamantra*' one hundred and eight times. The uninitiated should repeat 'Ma' or a *Namu* denoting God. This is all about the cowrie game. I do not know if I have been able to make it sufficiently plain. If you find any difficulty while at play, you may let me know.

veranda of Her room. Pramatha Babu was saying to Ma, "I got you change the place twice like a bundle, but what good was it? We have no access to you, thanks to the ladies." Ma began to laugh.

Nagen Babu: It is no use complaining. Now the women are the privileged group.

Ma: (smiling) If the women take the right path, men cannot go wrong.

At this moment Khukuni Didi came up and conducted Ma to help Her wash Her face. As Ma went with her, She said looking at Pramatha Babu, "You remain dissatisfied because you talk of dissatisfaction. You should instead reach out for what yields satisfaction."

After Ma had washed Her face, She inspected the plan of the sacrificial temple and approved of it. I heard the king of Solan was bearing the expenses of the construction of this temple.

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"Quarrels between Ma and Baba Bholanath at the cowrie game is worth mentioning. Ma sits in a circle with children to play the game. Ma and Baba Bholanath are in opposite groups. The Swamiji also is in the party. After the game Ma and Bholanath have a sharp wrangling over who has won how many times. Each calls the other 'Kanthha' (Swindler). The loser seeks strength through the recall of another day on which he had won. The whole thing ends in a spell of merriment.

"Suppose, in a throw two cowries are in face-up position attached to each other precariously so that if one is removed, the other may be upturned. Such throws also lead to differences between Ma and Bholanath. While one claims there are four, the other says it is only three.

"Sometimes ready for a throw, Ma says, well, — I leave it to *Bhaga* (Ilhappavan God), let me see how it turns out."

Sometimes Ma says to a boy of Bholanath's group, 'Beg it of me, say, Ma make me win. Otherwise you shall lose.' With the movement of both hands, Bholanath forbids the boy to ask for anything. The boy says, No, I will not ask of you. You are a Hindu while I am Brahmo.' Ma says, 'I too am a Brahmo—even at this point, do ask.' The boy says, 'No, I will not, by any means.'

**"I also have my Kuchery(court)".**

Ma was taken away to be fed. Pramatha Babu and Moti Babu went to Ma and left for home with some *prasada*. After some time, Ma returned and sat on the veranda of Her room. For some time sundry topics were talked about. Then Ma enquired about Pramatha Babu and Moti Babu.

I: They have gone away.

Ma: Why?

I: They have to attend kuchery.

Ma: (smiling) I too have my kuchery. When I lie down wrapped up, I attend my kuchery — move about in different places.

I was told that Pramatha Babu had roused up Ma from sleep in the morning when She was lying wrapped up. He could not wait for Ma to wake and sit up by Herself. Perhaps Ma's remark referred to that event. We often say that Ma has gone out for a walk, when we find Her lying covered up. Now She vouched for its truth Herself.

Now, the conversation turned to Mrs. Jennings. Ma said, "Born of a respectable family, she is quiet and grave. She often spoke nothing, only kept sitting quietly. She had the power of inducing composure in others also."

I: Is her *Sadhana* along the path of devotion?

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Ma: 'Well then, play on. You're sure to lose. At the end of the game Bholanath loses. Ma says, 'You see, 'Ask for it now. Ask of me to make you win. Or you will lose this time also.'

This time also Bholanath forbids him with a beckoning. The boy says, 'I will not ask of you in any case.'

In this way Bholanath loses six times in succession. At the end of each game Ma says to the boy, 'You see, how you are losing every time. Just ask me to see what happens. Say — Ma, make me win. It will certainly be a win for you. But the boy is not prevailed upon.'



Ma: No, but devotion being the common path of least resistance for *jivas*, it shows up more or less in all. When she tried to concentrate on herself, tears often appeared in her eyes, without her knowing". So saying, Ma began to laugh.

A devotee: I hear, she was to go with you to Kailas?

Ma: Yes, she had asked me if she could expect any spiritual edification if she went to Kailas and whether it was my desire that she should go. That meant, she was ready to go, if I asked her to. You know my ways. I told her that a spiritual uplift experienced on going to Kailas was determined by the preconceived idea of the person concerned. That is to say, those who regarded Kailas as a preferred place of a particular Deity were inspired by appropriate emotions on going to Kailas; for the rest, it was only a sight-seeing tour.

#### Jyotish Babu's experience about Ma.

8th Jyaishta, 1344, Saturday (22-5-37). I reached the Ashram at 10 a.m. I was told that Ma was still in bed. Seeing Jyotish Babu talking with others at Panchavati, I went there and took my seat. Pramatha Babu also went with me. There I found Charu Babu too.

Jyotish Babu was speaking about Sri Sri Ma. I said to him, "It is said that once you visualized Ma in the form of Devi. Let us hear of the event."

Jyotish Babu said, "Ma was then staying at Shahbag. One morning, going to meet Ma, I was waiting at Nachghar. Ma, Bholanath and Matori aunt were still lying in bed in their rooms. Suddenly, I saw the door of Ma's room thrown open and the radiant form of a goddess appeared near the door. At that, I was very much astonished. I thought - 'What is it that I am seeing fully awake and in broad daylight?' It did not appear to be a hallucination. While I was looking on, the vision

of the goddess faded out and I saw our Ma coming out from the room in Her easy, leisurely gait approaching me. To me reasoning never gets a less weightage than emotion. So I made up a plan and began to mentally recite a *Devi stotra* from the Chandi. I thought that if She really was a goddess, She would be pleased at my recitation and offer something to me by way of reward. As She slowly proceeded from Her bed room to the Nachghar, Sri Sri Ma plucked up a few grass flowers from the ground. When She was before me, I bowed down to Her and She at once dropped on my head the flowers as Her blessings.

Jyotish Babu continued, "At this time, I was pestered with the desire to know Her identity. So I often asked her, 'Ma, who are you?' One day She said, 'You will know it later on.' Another day She said, 'It is possible to say who I am only so long I have a perception of self. I am completely devoid of this perception. So I am whatever you make me out to be.' Then She said a bit seriously, 'What else do you want to know?' She uttered these words in a tone and with an unusual expression on Her face that made me shiver to the inmost depths of my being. I could not say anything more. Since then, I never asked Her about Her identity."

As it was getting late in the day, I turned homewards. At the time of coming away I found Ma sitting up.

When at 3.30 p.m. I went back to the Ashram, I was told that Ma had gone to Shahbag for a walk. This time while coming from Nainital, Ma had brought along with Her a girl named Godavari from the hills. She had in all probability gone to Shahbag to show the girl around the place. I went to Shahbag. Many children were walking about Shahbag with Ma. Seeing me Ma said, "The trees I planted here, have now grown up." Khukuni Didi asked me if I had been to Shahbag



before. Ma said, "Yes, Babaji has. I had once to face a complaint on this account."

One day Ma had conducted me to Shahbag. After our walking was over, the caretaker of Shahbag came out with his complaint, saying that entry for men was forbidden in Shahbag as the begums often came there for a walk from the Nawab's residence. Ma said, "Since then I never came here for a walk — except today and it is my first visit after that incident. It is permissible too, for those of the Nawab's residence are not here at present." So saying Ma began to laugh.

From Shahbag Ma went to Siddheshwari with Godavari and a few other women in trail. We went back to the Ashram.

From Siddheshwari Ma returned in the evening and took Her seat in the Namghar. A little after, the *arati* began in the temple. We sat on silently watching the *arati*.

After the *arati* was over, Bhudeb Babu came and said to Mataji, "Ma just sing us a song. We can trouble you for one, seeing that you sing so many songs to the ladies." At first Ma refused. Then She sang two songs of Her own accord. One was Hindi and the other Bengali. She sang in Her sweet voice lost to the outer world. It went to the heart of all who heard it.

After this Bhudeb Babu came out with another tall order. It was that he would listen to the Mataji speaking Hindi. Ma said, "You put questions to me. I will answer them in Hindi."

#### Ma's unwillingness to reveal Her identity.

Bhudeb Babu : People call you Bhagavati and no other, that is, Bhagavati Herself is reborn. Can we not be emancipated by looking at you and touching you? Ma replied first in Hindi and then in Bengali. She said, "Proper sight and touch certainly lead to emancipation, but how often are they in evidence? You call me 'Bhagavati' 'Annapurna' — but these

are mere words coming out of the mouth. How often can you identify the idols with divinities? You say many things from your beliefs. I call such beliefs blind as they are not backed up by feelings that should go with them. Deities are mentioned in scriptures also and you can talk about from your scripture-based knowledge. But to me scriptures are time-tables and no more. A time-table contains names of places but you cannot have any idea of those places by reading the time-table alone. It is the same about the deities referred to in the scriptures. You can have no notion of them from your scriptural knowledge. Notions of them call for action. Actions lead you to various mental configurations and then everything becomes plain to you. But you may contend that the property of fire is to burn — it burns the hand if it is touched whether consciously or unconsciously. In the same way, why should you not be benefitted, if you touch Bhagavati, without knowing Her as such? To this I say, an ice-cold object does not burn as soon as it is brought in contact with fire. Perhaps all it does is to leave a mark on the place. In the same way if you see and touch anybody taking her for Bhagavati, it will leave on your mind a good propensity. Nothing is absolutely thrown away."

Bhudeb Babu : I understand it well. Now the question is, are you Bhagavati or not?

Ma: It is a question I cannot answer.

Bhudeb Babu: Why can't you? I can cite a precedent to support that my question admits of an answer. When Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansadeva was asked about His identity, He had disclosed it.

Ma: I cannot say or do anything deliberately. With me a thing comes out spontaneously or not at all. Perhaps some day my identity would come out of my lips. But at present, it is not coming out.

### Salvation comes from actions dedicated to God.

Paresh Babu\*: It is true that one cannot go from one place to another merely by reading a time table. It requires action. But one can rise to a high state of experience, without having recourse to actions. God can draw us directly to the path of religion as a magnet attracts iron.

Ma: Attraction is there, but we cannot perceive it. It is this attraction that inclines one to the religious path. But for it there could have been no such inclination at all. It is the natural destiny of man to be liberated, to attain God. No one loves to be bound. Some may develop religious tendencies at an early age. You can call it fortune, or a reward of good action. Again some one has an urge for the religious life but can make no headway. In despair he thinks that he is getting nowhere. But this very thought of not getting anywhere is a proof that he is making some progress. He has his eye on God even for a passing moment.

Paresh Babu: He can get everything done, can't He?

Ma: It is He who gets everything done. But a mere statement of this fact means nothing — one must perceive it. We can attend to all household works, but want to depend on Him in respect of religious matters alone. It is an inconsistency amounting to hypocrisy. As children are directed towards education by force, similarly one has to repeat the Name against his will, and try to be single-minded. The means of attaining single-mindedness are reading good books, associating with the good and taking part in religious discourses. While at such practices, a man feels that they are attracting him magnet-like towards God. While performing household

works, you should do some works for Him as well. Though whatever you are doing for your domestic life are also His works, yet for the awareness of this fact, God must be drawn into your household. While looking after your relatives and serving them, you should be mindful of God inherent in them. Performing household works as one's own, makes only for bondage; but doing them as God's work leads to liberation. In each work you do, He must be involved. There's no other way.

### A proper bowing consists in a complete self-surrender.

At this moment some women came to bow down to Mataji. Ma lapsed into silence. After their departure, Ma again said, "See, can we even make a bow in the proper way? What is bowing like? Well, it is like pouring out water from a pot. If the pot is held upside down, all the water in it flows out. In the same way a proper bowing consists in pouring out all one's emotional content on the feet of the object of the bow. You say, don't you, that our head is the seat of all our thoughts and emotions. But when we bend it low while bowing, nothing flows out of it. It is like tilting a powder can. When the can is tilted, a very small amount of powder and not all falls out through the perforations in its lid". Ma added in this connection, "Unless the water-pot is emptied, God would not come forward to fill it up".

### "Let there be at least a start in giving".

Hearing this interpretation of *pranama*, Naresh Babu said, "Ma, if you're bowed down to it in that way, you will get blackened."

Ma: All right, offer to God whatever you have. Say, "God, I have only sin, I offer it to you." It will at least serve as a start.

\* Dr. Parosh Chandra Chakraborty, A brother to Sri Naresh Chandra Chakraborty. Highly devoted, both of them.

forward towards giving. Here is a story for you. A beggar had gone to beg to the house of a miser. While the miser made it a point not to give away anything, the beggar refused to budge without having his alms. At last the miser, out of sheer anger, gave him a handful of dust, saying, "Take it for your alms." The beggar accepted it with satisfaction, saying, 'Good, it is at least a start in giving.' (All laugh). It is very true. The miser in his anger gave dust, but when his anger subsided, he must have felt sorry for having given dust to the man instead of food. It may be that to the next beggar he would give half a pice or a pice instead of dust. I also tell you to give whatever you can afford. Even if it be half a pice, no matter, later you may be able to give a pice, a rupee or even a gold coin.

9th Jyaishta, 1344, Sunday (23.5.37). Ma was away from the Ashram in the morning. She had been invited to different families. So I did not go to the Ashram in the morning.

#### **"I pre-exist creation, continuation and destruction."**

I went to the Ashram in the afternoon at about 6 p.m. It was almost impossible for the crowd to have a glimpse of Ma. In the evening though Ma took Her seat in the meadow, there was no approaching Her for the crowd of women. I heard that Madhavi Mata\* had come to meet Ma and that Ma was very mirthful with her.

When the night was deeper I stood where Ma was sitting. At this moment Pramatha Babu came up and said to Ma, "Ma, in 11 or 12 old-men's kirtan tonight?"

Ma: Ask it to Bholanath. You had better have a kirtan with Bholanath.

\* A Vaishnavi Sadhika, having her Ashram at Tejgaon, Dhaka.

Pramatha Babu: You will not be present at it? If you are not present at our kirtan tonight, then I will not allow you to be present at the kirtan to be arranged tomorrow by children below twenty years.

Ma (smiling): I am with twenty-year-olds, fifty-year-olds, as well as with centenarians. That is not all — I pre-exist the cycle of creation, continuation and destruction.

Hearing that tonight there would be a kirtan, participated by 'middle-aged uncles' like us, I went to the house to have supper. The supper over, I went back to the Ashram and found Ma seated in the Namghar. The others were performing kirtan with Baba Bholanath. The kirtan continued for about an hour. Baba Bholanath began to dance in *bhava*. After the kirtan was over Bholanath went away. In the meantime Ma also had left the Namghar. We went on singing kirtan in the Namghar.

#### **The state of the body on the Awakening of Kundalini Sakti**

After sometime I observed a gathering of people on the veranda of Annapurna temple. At that I presumed that Ma was there. On going there I found that my guess was right. Ma was lying on the veranda of the temple, and some university students were sitting by Her. Almost all of them were my students. I also made room for myself at a corner. I found Sri Atul Brahmachari of "Sadhan Samar Ashram" and Naresh Babu talking with Ma. I could not hear what they said partly because a loud kirtan was on in the Namghar and partly because my seat was at some distance from Ma.

I found my student Prafulla Chakraborty absorbed in meditation. Noticing him Ma said, "Where have you come from?" He made no reply. He spoke nothing even when pushed by his friends. At this I was a little astonished.

At this time Ma said, "See if Pramatha Babu is at kirtan in the Namghar." Someone said, "Yes, he is". Ma said, "I am going to the Namghar for a while." I followed Ma. The boys sat on. Short time after, I saw the boys forming a crowd in the Ashram yard. A student ran into the Namghar and went back with a fan. Fearing that something untoward had happened, Khukuni Didi and myself went up to the boys. Going there I found Prafulla Chakraborty lying on the ground writhing restlessly. I asked Vijoy, another student of mine, what it was all about. He said, "Ever since Prafulla's mother died, he has been frequently dreaming of her. Today coming here, he has lain down, restless with pain." Hearing this I thought it prudent to call Ma, and called Her from the Namghar. Seeing the boy rolling on the ground, Ma said, "It is not good, his lying on the ground like this. He may catch cold. Lay him on a blanket in the temple veranda." I told it to the boys. They asked Prafulla to get up, but he kept lying. I noticed that he had not completely lost his consciousness, but was highly restless. On Ma's repeating several times that he should be removed, the boys lifted him bodily and carried him to the temple veranda, but there also they set him down on the bare cement. Nobody apparently paid heed to Ma's advice to lay him on a blanket. Ma told them to pass their hands on the boy's backbone. Naresh Babu being near, began to pass his hand. I saw that he could not do it properly, yet I could not go near him for the crowd. I heard Ma say, "Massage him up from the middle of his brows to the forehead with your fingers." But seeing that nobody was doing it, I forced my way to the boy and laying him on a bed-cover, passed my fingers gingerly from the junction of his brows to the forehead. When it was done for some time, Prafulla began to repeat "Ma, Ma" in tune with the kirtan in the Namghar. From time to time he said, "Why do I

feel so weak?" When Ma came to hear of it, She said, "It is natural that he should feel weak. At the slightest activation of the Kundalini Sakti, the body experiences a shock and the man falls down unable to withstand its impact. Ask him if he occasionally comes to this state." I asked him and said to Ma that he had never had it before. To day he was having it for the first time.

Seeing the boy in that state and hearing Ma's comment, I was reminded of Nirmala Ma and Sevadasi. I asked, "Ma, is it a state allied to that of Nirmala Ma?"

Ma: Yes, it is so. Do not think that he has done it deliberately. As soon as a person becomes single-minded, a surge of *bhava* breaks upon his body in this way and he is prostrated. If this state recurs to him, it will bespeak his spiritual elevation. But it may be that after it has happened for this once, it will never happen again in his whole life.

I: Is a man subjected to such onslaught of *bhava* if he is single-minded in respect of any matter other than religious?

Ma: No.

I: This boy only visualizes his mother in dream and thinks of her; why then has he been so affected by emotional upsurge?

Ma: There is an element of divinity in father and mother.

I: If one becomes single-minded concentrating on his dead son, is he likely to have this state?

Ma: He may, but then, he must have submission to God added to it. That is, if he thinks that God has taken away his son, then it may happen.

**Why it is necessary to recite the Name of God to rouse up one in the grip of emotion.**

When Prafulla was lying on the temple veranda; Ma laid



also advised that the name of God should be whispered into his ear. I said, "Ma, when a man falls unconscious repeating the Name or hearing it recited, why is it needed to whisper the Name into his ear to restore him? It seems contrary to the law of Nature."

Ma: Why?

I: We heat water by exposing it to fire, but we do not bring it in contact with fire again to cool it.

Ma: It is not like that. It is like retracing one's steps during returning. That is also natural.

#### State of trance (*samadhi*)

I: I have seen in the diary of Khukuni Didi that you have divided the state of trance into four categories — *Jada Samadhi*, *Savikalpa Samadhi*, *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* and *Chaitanya Samadhi*. Does one not have super-consciousness (*chaitanya*) in the state of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* that you speak of another category — *Chaitanya Samadhi*?

Ma: It is impossible to say what a person has or has not in the state of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, I won't go into these discussions now.

I: Do the limbs stiffen during *Samadhi*?

Ma: It is not possible to detect *Samadhi* simply by observing physical states. In the detection of *Samadhi*, physical states have certainly to be considered, but in addition to them *bhava*, spoken words and many other aspects have to be taken into consideration. Stiffness may occur during *Samadhi*, but it will be similar to rigor mortis. If the man is moved by his leg, his body will move as a whole. (Pointing to Herself) This body has passed through no end of states. Sometimes my hands and feet became excessively stiff, so much so, that even when rubbed with might and main, no

sensation would be produced. But that state did not amount to *Samadhi*. They were the reactions to the upsurge of *bhava*. How few can understand or detect such states! You have seen the state of *Sevadasi* at Navadweep, and that is why I tell you about these things. It is often seen that a person under the influence of *bhava*, closes his fists; he holds a thing so strongly that it cannot be wrenched away from his grasp. In such a case you must understand that his emotional influence has been re-inforced by his will power. But such a thing does not happen in *Samadhi*. During *Samadhi*, the hand may stiffen, but you can put it in any position you like. If the fist is closed, fingers would open out as soon as they are pulled, and when they are let loose again, the fist would reclose itself. You may have seen a person struck by lightning while standing and is killed. But though dead, he keeps standing like a live man. He would drop down as soon as he is pushed. The state of *Samadhi* is also somewhat akin to it. In this state will power being absent, the body can be put into any desired position. But if you see that you cannot manipulate the hands and feet at will, but meet with a resistance, it means that it is not a state of *Samadhi*.

I: What is *Jada Samadhi*?

Ma: Under it the body keeps lying like an insensient thing and the mind becomes inert. When the influence passes off, the person finds that the world has taken up a new form, and that his outlook on the world has undergone a complete change.

I: At Navadweep you described *Jada Samadhi* as a state when a person loses his contact with worldly objects but relationship with the spiritual world has not yet been established. This being so, how can a man passing out of this state have his worldly point of view changed? The spiritual truths are yet



to be revealed to him.

Ma: The state I told you about is the initial state of *Jada Samadhi*. It is true that in that State the spiritual consciousness does not emerge, but its seeds may be lying dormant within to develop later on by slow degrees. Knowledge is then revealed in a piecemeal fashion. As for example, a sense of utter humility with regard to one's own self. We express humility and meekness as a matter of good manners, but when humility wells up from the inner depths of the heart, a person takes no offence even when insulted, as his humility is not lip-deep but a feeling disseminated through his entire being. The developments of other attributes like forgiveness, patience etc. also take place similarly. Those simply under influence of *bhava* don't have such awareness as they are found to accept services from others. But for one who is developing knowledge bit by bit, it is not possible to accept *pranama* or services from others. *Bhava* and *Samadhi* are capable of taking a wide variety of forms beyond all recounting. It is in our nature to indulge in tall talks, in our attempt to describe a little out of the way characteristics observed in some one. (laugh from all).

As it was 2.30 a.m. I bowed down to Ma and went to the Namghar. Sitting there, I began to repeat the Name. At about 4.30 a.m., Ma came to the Namghar. At that time our kirtan had gained a high momentum. Ma struck cymbals close to the ears of those who were sleeping in the Namghar at that time, to wake them up. All these activities of Ma had charms of their own. At the sound of cymbals, the sleeping devotees started up and seeing Ma before them, they were prostrating themselves at Her ruddy feet in pleasant surprise.

13th Jyaishta, 1344 Thursday (27.5.37). Last night there was a combined kirtan of boys and old men. Jyotish Babu had

laid down the rule that those taking part in a kirtan should be in the standing posture and that nobody should be allowed to sit where the kirtan was on. The kirtan was regulated by this rule and was a grand success. Ma had come to the Namghar only for a short time. We went back home in the morning.

### Sri Sri Ma's going to the Dhaka Hall.

Today at 10 a.m. Ma went to the Dhaka Hall. My students Nani Chakraborty, Shrikanta and others came and conducted Ma. I also was taken together with Her. Bholanath, Khukuni Didi, Baby Didi etc. accompanied Ma. Seats were arranged for all at the Lytton Hall. The boys asked me to put a question to Ma. Pointing to the boys, I said to Ma, "Ma, these are all my students. I would ask you to tell them something that would be of benefit to them."

Ma (smiling) : So they are your students, are they ? Whose student are you ?

I : Yours.

Ma smiled and remained silent; then She said, "I find no words coming. You start talking. I shall take up the thread."

Prafulla : What is the need of religion ? Why should we be particular about religion ?

Ma : What do you want to do ?

Prafulla : We will acquire knowledge through education, earn money, do social service and such other works.

Ma : The knowledge you are acquiring is temporal in nature. It cannot be regarded as real knowledge as it can't answer such fundamental questions as "who are we", "where do we come from", "what are we bound for?" Besides, it does not enable us even to know what will happen to us one hour — nay, even one minute later. There can be no true knowledge divorced from religion. Religion implies the

principle sustaining the world. Only religion leads to real knowledge. But the temporal knowledge can also lead us to real knowledge, if properly acquired and utilized.

As for the social service you speak of undertaking, what is the certainty of it? It is all very well for you to think at present that by earning money you would do good to others, but it may well happen that you find it difficult to maintain your own family, not to speak of helping others. It is also common knowledge that those who earn more are inclined to save instead of spending on charity. A little thought would convince you that the people often cannot do what they once intended to do. This conflict between one's own will and the Supreme Will Power has been going on for ever. You intend to serve others, but it may well turn out that you can barely make time to serve yourselves, let alone serving others. So I say, who can have the power of serving others unless he knows God and can draw upon His power?

There is another thing. From birds and beasts to man upwards, — all long for peace and joy. This is inherent to their nature, for they all have a foretaste of joy. Otherwise, they could not have desired it. Again, man is not satisfied with finite joy. He desires perfect joy that does not peter out into nothingness. The joy that we derive from worldly objects are finite, it cannot afford us satisfaction. Worldly objects merely maintain us in a state of want. When a man who wants money gets it, he wants more money or something else. Peace eludes him constantly. Only the attainment of God can bring peace and joy to man. It is not so much of attainment either, for everything is within him. You see, all seek truth, for falsehood is repulsive to all. A man can seek truth only because it is present within him. Otherwise, desiring it would have made no sense. It is the same with *Chaitanya*. Remember, how you

were concerned, when the other day one of you fell down unconscious at the Ashram. You tried to restore him to consciousness, for unconsciousness is not to your liking. You strove for consciousness, because you have within you a perception of *Chaitanya*. It is true of joy also. So I say, you have within you truth, consciousness, joy and peace — everything; only, you cannot realise them.

A student : To acquire religious merit, are rituals such as worship etc. indispensable?

Ma (smiling) : So long you have been calling in question the necessity of religion itself. Now you are doubtful about its rituals. Your doubts have receded from religion and are entrenched at its periphery — rituals. So I was telling you that religion is necessary or there would have been no room for your questioning it. Now, about rituals, my answer is that they are not equally important to all. In the world religion is but one, and people try different methods for its attainment, for without it there is no joy and peace, whether it is worship, repeating the Name or meditation all are different paths to the attainment of religion. Some are naturally inclined to worshipping, some others to meditation. These depend on innate bents of mind that vary from man to man. There is no universal law for them. In this respect you must follow your personal inclinations. In short, your actions, whatever they may be, should be God-oriented. You see, you are staying here in different rooms, but when you go to bathe, you've only one pond\* to go to. The pond is one and the path leading to it is also one. But as you set out from your respective rooms, the path seems different. In the same way, religion is one and the practices for its

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\* The Dhaka Hall encloses a pond. It is surprising though, how Ma came to know of it.

attainment are also one. But they appear to be different on account of difference in personal inclinations. Some make it through worship of God, some others through repeating the Name and some others still through meditation. Each of them is a discipline (*Sadhana*). So I say, *sadhana* is one. Worship, *japa* etc have all uses of their own.

Often the parents of children complain before me that their sons have no religious tendency. They do not take part in *sandhya* (evening prayer), *ahnik* (daily prayer) and other such activities leading to the ultimate objective of life. They are sceptic with respect to everything. It has gone to such length, that a Brahmin's son is disinclined to have the holy thread on him. On hearing their complaint I say that in this matter, the parents are more to blame than their children. They take care only to ensure for their children the money-oriented education and neglect their religious training. The parents are not justified in complaining, if their children, with no religious training to guide them, grow up to be atheists and indisciplined, for it is the logical conclusion of their own action. So my advice is that at an early age religious training along with secular education should be imparted to children. The effects of such training, imparted at a tender age, are abiding.

Bijoy : What's the significance of investiture with the holy thread ? We believe that the main cause of our backwardness is casteism. Older nations are free from casteism. Why should we not also abolish casteism and try to work out an all-round amelioration for our country ?

Ma : What good will it be to look up to the leaves and fruits of a tree when its root has been chopped off ? First the tree itself must be saved. Then alone can the question of its leaves and fruits arise. You want to equalize a Brahmin and a scavenger, but who among you is ready to go in for scavenging ?

While making railway journeys, you seek the help of porters. But you are scandalized at the idea of carrying your own luggages on the head. You all opt for equality, but shy away from adopting each other's vocation. However, it is quite true that you should cherish a feeling of fraternity for all. I too agree with the concept of one caste. But casteism has been in practice from olden days to maintain social order. This casteism has God's sanction behind it, and if one day it is abolished, it would be through the will of God. So long as it continues it is good to abide by it.

Bijoy : The wearing of the holy thread alone does not make a Brahmin. What is the object of adopting the holy thread ? And what good comes out of performing *sandhya* and *ahnik* ?

Ma asked Bijoy his name and when She knew that he was a Brahmin, asked him, "You have cast off your holy thread, haven't you ?" Bijoy confessed. Ma laughed aloud and said, "The holy thread is a distinguishing mark of Brahminism, a symbol. Believe it or not, having the holy thread on and performing of *sandhya* and *ahnik* have their uses. You may take it from me. Go on performing *sandhya*, *ahnik* and similar other rituals in the same manner as you are carrying out the other directions from your parents. You may not understand their significance at present, but attend to them as courses enjoined by your parents."

A student : Is it true that those who are human beings at this birth would be human beings at their next birth as well ?

Ma : Rebirth is determined by actions. If born as man, one behaves like a beast, he is not reborn as man. Besides, what a man thinks of at the time of his death is a determining factor in his rebirth. As for example, king *Bharat*, thinking of a deer at death, was reborn as a deer.

A student : Does it hold good of birds and beasts as well?

Ma : Yes, it does. But there is a difference between man and birds and beasts. What birds and beasts would think of at the time of their death is pre-determined. In the domain of birds and beasts, successive births are predetermined in a hierarchical order. Actions of birds and beasts cannot make an exception to it. But it is given to man to regulate his next birth by his actions. So by man I mean a being, whose mind has been alerted.\* But this should not induce you to think that one can come to good end conjuring up merely by good thoughts in death-bed, after having passed a dissolute life all throughout. This is because as a man approaches death, he comes to a state when he is no longer capable of voluntary thoughts. His death-time thoughts are determined by the actions during his life and his next birth in its turn is determined by these thoughts. This underscores the need of good actions.

A student : Can God be seen ?

Ma (smiling) : Yes, He can. God can be seen and talked to in the same way as I am seeing you and talking to you.

The student : How does God look like ? Kindly give a description of His form.

Ma (smiling, pointing to the assembled students) : All these are forms of God. (A loud laugh from all).

Now the parting time drew near. Ma said to all, "Baba, I am your daughter, am I not ? You must comply with a request of mine. Say you will comply with it." The students said that they would try to the best of their power. Ma said, "I know that you will do as I tell you, but still I will insist on your pledging your word. You should devote some time to His work just as

you are attending to all your works. An hour, half-an-hour, at least ten minutes should be spent in doing His work. It is but a small demand on your time to set apart just ten minutes for God's work out of a day of 24 hours. I do not ask you to be particular about the spot or require you to be in some definite *asana*. In whatever state you may happen to be, be sure that you repeat His name for at least ten minutes a day. This is my request. I beg this ten minutes time of many persons. But 'begging' is a word not to my liking. It is not in the fitness of things to beg one's own kiths and kins."

Ma spoke these words smilingly and in such a tone that they melted the hearts of all who heard them. The boys gladly gave their word to Ma that they would devote some time everyday to God.

Prafulla : But you must come occasionally to encourage us.

Ma : It is up to you to bring me back.

Prafulla : We cannot even approach you, for you are cordoned off by the ladies. We have also observed that you are more indulgent to those of your own group (Laughter from all).

Ma (smiling) : You are right. The women attract me more strongly. But then everybody in the world is a woman *Prakriti*. God is the only *Purusha* or male. All beings of the world long for God, the supreme Husband. It is in the nature of *Prakriti* to desire something or other. *Purusha* has nothing to ask for. In this sense, we are all *Prakriti* or women. This being so, my attraction for you is quite as strong. (Laughter from all).

Prafulla : We are greatly pained to see the women so exacting towards you. Why don't you forbid them?

Ma : Forbidding is not in my line. If I had the slightest desire for preserving this body, I could have forbidden their advances. I am volitionally indifferent to whether this body

\* A favourite composite pun of Ma. Manush [man] = Man [mind] + Hush [silent].



continues to be or is destroyed. So I cannot obstruct anybody. This body would continue to be or is destroyed. So I cannot obstruct anybody. This body would continue to be only if you are intent on preserving it, and it will perish when you cease to care for its preservation. You have not seen what a mess the women make of me in their eagerness to put the vermilion mark on me. They besmear me with vermilion on the head, forehead, not sparing even my eyes. The vermilion dyes my garments red. When I cleanse my face and hair, a river of blood seems to run down the drain. Yet I cannot prevent them from besmearing me with vermilion. This is because I have not the slightest urge for preserving my body. All cannot understand it. It makes many a man gape with wonder to find that I cannot eat with my own hand. They see that I can do all my works with my hand, but when it comes to eating I cannot use my hand. Many have questioned me about it. I told them that people eat to preserve their life; how can I do it, not having the slightest urge for preserving my life? For a few days I had started eating with my own hand, but then also I put food into somebody else's mouth, instead of my own. Seeing that, they did not allow me to eat with my own hand any longer.

Prafulla : Why do you accept *pranama*?

Ma : There was a time when I could not accept *pranama*. If somebody bowed down to me, I was restless till I touched his feet and return the *pranama*. Nobody could get away with bowing down to me without being bowed down to in return. Sometimes it so happened that if somebody made *pranama* to me from a distance at my back, my head would bow down of itself, though I could not see him. Now I do not prevent people from offering *pranama* to me because I think that in bowing down to me, they are really making their obeisance to God.

With these words, Ma took leave of them. I also went to my house.

In the afternoon when I went to the Ashram, I found Ma sitting under a tree in the meadow adjoining the Ashram. The women were all around Her in such a way that the passage of air was almost blocked. Some were doing *pranama* to Her, while some others were laying vermilion on Her forehead and the parting of the hair. Ma's face was dyed red with vermilion. Someone had covered Ma with a blue Banarasi saree and had put a nose-ring to Her nose. I observed that Ma's face was sombre. Seeing Ma thus mobbed, I moved away from the place. I wondered, if these women had really any love for Ma how could they be tyrannical to Her in this manner?

After a short time I saw Ma proceeding towards the Ashram, blue-clad and with the nose-ring dangling from Her nose, while a milling crowd encircling Her marched onwards noisily. The smile which was still on Ma's lips, did not seem to be natural and unforced. I was extremely pained at the sight. I could not find words for either the devotion or good taste of those who were deriving enjoyment out of dressing up Ma in that fancy-dress. Seeing me, Ma smiled a little; but perhaps noticing the marks of annoyance on my face, She at once looked the other way. Entering into the Ashram, She showed Her quaint dress to all. Seeing my eldest daughter, She said, "what do you come here to look at? Is a *sadhu* ever dressed up like this?" At the sight of Ma so dressed, Baba Bholanath flew into a rage. Finding him angry, those who were in an orgy of mirth over Ma, had their high spirit dampened and they dropped out one by one. Getting to Annapurna's temple, Ma relieved Herself of the fancy garments and dressed in Her own clothes, went out to have a stroll in the meadow.



16th Jyaishta, 1344, Sunday (30.5.37). Today was the last day of the festival, its clumination or *Mahotsava*. On the occasion of this *Mahotsava* about three to four thousand people assemble at the Ashram every year and all partake of the *prasada*. Last night, there was a *kirtan* performed exclusively by the ladies. Today in the morning, Ma set out for the Siddheshwari with the mixed group of boys and girls. Ma first took bath with the girls in the pond of Siddheshwari. We kept standing near the temple. After the bath of the women was over, we had our bath. All were on a spree of merriment.

Ma was offered *bhoga* consisting of flower of rice (*khai*), curd and sweets. Having our shares of *prasada*, we returned to our house at about 9 a.m.

From the noon, a heavy shower of rain broke out. It did not seem likely that today there would be a heavy crowd for the *Mahotsava*. I did not go to the Ashram facing the rain, but went there a little before evening. On being there I heard that there was a great merriment in the Ashram in the afternoon. In the yard of the Ashram, Ma and Baba Bholanath performed a *kirtan* with the devotees in the midst of rain. They told me that Ma had roused everybody into a frenzy by Her dance. During this *kirtan*, many had onset of *bhava*. When the *kirtan* was over, Ma distributed the *khichri prasada* to all with her own hand. The *prasada* was too hot to be received on the palm. Ma advised everybody to use cloth to hold the *prasada* in and eat it from there. Then She bathed in the pond of Ramna Kalibari together with all. Due to the performance of *kirtan* in water and mud, the clothes of all had become bespattered with mud. Ma had declared that the clothes, instead of being sent to the washerman for a wash, should be kept as mementos after a soap-wash at home.

### Ma's leaving Dhaka at the end of the festival.

17th Jyaishta, 1344, Monday (31.5.37). Today Ma was due to set out for Calcutta. After a light breakfast in the morning, I went to the Ashram. When I was there, I heard that Ma had been to our house on a short visit and then gone to Benoy Babu's\* house. Next I heard from my wife that on going to our house, Ma had said to my wife, "So, the Babaji is not at home? Well, he stays out of doors most of the time. It is enough that one at least is at home. (Seeing the garden in the house) You have such a nice garden, but you never for once invited me to have a look at it." After some such words, Ma had got into the car. I began to wait for Ma at the Ashram. She returned about half-an-hour after. On Her return, She directly entered into Her room. I heard that today Bhudeb Babu with his family would be initiated by Baba Bholanath.

Ma stayed away in the room till 8.30 a.m. When She came out, She was beleaguered by men and women eager to bow down to Her. In order to avoid the crowd, Ma drove out of the Ashram in Pares Babu's car up to a spot near the Kalibari, where She kept sitting in the car.

Waiting at the Ashram for a time, I went to the meadow and stood there. In the distance I found Ma's car surrounded by the people. This sort of things got on my nerves but there was no help. At this time, Didima came out and said that Ma's breakfast was ready and that I should call Her in. Not being in sufficiently pleasant mood, I passed the word to a boy named Manik. He said that Ma would not re-enter the Ashram that day. Any food served would be eaten by Her in the car. As soon as Didima received that information, I found her eyes

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\* Shri Benoy Bhushan Banerjee. An employee in the Agricultural Department and a very old devotee of Sri Sri Ma.

big with tears in sorrow. Her sorrow went into my heart, and as I was already worked up, a part of my displeasure spilled over to Ma. At this time I found Sri Purna Sarkar and Sri Jogesh Banerjee, fuming with anger, going to Baba Bholanath to lodge a complaint. I heard that when Sri Purna Sarkar had gone to make his obeisance to Ma, he had been pushed aside by someone and an old man that he was, he had fallen down on the ground, unable to withstand the impact. At this news I was furious and I lost all sense of propriety. I ran to Ma and spurred on by my anger, I gave Her a piece of my mind. What Ma said in reply fell flat on my ears. I cannot exactly recall what I myself said, but I remember that my words expressed how angry I was with Her. However, I brought Her back to the Ashram with sheer force. Ma sat down to eat inside the temple. While eating, She said to Khukuni Didi, "I could have no talk with Amulya Babaji, rather I rebuked him twice." When Didi passed on Her words to me, I said, "Ma, when did you rebuke me? Was it not I, instead, who gave you a good talking – to this very moment?" Ma said smilingly, "Is it so? I had an impression that I had rebuked you." The affectionate Ma chose this tender way to remind me of my misdemeanour.

After the meal She again said to me, "Babaji, now arrange for a meeting with the people." Several of us made Sri Sri Ma take Her stand on the temple veranda. It was so arranged, that the devotees would come up one by one by the western staircase and after making their *pranama* to Ma, get down by the eastern staircase. But the ladies took a long time over making their obeisance and laying the vermillion on Ma. At this Ma said to me, "At this rate, it will not be over even in three or four hours." I said, "Well, then, let me conduct you to the car. They would make their parting obeisance to you there." However, this time Ma took the initiative and told a man that

Bholanath should conduct Her out of the temple at the right moment. I realised that it was the best plan. Remarking on the way the women applied vermillion to Her, She said, "They do not apply it, they literally pour the vermillion on my head."

After sometime Bholanath came up, and leading Ma, got up into the car. We also went to the station. Getting down at the Chasara station near Narayangunj, Ma went to the house of a relative of Bholanath. Getting to Narayangunj, we waited for Ma. She came to the station about half-an-hour before the departure of the steamer. We all got into the steamer along with Her. With folded hands Charu Babu said, "Ma, give us at least a one-word message before you go."

Ma : What message?

Charu Babu : Just anything you like.

Ma : I have nothing to say here. I have spoken a lot already. Just increase a little your time of daily discipline. The days are passing out, devote as much time as you can to His service.

The steamer was on the move. I went back to Dhaka, broken-hearted.