



Reach

Newsletter of the Vedanta Centres of Australia

SAYINGS AND TEACHINGS

Sri Ramakrishna on Prayer

Be not a traitor to your thoughts. Be sincere; act according to your thoughts; and you shall surely succeed. Pray with a sincere and simple heart, and your prayers will be heard.

Source: *Great Sayings: Words of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda*; The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture; Calcutta; page 3.

Sri Sarada Devi On Desires versus Detachment

How little intelligence does a man possess! He may require one thing, but asks for another. He starts to mould an image of Shiva and often ends by making that a monkey. It is best therefore to surrender all desires at the feet of God. He will do whatever is best for us. But one may pray for devotion and detachment. These cannot be classed as desires.

Source: *Great sayings: Teachings of Sri Sarada Devi: The Holy Mother*, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Math, Mylapore; page 93.

Swami Vivekananda on Happiness

Philosophy insists that there is a joy which is absolute, which never changes. The joy cannot be the joys and pleasures we have in this life, and yet Vedanta shows that everything that is joyful in this life is but a particle of that real joy, because that is the only joy there is. Every moment we are enjoying the absolute bliss, though covered up, misunderstood and caricatured. Wherever there is any blessing, blissfulness, or joy even the joy of the thief in stealing, it is that Absolute Bliss coming out, only it has become obscured, muddled up, as it were, with all sorts of extraneous conditions, and misunderstood.

Source: *Teachings of Swami Vivekananda* by Swami Mumukshananda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta; page 106 .

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Compiled and
Transcribed by
Shiwani Sharma

We welcome you all to the Vedanta Movement in Australia, as epitomized in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda, and invite you to involve yourselves and actively participate in the propagation of the Universal Message of Vedanta.

1. NEWS FROM AUSTRALIAN CENTRES 11 MARCH 2020 TO 10 JUNE 2020

On account of the global Coronavirus or Covid 19 pandemic, lockdown measures were introduced throughout Australia in the period covered by this issue of the Reach magazine. As a result, the different chapters of the Vedanta Centre of Sydney scaled back their activities. Over this period, most of the classes conducted by the monks were undertaken online. Nonetheless, the most significant news to occur during this period was the return to India of Swami Vireshananda from Adelaide and Swami Manyananda starting to reside in Perth from Adelaide. This special issue of Reach contains two articles on the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada devi. The first article is a compilation from Swami Gambhirananda's *Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi* and the second article is a transcript from some talks on the Holy Mother by Swami Sridharananda. The transcription was done by Shiwani Sharma. The subsequent issues of Reach will hopefully follow the same format as the previous issues.

2. FEATURE ARTICLES

A. Sri Sarada Devi: The Great Awakening

In 1867, after a long spiritual discipline Sri Ramakrishna came to Kamarpukur and the Holy Mother too came there. After the departure of the Bhairavi Brahmani, Sri Ramakrishna returned to Dakshineswar and the Holy Mother after a long period of seven months of unalloyed joy, went back to her mother at Jayrambati (November 1867).

Arriving at Jayrambati, the Mother found the village still the charming old place she had known it to be; the love and affection of parents, brothers, and cousins and, in fact of all relatives were as deep as ever; the daily life with its work and recreation, talks and discussions, still flowed on as before; yet in the depths of her heart could be felt the stirring of some muffled sorrow. At Kamarpukur she enjoyed a divine bliss, the memory of which remained forever fresh in her mind; but finding nothing corresponding to it in the outside world, she turned inward with

disappointment, converting life into a brooding, wailing dream. Autumn was followed by early winter, and then came chilly days. But forever the Holy Mother kept her ears pricked for any chance news trickling into this village despite the barriers of transmission and rural indifference. Thus passed four long years.

In the meantime some stray pieces of news broke into the quiet sublimity of Jayrambati and stimulated gossip. The villagers concluded from what they had heard that Sri Ramakrishna had lost his mental balance. The Mother had now neither zest in work nor solace in imagination; she only went about her daily round of duties mechanically. The ever-present pang of separation from the Master gnawed at her heart and cast a gloom over her face which drew the instinctive sympathy of the village women. But they, however, owing to their ignorance or narrow outlook, talked in a way that intensified

rather than assuaged her agony. Their companionship became intolerable rather than welcome. Though they seemed to share her sorrow, they really pointed to her husband as an object of ridicule. And quite a few said, pointing to her, 'That's the wife of a madman,' or under the guise of consoling her, inflicted on her a cruel wound by saying, 'Ah me! Shyama's daughter has been married to a lunatic.' Loathing such company, the Mother avoided visiting any house and kept herself constantly engrossed in work. To a loving, faithful wife, any criticism of her husband is intolerable. She kept to her home all the time, and when this became oppressively monotonous, she would go to Aunt Bhanu's house and there on a veranda she would spread out her cloth and lie down.

The pure-hearted Aunt Bhanu had an insight by which she got a glimpse of Sri Ramakrishna's hidden greatness. She said to Shymasundari Devi, 'Well, sister-

in-law, your son-in-law is Siva – none other than Krishna Himself. I prophesy that in future you will believe what you don't now.' When the Master came to Jayrambati for the second time to take his girl-wife to Kamarpukur, Aunt Bhanu reminded of the divine couple Siva and Parvati, sang merrily, 'As thou art beautiful, my little child (Sarada) hast thou got a groom who is both mad and naked.' We have to remember that in those days the Mother's complexion was bright and fair. Aunt Bhanu recognised even in those days, and in her own way, the Master and the Mother as Siva and His consort. But people regarded her as too emotional in her nature, and nobody heeded her. Her house was the only place where the Mother got shelter and mental composure.

But obviously a whole life could not be spent thus. True it was that she did not believe in all the gossip that was going on about the Master. For, it was incredible that the Master could be mad, - he whose holy company had conferred on her immeasurable bliss only the other day, whose divine fervour infected her also to some extent and brought about an indescribable elation in her, whose selfless thought for others had charmed her, and whose wise discourses and witty remarks held all spellbound for hours. But, all the time, the ignorant village people could not evaluate his afflatus; and so their unbridled imagination raced apace, and their criticism was unchecked. The dutiful wife, therefore, came to think at last, 'When all people talk thus, let me once go and see him.' At the begin-

ning of 1872, many people of the neighbourhood were going to Calcutta for bathing in the Ganges on an auspicious day which was near at hand. The Mother wanted to accompany them, and yet through fear and bashfulness she could not speak out. At last no longer able to suppress her idea, she divulged it to a woman who communicated everything to Ramachandra. The old noble-hearted father took it in the best spirits and said, 'Does she want to go? Very good.' And he himself escorted her.

Along with other pilgrims the father and the daughter had to travel about sixty miles on foot. On either side of the track there were open fields covered here and there with green crops and dotted now and then by villages shaded by clusters of trees. They came by big tanks with sparkling water, and now and again they took rest under huge shady trees. Some two or three days thus passed uneventfully. The Mother was full of enthusiasm for reaching Dakshineswar soon, but unfortunately her health was not equal to the task. That part of the country was infested with malaria from which she had often suffered. Besides, she was not used to making such long journeys. But, for fear of causing her father and others anxiety and inconvenience, she kept quiet about her growing indisposition for two or three days. At last, she had fever and the temperature rose so high that it was impossible for her to proceed. Ramachandra took shelter with her in a nearby hut. It can well be imagined how great the Mother's disappointment was. Fever was nothing new to her; so she had

no worry on that score. Neither had this unknown place any terrors for her. But what caused her the greatest dismay was the delay interposed by all these events in meeting the Master for whom she had been pining away.

A divine vision came to her in this hour of dejection and cheered her up. As the Mother lay unconscious on the bed, she saw a dark woman of peerless beauty sitting by her caressing the Mother's head and body with her soft, cool hands. It seemed to remove all her pain. The Mother asked, 'Where do you come from, my dear?' The stranger replied, 'I come from Dakshineswar.' The Mother wondered at this and said, 'From Dakshineswar! I thought I would go there, see him, and serve him. But as I am laid down with fever on the way, I fear this may never come to pass.' The dark woman said, 'Don't you worry. You will certainly go to Dakshineswar; you will recover soon and see him. It is for you that I have been holding him there.' The Mother said, 'Indeed! How are you related to us, my dear?' The woman said, 'I am your sister.' The Mother said, 'Indeed! That is why you have come.' After this conversation the Mother fell asleep.

Next morning she found that the fever was off, and that the divine vision had put fresh zeal and vigour into her. Hence when her father suggested that instead of waiting helplessly in that unknown place it was better to proceed slowly, the Mother readily agreed. Then they moved on. Fortunately a palanquin was available nearby. She had fever

on the way again, but it was not very severe. Besides, she was not then as helpless as before. So she kept quiet without adding to the worry of her father by telling him of her predicament. Slowly, the long journey ended, and by crossing the Ganges, they reached Dakshineswar at nine o'clock in the night.

As the people from Jayrambati were landing from the boat, the Mother heard the Master say, 'O Hride (Hriday), I hope the time is not inauspicious. This is her first visit.' The Mother had no worry on that score as she knew that she had passed the inauspicious time in the boat itself. That apart, those few words of the Master had such a touch of sincere love in them that, moved by them, she went straight into his room,

while others went to the *Nahabat* (that is, the orchestra block or the concert house) or other places. As soon as he saw her, the Master said, 'Ah! You are here at last! That's well done.' Then he ordered someone nearby, 'Spread a mat for her.' A mat was spread on the floor of the room. The Mother sat on it and talked to the Master. When the latter heard that she was ill, he became anxious about her treatment and comfort and said with extreme regret, 'Alas! You have come so late. Would that my Mathur were there now to serve you. My right arm is broken now, as it were.' Mathur, who was the son-in-law of Rani Rasmani, the foundress of the Dakshineswar temple, and who was the first supplier of the Master's needs, had died only a few months before on 16th July

1871.

Conclusion

During this time, the Master instructed his wife about everything ranging from such worldly affairs as domestic duties, dealing with relatives, good manners, and the need for adaptability under varying conditions, to spiritual practices like religious music, meditation, service, and self-abnegation. From her talks with him the Mother formed a clear conception of the aim and purpose of human life.

Source

Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi by Swami Gambhirananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math. Madras, India, pages 38-45

B. Sri Sarada Devi - Who is She?

Discourse by Swami Sridharananda

At the Birth Anniversary of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi

December 28, 2018, at

Vedanta Centre of Sydney and on some other occasions.

Compiled and Transcribed by Shiwani Sharma

Dear friends, it has been a great honour for me to invite all of you on this special occasion several times in the many years that I have been here. And I enjoy talking about Sri Sarada Devi. Now, this wonder of a human being, her personality, is depthless. And it is as extensive as space. You

can look at it from any perspective you want to. Today, I will try to follow a procedure in answering this question, which is the title of today's talk: 'Sri Sarada Devi - Who is She?', as simple as that. In our scriptural studies there is a methodology which is time-tested and which has been followed for millenniums together to reach a particular deter-

mined rock-solid, crystal-clear conviction.

Now, we know, we have faith in somebody; we believe in something. But that faith and belief are sometimes shaken by people talking to each other and trying to highlight their view, which is contradictory to ours. And then we develop a doubt, we develop

a hesitancy. And as you know, doubt and hesitancy, take away the motivation to proceed and to know. Therefore, today, I start with this idea that Sri Sarada Devi was born more than a hundred years ago and she passed away in 1920.

Now, today we find almost all over the world, wherever there are groups of devotees devoted to this man-making, character-building, noble ideas of Vedanta, as preached by this Divine Trinity, gather, they celebrate this day. Other days of celebrations are Sri Ramakrishna's birthday and Swami Vivekananda's birthday. What do the devotees see in them? Why have they developed this feeling that Sri Ramakrishna is an incarnation? How does He fit the bill? And if we read Sri Ramakrishna's life, we will find his life is full of excellent manifestations of spiritual truth and reality hidden behind this apparent world. We can't deny these acts and deeds which were publicly displayed, not for the sake of displaying but to convince us that there is something known as God, there is something known as a Supreme Being, at whose will the whole world moves. Whereas, in Sarada Devi's life, if we don't look very carefully and deeply, we'll not find any such expression; I would say, magnificent spiritual experiences. We'll not get them (spiritual experiences). But, she sits there, not as a

borrowed shine of her matchless Master. She sits there in her own right.

So dears, today, the perspective will be, let us try to find out, as far as our rationality takes us, who is she? I would like to answer the pertinent question — Who is She? She never manifested the, I would say, spiritual experiences of her matchless Master. She was very humble, very ordinary. Once it so happened, in the latter days of her life, one disciple of hers, a lady, told her, 'Ma, you are very, very ordinary'. Ma laughed at her and said, 'My dear, could you find another such an ordinary person in this world?' Look at the suggestion hidden into it! She (the lady) was comparing the Holy Mother with Guru Maharaj's excellent spiritual manifestations. And Mother lived like a mother of a village home, looking after her children, who were initiated by her and who were not initiated by her, but her motherly disposition knew no bounds.

Now dears, let us start. In our scriptures, it is said, to study such a personality based on robust common sense, based on infallible logic, we have to find an answer to this pertinent question, 'Who is She, what is She?'. So, let us go by the traditional, scriptural way of studying, by making use of our faculties from all aspects and drive ourselves to that conclusion where we say

QED, the theorem is proved. We will take that path today.

In our scriptures, a trainee, a novice, is told that your mind stuff has various modulations. One of the modulations is known as *sanshayaatmika manah* (that aspect of mind which is unassertive/irresolute) and *nishchayaatmika buddhi* (that aspect of mind which is determinative). When your mind is not very positive, it moves this way, yes, this may be right. Or it moves the other way, yes, this may also be right and a third way, and he doesn't know which is the right way because his vision is clouded by hesitation and doubts. He has several options but he doesn't know which is right. That state of mind is *sanshayaatmika manah*. *Sanshaya* is doubt and *atmika* is beseeched by doubt. I think this is good, I think this is good, I think this is good but I don't know which is really good. And by contrast, this mind has the capacity, a modulation, which is *nishchayaatmika buddhi*. My rationality, which is an aspect of my mind's modulation, and based on robust common sense and infallible logic, tells me this is right. So, we go by *nishchayaatmika buddhi*.

And how do we generate knowledge? Because I want to have the answer to, 'Who is She?', I must know who She is and then I say, 'I know who She

is'. So, how do I proceed? I proceed with my untrained mind. I am tertiary educated but I have not educated myself regarding the management of my thinking, of my understanding, and of my interpreting the world. I have not educated myself that way. So, the teachers, out of sheer compassion say, 'Look my dear, there is a process of self-education in these matters, where your tertiary education will not help you but your well-disciplined faculties will help you'. Mind my words! Well-disciplined faculties will help you to answer this question, 'Who is She?'

Let us start on a clean slate. Let us not be pre-conditioned by, 'O the Holy Mother, she is the Divine Mother of the Universe' and this and this and this. Let us keep that away. We would like to reach that conclusion on a rock-solid, crystal-clear foundation of understanding.

How is that understanding generated? That understanding is generated by a very simple process, which happens within us all the time, and because we are so familiar with it, we never open our eyes and see what it is all about. We take it for granted. Let us start. Let us not take it for granted. Let us analyse and see how knowledge is generated in us when I say with fullest conviction— I know. How is that generated? My five sense organs interact with this whole world. Eyes

have their objects, known as the object of vision, and so is it with the object of hearing, object of smelling, object of touching and object of tasting. With the five sense organs we keep on absorbing. That is known as *perceptual observation*. That is, I observe you sitting here. I know you, and I, with full confidence, say, I know my friend so and so is here; no doubt about it. Why? It is being verified by my sense organs. *Perceptual observation* leads to *conceptual knowledge*.

What is *conceptual knowledge*? It is a product of, a graduated product of, *perceptual observation*. So what happens? We have seen a ripe apple fall from the tree. If you throw something upwards, it will fall down. The whole world has been seeing this phenomenon. But it was left to Newton to develop the *conceptual knowledge* of the force of gravity. He said that the world rotates so fast that it has a force of gravitation towards the centre of the world, centre of the earth. So, *perceptual observation*, when properly analysed, gives rise to *conceptual knowledge*. And that is how our life moves. But there is a third stage, which has nothing to do with tertiary knowledge. It is a different branch of knowledge. The students of the Mundaka Upanishad know that knowledge has been classified into two branches — *worldly knowledge* and *intuitive experience*. What does that

mean?

I am the fulcrum of all knowledge. I know; I know; I know; I keep on saying. But have I ever thought, 'Who is this "I" who knows?' That 'I' cannot be proved in a laboratory; cannot be displayed on a platter but I am aware, I am. It is self-evident awareness, 'I am'. I need nobody's help to know that I exist, 'I am'. And because I know I am, therefore I know the world is there for me to experience. First I am, thereafter the world is. Who is that I am, who is that I? It is to be known through intuitional knowledge. That is *aparoksha anubhuti*.

Paroksha anubhuti is I know through the help of my sense organs. And from there I use my brains, my wisdom, my rationality, and I come to a concept like electricity, gravitation, and so on and so forth. But I must know who this 'I am' is? Who teaches me that? I don't have any university which teaches me who I am. This is known as *aparoksha anubhuti*. I will slowly and slowly, in the process of education, educate myself in a manner that I widen my sphere of identity, and ultimately I keep myself totally away from all these so-called apparent realities, I concentrate on 'Who am I'; 'Who is She'.

Now, 'Who am I' is an internal search, which is a different ballgame. Sri Sarada Devi is a fact in

history. There are people, living even today, may be a very few, who have had the great opportunity of seeing her, physically. So, she was at one point of time, an object of my perception, an object of my conceptual knowledge, and now the purpose is, how do we know who she is *in reality*.

So, let us start. How do we learn, how do we educate ourselves? I hear. Each and every sound that I hear, has a meaning. My brain and the nervous system are so created that I can hear, and on hearing, I explode that sound energy into an idea, a thought energy and I say, 'I understand'. There is not a drop of water here. I say 'water' and I ask you, 'do you understand?' All of you will nod your head, 'yes'. Why? That word 'water' explodes into an idea and we have had a past experience of water; and I was told this is water, and I immediately understand by hearing. This is known as listening with care — *shravana*. These are old, time-tested, millennium-old methods of self-education. I hear and I say I understand. And then I keep on cogitating on that understanding, 'Is there anything more in it, is there anything to it?'. And that cogitation is nothing else but a deep concentrative attitude to know further. That is known as *manana*. That is, what we do within ourselves to come to a rock-solid crystal-clear conviction. And

then, that conviction when properly nurtured, converts itself into an unstoppable motivation until you reach the goal. What is that goal? To know that secret which is yet not known to me.

This is the prelude, dears. Now let us take a historical reality known as a lady, Sarada Devi by name.

Our purpose today is to keep our faith, our belief, our respect and reverence for her intact. To protect myself from being assailed by doubts, hesitancy, failing of conviction, I must develop a rock-solid, crystal-clear intellectual conviction as to who She is. And the last step is, having known who She is, how can I merge my individual small ego, petty small individual ego, into her and that is the end of the ballgame.

She was born in the year 1853 and she passed away in 1920. Now, there are biographies, her Gospel, memoirs of her disciples, so much literature on her, where some of the incidents of her life have been highlighted. When we read those incidents, those words develop into ideas, and we have a *conceptual knowledge* of who She was. Now let us be very practical, realistic. Let the books be. I will pick up several occasions of her life, and those occasions and incidents need not be doubted, because her personal character was based on truth and simplicity. The questioning or

doubting her statements is out of the question. The character of that lady speaks for itself.

The first thing is, as I stated, we are enamoured we are carried away by Sri Ramakrishna's manifestation of his spiritual excellence. In our language it is said *muhur-muhur samadhi*. With the drop of a hat he goes into *samadhi*. What is *samadhi*? It is where all his faculties have been collected together and concentrated into one point, in such a depth that he loses his own identity into that. That is the concept of *samadhi*. This is like for example which we see in circuses, of a tight rope walker with a huge rod balancing tilting this way, balancing that way. Sri Ramakrishna's life was like tight rope walking. Any suggestion of the Divine would make him go into *samadhi*. And then again, his sense of duty to his own children (devotees), would make him come back again. And sometimes it was difficult for them to keep him down. That was his life, and people were absolutely spellbound with wonder. So, it is but natural that someone will ask people who have lived with the Holy Mother, 'Sir, have you seen her in *samadhi* just like Sri Ramakrishna goes into *samadhi* at the drop of a hat?' Absolutely a genuine question! Then, my idea, my opinion about her will take a path, a route, to go forward. So, the first question is, has anybody

seen her in *samadhi*? It is very rare that anybody can swear and say, 'I have seen her in deep *samadhi*, lost to the world'. So, what type of Divine consort is she? So, the student who wanted to ask, repeats, 'Maharaj, please say, have you ever seen her in *samadhi*?'. After a while he (the Maharaj) expresses deep annoyance, almost verging on anger, 'You stupid ass, you claim to be an educated person, what do you think my Mother is? Is she an ordinary *sadhika* (spiritual aspirant)? You stupid ass, don't you know, she is the giver of *samadhi*.' The boy was trembling with fear because the Swami might have a stroke. He was so excited. The boy was absolutely shivering in his pants as it were. He tries to calm him (the Swami) down. He (the Swami) refuses to calm down. And the bombshell comes later on. 'What is that? I know why you are asking this question? You want to compare Sri Ramakrishna's excellence, his manifestation of spiritual experiences, with my Mother. You fool, don't you understand that *she* is the giver of *samadhi*. The spiritual experience of Sri Ramakrishna is because she *willed* it.'

These are words! *shravana* (listening)! The boy listened. And when he (the Swami) cooled down, the boy also heaved a sigh of relief. At least the old man is alright. Now, these words entered in his ears and they explod-

ed into meaning. What is that? What do you think of my mother? *My mother!* Is she an ordinary *sadhika*? *Sadhan kar rahi hae* – (practising spiritual disciplines), do you think her to be that? You fool, she is the *giver* of *samadhi*.

Now, who is the giver of *samadhi*? *Mahamaya* herself! There is nobody who can give you *samadhi* until and unless *she wills it*, the primordial cosmic energy known as *aadya shakti parama prakriti*, *sakshat mahamaya* (primordial cosmic energy, highest manifestation of the manifested universe, The Great Enchantress incarnate). If she wills it, it will happen; if she doesn't will it, it will not happen. That is the absolute truth. So, does he mean that this ordinary simple lady, a village woman in her middle age, is *sakshat mahamaya*? It was hard to swallow because he was a novice. Neither had he studied anything, nor had he meditated on it, nor had he educated himself. He was just a novice. So now, from the ancient school of teaching, he had heard an outburst of a realised soul! From a person that she is *mahamaya*. He says she is *sakshat mahamaya*. Not only that, he carries on with scriptural conclusions—the excellence that you see in Guru Maharaj, which has enamoured you, which has mesmerised you, was because she willed it. That is why it happened so. That is a fact of life! *Samadhi* etcetera is in the

domain of *mahamaya*, *aadya shakti parama prakriti*. This is what is listening, *shravana*, is all about. The person who hears, puts his thinking hat on, 'What did he say? Why did he say so?' And he is to be believed. He is not the one who will lie. So, what is all this about? *Sakshat mahamaya* in such an ordinary form. Is it possible? So, cogitation starts. Who is She? Who is She? A realised person says she is *mahamaya*, *aadya shakti parama prakriti*. And your Sri Ramakrishna whom you are canonising as the man of great spiritual excellence; that spiritual excellence was bestowed on him by her. Enough for a lifelong education!

This is one. Now another incident. What is that? Swami Virajanandaji (also known as Kalikrishna Maharaj), Swami Vivekananda's monastic disciple and Holy Mother's initiated disciple, *mantra shishya*, after he was initiated, went for intense *tapasya* (austerities). The intensity could be measured. How? He used to have his breakfast after telling his rosary, his beads, for one hundred thousand times, every day. And he carried on with it with great intensity. Somehow or other something went wrong with him, and he slowly and slowly developed insomnia and then dizziness. The whole world appeared to him like a dream, and he lost control over proper thinking. In his words, as he told me

personally, he was almost scared that he was going insane. So, he wrote to Brahmanandaji, our then President Maharaj. This is what is happening to me. He (Swami Brahmananda) immediately said, 'stop meditating, stop telling your beads', he was in Mayawati then. 'Have plenty of exercise, and eat nourishing food. Stop meditating; and if you improve, if you are able to take the journey, come to see me in Belur Math.' Nothing happened. That condition remained. He came to Belur Math. Swami Brahmananda tried his level best to help him out, even taking him to that same *kaviraj*, *Vaidya* (doctor), who treated Sri Ramakrishna, Gangaprasad Sen. Hari Maharaj - Turiyanandaji, Baburam Maharaj - Premanandaji, and Raja Maharaj - Brahmanandaji, all failed in their endeavour; and they were realised souls in their own right. They were world movers in their own right and they failed. So, the ultimate source was Kalikrishna to go to the Holy Mother; she was his guru. She would be able to help him without fail. So, Kalikrishna Maharaj at that time was absolutely skin and bones. He was looking almost insane with a vacant look. He went to Jayarambati, to Mother's home. Standing at the doorstep in the *aangan* (courtyard), he called for the Mother, 'Ma, I am here'. Mother heard him, came quickly out of her room, looked at

him and shuddered, 'What have you done to yourself my dear child, what have you done to yourself (in a scolding manner)?' And then, as usual in the Indian household, she wipes her hand in her *pallu* (veil/loose end of cloth), the cloth or piece of linen, and comes straight to him. She touches his sternum or *hridaya* (heart), rather briskly with three taps as it were. 'Didn't I tell you to meditate here? Why were you meditating in your head, in the *sahasrara* (spiritual centre at the top of the head). Why did you not listen to me? Meditate here! Meditate here! Meditate here!'

That is all. Touching him and tapping him at the bottom of the sternum, which is the point of meditation, *anahata chakra*, *hridaya*. And listen to what Virajanandaji said later, 'You know my child, in less than an instant I became normal.' A person who overdid his meditation in a *chakra* which was not approved by Mother. He defended himself very hesitantly and said, 'Ma, I enjoyed meditating at the *sahasrara*.' And Ma in typical Bengali, I'll translate it to you, said, 'tomar anander nikuchikoreche (to hell with your ananda/bliss)!' And Virajananda told me, 'My dear child it was not even an instant, I became normal again.' Here is another incident. *Shravana* (listening), we are listening, and the words are explod-

ing into ideas. What does it mean? This lady, a common village woman, how is it she had this spiritual insight to look at her child and say, 'What have you done to yourself, didn't I tell you to meditate here, here and here?' And Virajanandaji told me in his own words, it was less than a moment, less than an instant, and I became absolutely normal.

Who is She? It is for you to think. I will not spoonfeed you. You put your thinking hats on and try and find out who She could be. I will only quote certain incidents, personal experiences, which are also mentioned in their biographies and memoirs. I will only highlight the interaction with her children. I know you have full faith, I know you believe in her; but why don't you reinforce it with your personal rock-solid conviction? So that, that conviction, becomes an unstoppable motivation, and that motivation will push you as it were to take you to your promised goal—to be one with Her.

There is another example. She was married. And at that time Sri Ramakrishna's family was very poor. They borrowed some jewellery from the *zamindar* (landlord) of the village and dressed the Mother on her marriage night with all the jewellery. And Mother was a child of 5. Anyway, it was a child mar-

riage as in those days. She was happy with her ornaments and went to sleep. Now, Sri Ramakrishna's mother had promised the *zamindar* that before dawn breaks she will very carefully remove the ornaments and give them back to him. That was a commitment. As dawn breaks, mother, that is Sri Ramakrishna's mother, Chandramani Devi, did not have the heart to remove the ornaments because she had seen the smile of happiness on the child bride's face. So, Sri Ramakrishna tells her, 'Mother, don't worry; you will be able to keep your word. I will remove those very deftly. She will not wake up; and you give it back to them; your words will be valid.' Holy Mother wakes up; finds no jewellery on her; stretched her leg; why and started weeping! Sarada Devi's uncle was present that night there. When he came and saw that there was not a piece of jewellery on her body, they were annoyed. They felt that they had been cheated. Rightly so. So, the uncle declared, 'I am going to take the bride away.' Chandramani Devi was in great distress. The marriage; what will happen to the marriage if he takes the bride away? Sri Ramakrishna smilingly said, 'They can take the bride away, but they can't break the marriage'. And then Chandramani Devi tried to console Saradamani,

'Look, my dear child, I promise you, my son Gadadhar will bedeck you with such jewels, the world will look at you with great wonder, how decorated you are.' This was Chandramani Devi's prophecy and look, today, this ordinary middle-aged lady sits next to her consort, her husband, and she is worshipped throughout the world. What was the jewel that Sri Ramakrishna gave her? The wisdom of Oneness with God.

And it is just human as if Mother needed that. Mother is *mahamaya, aadya shakti, parama prakriti*. But the human play, the human *lila* (play) is such, that He becomes the teacher, She is the student; but the interaction is absolutely heavenly. I will relate an incident.

After Ma attained age she came to know that her husband had been declared insane; his obsession with God was so much that he was now almost an insane person. So, Ma, in those days mind you, goes to her father and tells him, 'I am his married wife; if he is sick and if he is ailing, it is my place to be beside him and to care for him, to serve him and to help him; what am I doing here; please take me to Dakshineswar.' It seems to be very positive now but remember it happened over a hundred years ago in a village steeped in old-time culture. If you call it superstition, I won't mind. The

first thing that happened when they all came to Dakshineswar temple garden and Thakur saw all of them, was what Sri Ramakrishna said spontaneously, 'What do I do, my Mathur is no more?' Mathur Babu was the manager of that temple garden estate, and he looked after Sri Ramakrishna by meeting all his needs. He wanted, and he spent money like water on him for his comforts. Mother, a shy newlywed bride with a veil covering her face, said 'The first word of anxiety that I heard from him, that is Sri Ramakrishna was, "What do I do, my Mathur is no more, who will care for you"', she said, 'Immediately I knew he was not insane'.

And the first interaction, after a while, was, 'Why did you come here dear; to assert your marital rights?' That is how bluntly Sri Ramakrishna asked Sarada Devi. 'What brings you here my dear? Are you here to assert your marital rights on me?' Ma, without batting her eyelids responded. 'How? Far from it dear; I am married to you, it is my duty to serve you, to help you, to assist you to reach your goal.' And in return, after a while, Mother asks Sri Ramakrishna, 'What do you think of me?'. It is such a wonderful interaction, dears! And all this is, mind you, the object lessons of *shravana, manana, and nidhidhyasana* (listening, cogitat-

ing and assimilating). It is not story telling; it is not an airy fairy tale. It is a basic principle of *shravana*, listen carefully, read a thousand times. Keep on cogitating in your mind, 'Who are they, what are they here for, what are they doing?' This is the purpose of this gathering and meeting. So, Mother looked at him and said, 'What do you think of me?' And Sri Ramakrishna was lying on his bed. Mother was massaging his feet. Sri Ramakrishna didn't even bother to open his eyes. He said, 'The Divine Mother of the Universe who is known as *bhavatarini kali* (Goddess Kali, saviour of the world) being worshipped there every day, and Chandramani Devi my physical mother who lives in that music house and who is the Divine Mother in my physical mother's form, I see that Divine Mother in you'.

Here is another object of cogitation. What do they mean? Both of them, know who they are, but they are creating a series of incidents, I wouldn't say story, story has an element of imagination in it, series of incidents in their life, recorded, when they are playing games with each other. Both of them know who they are. This is dears, for us to remember.

The most remarkable incident in their lives was the worship of Mother in the form of *tripura*

sundari shodashi. After Sri Ramakrishna completed practising his spiritual disciplines, he seated the Holy Mother on a pedestal of a Goddess and worshipped the Mother as *tripura sundari shodashi* with all the items according to tradition. *Tripura sundari shodashi* is the softest, the most delicate, the sweetest, ever forgiving, ever forbearing aspect of Divinity in the form of a mother. He awakened the form of the Divine Mother of the Universe in her and prostrating, offered his rosary, at the Mother's venerable feet and saluted her. He begged, 'Mother, protect me!'

Now, let us move on. The boys, now known as the famous sixteen disciples, started gathering one after another. The basic introductions were over. They were invited to spend nights and days in Dakshineswar under the spiritual guidance of Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna knew the constitution of whosoever came every night, and he fixed up what should be their menu at dinner time. Ramakrishna's instructions were, they will eat very light at dinner time and spend the whole night meditating at various corners of the temple garden. And in that respect, dears, Sri Ramakrishna was extremely exacting, hard, almost a cruel taskmaster. In spiritual meditation and in spiritual practices there was no half-way house with him—it was

very exacting, almost cruel.

Now what happened was, Premanandaji or Baburam Maharaj, was constitutionally very weak. His digestion was also very weak. So, Sri Ramakrishna sends word to Mother, 'Naren has come, he likes this, this, this, please cook these for him. Oh, Baburam is here, don't give him more than two *phulkas*'. *Phulka* is chapati, very thin chapati. Now, the boys gathered around the kitchen, an open-air kitchen, in which Ma used to cook and serve. One day Baburam Maharaj said, 'Ma I am very hungry, may I have another chapati?' So, Ma says, 'Yes my child.' Ma fed him to his full. Sri Ramakrishna was in his room. He comes out and asks everybody, 'How much did you eat; are you good enough for a night-long meditation', and so on and so forth. When he comes to Baburam Maharaj, Baburam Maharaj honestly said, 'I was very hungry I had four chapaties.' Off goes Sri Ramakrishna. He goes to the Holy Mother and complains to her, 'I told you not to over feed him; he has a very weak constitution. Has he come here to snore all night or has he come here to meditate? And, you don't keep my word!' Ma listens to that rebuke quietly. Then, listen to what she says. Another matter to cogitate upon. Who is she that she has such an amount of courage to rebuke Sri Rama-

krishna. You know what she said? 'Look dear, if my children are hungry; if they ask for extra food from me to appease their hunger, I will give these to them. If two extra chapaties prevents you from giving them the vision of God, you better don't try, leave it to me.' In her homely Bengali language, '*tumi jodi na paro, to chaerae dayo, ami dekhbo.*' Who is She? Putting Sri Ramakrishna in his place and telling him, 'If emancipation is the goal that you are striving after and if two extra pieces of bread stops you from doing so, I know how far you can go. You had better leave it to me, I will do that for you.' Think of that! Who is She?

I can pass the whole night bringing up one incident after another. To show how my Mother, Sarada Devi, an ordinary village girl, shows all of us how she is living a life. A simple, pure, uncomplicated life, performing her duties of life, but always aware and rotating around her own true original nature. She hides it, lest people find out. Instead of beating her own drums as the Divine consort of Sri Ramakrishna or by going into *muhur-muhur Samadhi*. Nothing doing, she hides herself! But when required, her behaviour, her actions, her statements, her assurances speak for themselves. This is where we find the motherhood that will blossom into the motherhood of the Divine in this human body. It is

showing up slowly and slowly.

There is another example and it is a beautiful incident. In those days, helpless ladies sometimes made certain mistakes, committed some errors of judgement. One such lady was driven out from society because of her faults and failures. So, she had nowhere to go, when somebody said there is a saint in Dakshineswar you can go to him. She came, she met Sri Ramakrishna, and unknowingly touched his feet. And you all know, Sri Ramakrishna's body was so tuned and so pure that his nervous system was such that he could not stand the touch of anything impure. It used to sting like a scorpion, he used to say. That lady unknowingly touched him and Sri Ramakrishna shuddered with pain with a burning sensation. And that lady was absolutely saddened, 'What have I done?' And look at Sri Ramakrishna, he says, 'No, no, no, don't be afraid, don't be embarrassed, come, I'll sing a song for you'. And Sri Ramakrishna sang a song to remove the embarrassment of that girl's mind. She was very honest; confessed everything to Sri Ramakrishna, and wanted his shelter. Sri Ramakrishna sent that lady to the Mother in the *nahbat-khana*, music hall. She gradually became very, very close to her, almost like a daughter. And as familiarity grew, formality left. Mother had only one chance in a day, at night time, when all the devotees

had left Dakshineswar, to bring the dinner plate herself to Guru Maharaj's room, place it, make Guru Maharaj sit, used to fan him, and plead with him to eat this or that. And Mother knew all the motherly tricks to feed Guru Maharaj properly. She did not let Guru Maharaj know that one sear of milk had been boiled and thickened to make it one *paow*, one litre into two hundred and fifty millilitres, and Guru Maharaj thought he was having only two hundred and fifty millilitres of milk. So, these were the tricks that mothers play and the Holy Mother played with my Master also. Anyway, one day that lady came to the Mother and said, 'Ma, you take Guru Maharaj's plate every day why don't you give it to me today, Mother? I will have the great fortune and pleasure to carry the food to him and you come with me and then you do the rest.' So, everything was ready. Guru Maharaj comes and sits to eat; and as he goes to touch his food, his hand recoils. He tried to do it again, but the same sensation of recoiling occurred. You don't believe dears but I have seen how such pure souls suffer because of these contacts. Anyway, he tried thrice, but could not. He looks at the Mother, 'Has anybody touched my food?'. That lady was there. Mother said, 'Yes, I gave your plate to this lady, to this child of mine, to carry it to your room

and I am here to feed you.' Guru Maharaj said, 'Don't you know, I can't touch and eat food touched by others and etc, when will you learn?' Guru Maharaj kept on rambling away. Now, Guru Maharaj comes to this point, 'Promise me, that you will not allow anybody to touch my food hereafter—promise, then I will eat.' I do not know how he could eat with Mother's promise because the food was already soiled by the touch of that lady. Anyway, Mother listens twice, thrice, and she says, 'I can't; I can't make this promise. Whosoever genuinely approaches me', now mind each word, 'whosoever genuinely approaches me with the word Mother and prays to me for something, I am in no position to say no.' And then, she looked at Guru Maharaj's plate and says, 'Now you eat'.

This is the incident, dears. There are two interpretations. One is, the Motherhood of the Universe, the concept of Motherhood of the Divine is manifesting in her, 'Whosoever comes to me calling me his mother, with a prayer in his heart, I will not be able to say no to him', and looks at the plate and says, 'You eat'. How could Sri Ramakrishna's nervous system, eat or accept that polluted food? There are many interpretations. One of the very logical interpretations, according to the scriptures is, *mahamaya sva-roopini* (embodiment of The Great

Enchantress) Sri Sarada Devi, looked at the food and burnt it pure. And Sri Ramakrishna's nervous system accepted it. This is an incident, as explained in words. They have exploded in your mind into ideas; hang on to these ideas, latch yourself up and try to see what the scriptures say about the behaviour pattern of a realised soul compared to that of an Incarnation of the Divine.

Once, when Mother was staying at Nilambar Babu's house, next to Belur Math, Swami Virajanandaji was asked to go and serve the Mother. He was a young boy in his teens at that time. Even though Sri Ramakrishna had visited several times the locality where Virajanandaji's family lived, Swami Virajananda had not seen Guru Maharaj in his physical form. And he had great regret in his heart that despite having had several occasions and opportunities, he had not seen Guru Maharaj in his physical form but he kept it to himself and did not talk to anyone about it. While serving the Mother, one day, Virajanandaji had to go to Calcutta for some work. He was to go by crossing the Ganga on a boat. Before leaving, he went to the Mother. She was sitting in her room doing some work facing the wall, and the door was behind her. Standing at the door he said to the Mother, 'Ma, I am so unfortunate, I could not see Thakur. I had the opportunity

but because of my misfortune I could not see him I am very much grieved by this'. Mother did not reply. He thought perhaps Mother did not hear so he repeated it in a louder voice. Again, Mother did not reply. He became very impatient. Then, Mother slowly and slowly turned around on her feet, faced the door where Virajanandaji was standing, took off her veil and looking at him with a sorrowful look said, 'Why are you cursing yourself? You *are* seeing him.' Virajanandaji could not understand what Mother meant. Anyway, after saluting Mother and taking her leave, he left for Calcutta. Midway on the Ganga from the boat he saw Mother standing at the veranda of Nilambar Babu's house and looking at him with a raised hand, as if assuring him with a blessing. Virajanandaji said to me, 'Immediately, there was no doubt in my mind that Mother was saying that seeing her and seeing Thakur were one and the same.'

When Swami Ramakrishnanandaji took the Holy Mother for pilgrimage to Southern India, Mother went to visit Ramanathaswamy temple at Ramanathapuram, Rameshvaram. Maharaja of Ramanath was a devout disciple of Swami Vivekananda. The Shivalinga in that temple is made of sand and according to his (Maharaja's) instruction, to pro-

nect it from the water poured on it for worship, it was kept covered with a silver cover in the shape of a Shivalinga. Devotees used to offer water on that silver Shivalinga. In showing respect to the Mother, that day the silver cover of the Shivalinga was removed. Mother reached there with Gauri Ma. As soon as she saw the Shivalinga she spontaneously uttered, 'You are still the same, as I had made you!'. The story is, that when Ramachandra Bhagvan returned after killing Ravana, because Ravana was a *brahmin*, a devotee of Shiva, the rishis instructed Ramachandra Bhagvan to worship Shiva to absolve himself of the sin of killing a *brahmin*, before going to Ayodhya. So, Hanuman Swami said, 'I will go to Kailash right away and bring Shiva for the worship'. The auspicious time was elapsing; Hanuman Swami could not return with Shiva. At that time Mother (in the form of Sita Devi) made a Shivalinga of sand with her own hands at that seashore and Ramachandra Bhagvan worshipped that Shivalinga. Mother saw that same Shivalinga in the Kaliyuga in the form of Ma Sarada Devi and remembered what she had done in the Tretayuga and said, '*Arae* (Oh my God), you are the same, as I had made you!'. Gauri Ma was nearby, she distinctly heard this, and as soon as she asked Mother again, 'What did you say, Mother avoided, saying 'Oh nothing, oh

nothing'.

Jnan Maharaj (Swami Jnanananda of Benaras) was Mother's attendant, and he used to live with her at Jayrambati. Devotees from Calcutta used to visit Mother. Early in the morning Mother used to go from door to door in the village begging for some milk so that she can offer some tea to the devotees from Calcutta as they were habituated with having tea. A cat used to live with the Mother. Mother used to bring milk and the cat used to drink it. One day when it was found that the cat had drunk the milk that Mother had brought, Jnan Maharaj became very angry. I heard this from Jnan Maharaj himself. He was about to kick the cat to teach it a lesson. As soon as he lifted his leg, Mother absolutely like a lioness, said, 'Jnan, Jnan, what are you doing? *I also* reside in the cat. You want to kick it? Don't do that.'

And look at Mother's behaviour towards people. Swami Saradanandaji, who was her attendant, Sri Ramakrishna's chosen disciple and he took Mother's entire responsibility on his own shoulders, the boundless infinite love Mother had for him, was the same as for the Muslim dacoit Amjad.

A boy from Assam, who later took initiation from the Holy Mother, heard about Mother and imagined the Mother to be *sakshat mahamaya jagdamba*

(incarnation of The Great Enchantress, Mother of the Universe). He imagined her as sitting on a golden throne bedecked with jewels, with the *aashta sakhis* (eight maidens) surrounding her and worshipping her. He wanted to go and see the Mother in that form. With this hope, he started from Assam towards Jayrambati. Perspiring and tired, he reached Mother's doorstep and came and stood near the door. He saw a middle aged lady wearing a torn dirty garment, brooming the house. Does Ma Sarada Devi live here? he asked. Mother put away the broom, wiped her hands with her *pallu* and said, 'Yes my child, this is Ma Sarada Devi's home'. 'I have come to see Sarada Devi'. 'Yes, my child, you *are* seeing her'. All the hope he had developed that he will see Mother in that *jaganmata* (Mother of the Universe) form, was ruined. Despondently he uttered in Bengali, '*Oh Ma ejay ghor Maya* (Oh this is a horrible delusion)! This is a horrible delusion'. Looking at his grief and disappointment, Mother compassionately came towards him, held him by his hand and said, 'Yes my child, *I am mahamaya*'.

Once, Mother was staying at Udbodhan in Calcutta. Her room was upstairs. She heard some brahmancharins, swamis and others, from downstairs, loudly laughing and joking and making merry. She asked Golap Ma, 'Just

see why the children are so happy?' Golap Ma thought perhaps that Mother didn't like the noise. So she went downstairs and scolded everyone. 'Don't you people have any consideration, Mother is upstairs and you are making so much noise. Hearing this, everyone became quiet. Finding her children quiet all of a sudden, Mother asked Golap Ma, 'Why have my children become quiet?' Golap Ma said, 'An palm reader has come downstairs and he was looking at everyone's hand and telling them their future. That is why everyone was noisy'. Hearing this Mother said, 'What does it matter what that palm reader says? Only that will happen to my children, what I will'.

One of our swamis met the Mother one or two years before she passed away. He had seen many deaths in his life so he was very scared of death. He told this to Mother and requested her to promise him to help him when it is time for him to die. Mother did not say yes; she said, 'Thakur is there, he will take care of you'. On his repeated pleading, Mother ultimately agreed and said, 'All right, as you wish'. So, that swami was very happy! He was an excellent swami. He would do his work and, in his spare time, he would study the scriptures. He was not interested in anything else. After 50 or 55 years, when he was advanced in age, he

developed a cardiac problem. So, he was admitted to the Presidency Hospital in Calcutta. There he was kept in a room with other patients. It was a large room with six beds in a row on one side and six on the opposite side. Daily, that swamiji used to laugh and joke with other patients and say that 'Mother has promised me, she will come at the last moment to take me'. Those people used to think that he was talking like a mad person. One day swamiji woke up at 4 o'clock in the morning and sitting on his bed saw the Mother standing at the front of the door. So, he started saying to everyone, 'Brothers, get up; see, Mother has come to keep her promise. See, at least once have a look!' Those people could not see anything, but swamiji clearly saw Mother, and the whole room was surcharged with spiritual fervor. Who can do this?

Swami Saradanandaji had an interest in *tantra puja*. In the last days of her life when Mother was very sick and there was no hope of her survival, Swami Saradanandaji decided to do a *tantra puja* for Mother's longevity. He asked one of his disciples to gather all the items for the worship. He asked him to buy seven earthen pots and thoroughly check them before buying so that they don't leak. That swami did as he was told. All seven pots were filled with water and kept for worship. When Swami

Saradanandaji sat for worship, somehow, one pot started leaking, so he could not perform the worship. After a few days Swamiji tried again. The second time, Swamiji himself went to buy the pots. He first checked all the pots by putting water in them and bought those that were perfect. He again sat for worship and saw water leaking from one of the pots. Again, he could not perform the worship. When Swamiji thought of doing the worship the third time, he was downstairs and Mother, from upstairs, said 'Doesn't Sarat know, I have decided to leave the body.' Meaning, that Sarat was not going to gain anything by performing this worship.

So, there are endless stories, dears; endless incidents, dears. I will complete my talk now.

At the fag-end of her life all sorts of people used to flock to the Holy Mother. By that time people had been close to her, been intimate with her, been frequent visitors to Udbodhan Ashram and they came to know about the Holy Mother. So the crowds kept on increasing. I will now narrate a final concluding incident and that will be the end for today's talk.

There was a lady who had nobody to call her own in this world but the Holy Mother. She used to move around in the Udbodhan Ashram, *Mayer bari*,

Mother's house. It was palpably clear that the Mother will not live for long. One day that lady was alone. She wept and said, 'Mother, what will happen to me? There is nobody in the world to call my own, where do I go, what do I do?'. And listen to the last message that the Holy Mother gave for all of us through that lady. She says, 'Dear, don't shed your tears, I will be always there. When you all will feel that you are totally alone in this world, there is nobody to fall back upon, always remember you have a Mother for all time to come, for all practical purposes. I will be there to look after you and care for you'.

Who could say that? 'That after my death, after this physical body has disappeared, I will be there! And I'll be helping you, whosoever calls me, I'll be there for them.'

And I can tell you, there are many, many of our swamis who have not seen the Holy Mother in her physical form, but they have had the vision of the Mother. They have her protection. From sure death and disintegration, Mother has saved them, in her lifetime, after her physical life. She is the concept personified in a human form, that concept of the Motherhood of the Divine. Now dears, in the whole of philosophy and religion, Motherhood of the Divine is the only aspect that has been cultured and

cultivated in Indian spiritual culture. The idea is, that it is a projection of the family life. In the family, I have a father, who is the main player, and I have my mother, without whom the house will not run. Therefore, my father in heaven is a concept of fatherhood of the Divine. That is prevalent all over the world. In India, the argument is, if I can anthropomorphically conceive of the fatherhood of the Divine, what prevents me from conceiving that same force as motherhood of the Divine? And in the Indian pantheon you will find Durga, Saraswati, Laxmi and etc., etc. But, have you seen any concrete human form in whom we find those qualities that have been mentioned in the scriptures, and manifested in a human body? Have you? Thank Sri Ramakrishna for that. He wanted to complete that incomplete understanding of the Divine. When you look at it, the eternal Divinity, immutable, unchangable, beyond time, beyond space, the Absolute, out of sheer compassion for his children, takes this bondage of a human form but what is the distinction between him and me? He is *atandra chaitanaya purusha* (Lord with uninterrupted awareness/consciousness); he knows who he is, he knows why he is born, he knows what role he has to play and he knows when he goes away. It was Sri Ramakrishna's excellence that one of the special unique features of his av-

atar-hood was bringing the Holy Mother down to earth, so that we humans know what it is to know the Divine love of the Mother of the Universe. And She is that!

So, we started with this question, 'Who is she?'. And with our robust common sense and rationality we have come to this conclusion that she is epitomising the Indian concept of the motherhood of the Divine, Mother to all. Not only humans, Mother to all.

Thank you my dear friends. On this very holy occasion let us join each other and have a prayer to the Holy Mother so that we can pray to her with this attitude that I have nobody to fall upon, but my Mother.

Thank you.