

MA ANANDAMAYEE
AMRIT VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

VOL.-14

APRIL, 2010

No. 2

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INLAND-RS.80/-

FOREIGN-US \$ 12/- OR RS. 500/-

SINGLE COPY-RS. 25/-



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MATRI VANI

Abandon yourself to God in all matters without exception. 'May He do as He pleases with me, who am I but a creature of His hand's—this should be your attitude of mind. It is personal desire that is the very cause of suffering. Why make yourself feel dejected by the anxiety that you will be dependant on others? Is it you who have created your body? The One to whom you belong is free to deal with your body according to His Will : therefore may He do as He chooses. Try your utmost to stand aside and watch patiently as a spectator. When the mind is at ease one speedily recovers from ill-health. In this ever revolving world which is upheld by Him who causes it to revolve, a certain calamity has occurred, what is to be done? No matter what has happened, may His Will prevail—live in this spirit. In your present condition constantly think of Him alone.

* * * * *

Light is gained by His Grace alone. He is the One to be held in remembrance at all times. There is nothing else that you need feel concerned about : contemplate only on Him and Him alone.

* * * * *

It is characteristic of human life that it cannot continuously be either full of happiness or full of misery. Just as good fortune has not been lasting, do you imagine this evil luck will never end? For the present try to gird yourself with patience and fortitude and mend your way in complete trust in God. It is the will of the Almighty that prevails. Be intent under all circumstances to let the thought of Him be your constant companion.

* * * * *

While caught in the wheel of action and its results man is subject to adversities and hardships such as you mention. It is his duty to perform work that will aid him towards his Goal. Providence does not excuse one from the consequences of one's deeds. Your parents were religious-minded. Having left everything in the best order they have now gone from this world. In this time of affliction seek refuge in God alone.

* * * * *

The lute of man's short life is strung with so many strings: they have to be cut asunder. There is no real substance to these many strings. It is futile to let one's thoughts be occupied with the ties by which one is bound. Why behave like a fool and return again and again to this world of illusion? When someone understands deep down in his innermost heart that nobody is his own, why then should he bear so much pain and suffering? However, being under the spell of delusion, it is not always possible to attain to real deep understanding. But in certain cases even bitter medicines or injections administered forcibly restore people to health.

* * * * *

Everything is contained in everything. Where perfect Truth is, the question of illusion cannot even arise. Illusion is illusion and nothing else. He assumes numberless shapes, it is He who appeared to you in that particular way, for in all forms is He indeed. Meditate on Him alone. He is Pure Spirit (*ādhyātmic*) - nothing really exists but the Spirit: viewed from this angle everything is true.

* * * * *

If one prays to God with heart and soul the prayer will be fulfilled; for He is the Fountain of Goodness and does what is most beneficent. How can the ordinary person possibly be endowed with the extraordinary power of understanding that would enable him to grasp the working of God's all beneficial Law? 'May His will be done!' This should be one's attitude of life at all times.

* * * * *

If you want to become a householder and take up family life you will have to pass through all kinds of experiences. Let your mind be centred in God, then only is there a prospect of complete peace.

*

ON MA ANANDAMAYEE

[Continued from before]

—M. M. Pd. Gopinath Kaviraj

Mother says that the teachings of all lines and of all teachers, provided they are genuine and proceed from the right sources, are correct and should be followed by those for whom they are meant. They may be opposed to one another, but that does not detract from each its peculiar value as a distinct path leading to the goal set before it. If this path is selfconsistent and lies unblocked till the end of the journey it will not mislead, though it may carry the pilgrim to a sectional truth and not the *whole* Truth. But if the pilgrim has within him genuine aspiration for the Supreme Reality, Reality will assert itself and overtake him at any point of the journey. In that case the sectional truth will be either brought into relation with the Whole and make a step in its direction or will be converted into a medium through which the Supreme Truth will reveal itself. The Ultimate Truth is one and the Way to it is also one. An earnest Seeker, free from worldly attachments and desires, has no reason for disappointment. What is needed is unfailing patience, grim resolution, persistent endeavour, unflinching faith in Divine Providence and unconditional surrender to the Divine Will, preceded by a life of purity, devotion and self-dedication.

Mother has no line of Her own, no particular teaching or doctrine. She recognizes that though at bottom the Way is unique, it assumes varied forms as the temperaments and capacities of individuals are varied. The true test of real advance in spiritual life lies in the gradual purification, illumination and transformation of the human soul whereby in the end it may be restored to its lost unity with the Divine. She is at times very eloquent on the deprecation of the so-called spiritual favours, including revelations, visions, locutions etc. and exhibitions of occult powers. Not that they are always bad or inspired by dark forces, but the point to be remembered is that they have generally a tendency to deflect us from the right path, which consists in a single-minded and all-absorbing attention to the great Aim held in view. She does not, however, actually comment, even in an indirect manner, on anybody's personal experiences. She simply wants that we should be guarded against what Sri Aurobindo calls "the valley of the false glimmer". Usually these experiences arise from perverted imagination or alien powers, hostile or neutral. Self-deception, She points out, is always possible on the path. In very rare cases these favours are real and welcome

and may be helpful on the path. In such cases there is no harm in allowing them to continue, though even then the *sādhaka* should not actively co-operate with them until he feels strongly fortified against all outer influences. It is very important to bear in mind that the strength of personal will, self-consciousness and power of rational discrimination should not suffer in any way.

It is thus intelligible that Mother is tolerant to all. She sees the bright side of every object and every event and asks all to do the same as far as they can. Everything has its own use and importance. People have different points of view. What one says from his own view-point may be as true as what another says from his own view-point. She speaks to people from their own standpoints so that they may understand Her well, showing that She is familiar with all. This is the secret of Her universal sympathy and compassion. She always makes it clear that different people with different temperaments and intellectual backgrounds have to be led in different ways.

A great World-Teacher said that "there are many mansions in my Father's house". Mother says that there are really infinite mansions and that there are infinite ways leading to each and yet what She insists on is that we should not forget the fact that the House is one. All the creatures live in the same house and are members of one and the same family. They all have descended from One and are parts of One and verily One and the Same. Differences are in appearance only; due to *māyā*, but even this is in reality the play of the One. When we are ourselves again we are bound to realize this. Though She moves about from place to place She is always aware that She is in the same house—movement and rest, many and one, are always co-existent in Her consciousness; nay, they are aspects of the self-same Reality, indeed the Reality itself is aspectless.

For the same reason people of different creeds and persuasions find in Her their strongest support, each for reasons best known to himself. *Karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and *bhakti*, in fact all the ways of spiritual life, find their best exponent in Her. She knows the value of each, the relation of one with the others and the fact that all are simultaneously operative. She recognizes the different grades of spiritual advancement and yet She is emphatic—of course to those who can appreciate it—that the universal and integral self-revelation of God is always sudden and the question of a Moment, for it never happens in time. She teaches the law of moral and spiritual advancement and yet She is emphatic—of course to those who can appreciate it—that the universal and integral self-revelation of God is always sudden and the question of a Moment, for it never happens in time. She teaches the law of moral and spiritual causality on the analogy of natural law and yet She stresses the supreme value of Divine Freedom which stands above all laws and restraints. She attaches great importance to

Teachers and yet She holds that even Teachers need not be indispensable. She reconciles all conflicts in Her own inimitable way saying that behind all varieties and diversities one Truth shines in its own glory and adds strength to every position. It is not possible to speak at greater length on Mother's teachings within the brief compass of an article which has already exceeded its scheduled limits.*

There is a deep meaning in Mother's utterances some of which may seem to be obscure to a casual reader. It should not be thought the Mother is not accustomed to speak in plain language. So far as Her ordinary speeches are concerned, speeches addressed to the people of the world coming to Her in search of blessings or assurance or directions in a state of trouble or embarrassment, they are simple, straightforward, free from ambiguity and full of wisdom and compassion.

From what has been said above one may have a faint idea of what Mother is like and what Her central teachings are, but it would be a futile attempt to try to estimate Mother's position on the strength of what little we know about Her. We must go beyond surmises and grip Reality in its heart. The best thing for us would be to try to love Her deeply and sincerely as Mother and by loving Her to bring ourselves into closer and closer union with Her true Self. I felt this years ago and feel this even now. I am convinced that as a result of this process Mother will surely reveal Herself to us more and more fully according to the degree of our fitness and receptivity and that we shall then be in a fortunate position to *know immediately*, and not through our intellect which sees through a veil and perverts what it sees, what Mother truly is. And in so knowing Her we shall be able to know our own selves also. For She is verily one with us. No intellectual approach, however free from pre-dispositions and prejudices, is capable of revealing the heart of truth.

So much of disharmony and opposition in the world today, engendering bitterness and strife, is due to our lack of sympathy and sense of oneness. The root cause is the lack of Self-knowledge. There is but one Self which is Love and Wisdom eternal and we shall share it if we but know it in a proper way. Discord and hatred are bound to disappear like mist before the light of the sun. It will herald the advent of a New Life in the world when the central principle of Unity and Love will reign and dominate all its thoughts and activities. May Mother hasten that glorious day and shower Her blessings on humanity.

*

*. Readers anxious to have some clear ideas of these teachings may consult with profit "Matri Vani" and "Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma", published by the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha. The first of these books contains extracts from Mother's letters addressed to people seeking consolation and advice; and the second contains Mother's answers to questions asking for light on great metaphysical problems of a *sādhaka's* inner life.

**PAGES FROM
"MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG"**

[Translated from Bengali]

—Prof. A.K. Dutta Gupta

Dhaka, Ramna Ashram, 26th May, 1945

While going to the ashram at morning eight I found Ma inside her room. She was listening to the words of ladies one by one. Before the *path* began Ma came to the "Nam Ghar." Birenda* and many others were present there. Last night some army personnel came to meet Ma. Ma began to speak to Birendada about them—"Yesterday many army people had come and put a lot of questions to this body." One of them asked—"Why idol worship is done? This body replied—"What you have said is correct. But as you see, water & ice are one. Water has no form, but ice has. Similarly God is both formless as well as with form. These are only two sides of the same thing."

"Another person repeated—"No, idol worship is bad.' This body replied—"Baba, what you are saying that is very true; that is absolutely correct for you. But if anyone says that if worship of the idol is not done that will be wrong for him then what has to be said to him? That's why this body says, in whatever way He is called by a person that is correct for him.' At this moment there arose differences of opinion among them. Then they came to the decision among themselves that in whatever manner God is called that is correct.

"Another person asked—"Why there are differences between castes? Everyone is equal. Then why differences are made?" This body replied—"You all do service. But you all do not do the same job. All of your positions are also not the same. This must have been done for the convenience of work and you have done all this intentionally. Apart from this there are natural differences also. Differences occur out of nature."

Biren dada—There is a strong objection to the fact that why divisions have been made among people in the names of *Brahmans*, *Kshatriyas* & others. The main objection is that why these have been made clanwise? He who is following the regulations of a *brahman* no one will object to call him as such. But his son who is full of devilish instincts, why he can claim to be a *brahmin* only because of being born in a *brahmin* family. This is the objection of the modern people.

*. Prof. Birendra Mukherjee, elder brother of Gurupriya Devi (Khukuni didi) a scholarly person.

Ma—What you have said is true from one side. But it has to be also seen that when inspite of there being many other castes a person is born in a *brahmin* family then it has to be understood that he must had done some good work so that he has taken birth in a high caste family. If he can be always reminded about the high ideals of his caste then his devilish instincts may go.

Birendada—"You want to say that because he has been born in a *brahmin* family there is something within him because of which he can return from the wrong path out of his efforts. But if, inspite of being born in a *brahmin* family because of such good instincts in past life, such good instincts are much less and devilish instincts are much more in him and if he does the actions like a down-trodden then what will happen? There is one thing more. You are saying that a *brahmin*, who goes astray, should be reminded always that he is a *brahmin* and he has to follow the actions of a *brahmin*. But if a *Kayastha* continues to perform the rules and regulations of a *brahmin*, even then should he be asked to follow the custom of his caste and not that of a *brahmin*? Furthermore, people with not pay devotion to a *Kayastha* even if he follows the custom of a *brahmin*.

Ma—If the qualities of a *brahmin* are really developed in a person then he need not beat his own drum to obtain respect from others. The qualities themselves will lower down the head of people at his feet.

It was past 11 am. So Swami Saswatanandaji continued the reading of the scripture. The discussion on caste-division remained unfinished.

Reading of the Kathopanishad began. Uddalak, son of Rajasrava has started *Vishwaject Yagna* (Havan with the object of conquering the world) with the sole purpose of obtaining good result. But what he is donating for the *Yagna*? He is offering dry, organless almost dying cows etc., which means he is craving for good result without gifting anything. Son Nachiketa became quite aggrieved at his father's irreligious action. He had studied the scriptures from his father himself. So he was aware that the result of such gifts was dangerous and the effect after death will also be painful. He thought that one should gift away whole and sole in a *yagna* with the purpose of conquering the world. He (being the son) was also included in that whole and sole. Among the pupils also he was the first or the second, but never the worst. Therefore his father should also make a gift of him. Thereby the effect of his father making worst gifts might somewhat be condoned. Thinking in that manner he began to ask his father again and again—"Father, to whom will you offer me." His father on hearing these words repeatedly, angrily told—"I offer you to death."

The reading of the scripture also ended with this.

*. *Kayastha* class is a mixture of *Kshatriyas* & *Vaishyas*.

After the reading of the Kathopanisad was over Ma asked—"Well, the father gifted his son to *Yamaraj* unwillingly and also in anger. Has there been any fruit out of such a gift?"

Swami Saswatanandaji and others also said—"You know about that; what do we know?"

Ma—No, I am asking if there is anything written about this matter in your scriptures?

Swami Saswatananda—When Nachiketa asked for boon for the first time from *Yamaraj* then he thought about his father only, so that his father is not worried and his father should not suffer for his cause and that his father might recognise him and accept him again as son when he would come back, he asked for all these boons.

Ma—I had also asked this only. As it is written in your scriptures that even if one repeats His Name even carelessly and in disrespect there must be some fruit of action. Similarly, even if something is gifted unwillingly and out of anger there shall be some fruit.

Swami Saswatananda—I donot want to call it a gift at all. The son himself has got all this done for his father's welfare, otherwise, there is nothing to be said from the side of father.

Ma—I know that you will explain this in that manner. This is quite natural for you to explain the thing in that way. Because, then the manner in which you have taken *sannyasa* gets endorsed. (Everyone laughs). But the thing can be seen from another angle too. You were saying that Nachiketa studied the *Shastras* from his father. His father was his Guru. His father had himself taught him how to make gifts. Therefore, at this point he was carrying out the orders of his father, the preceptor by gifting himself.

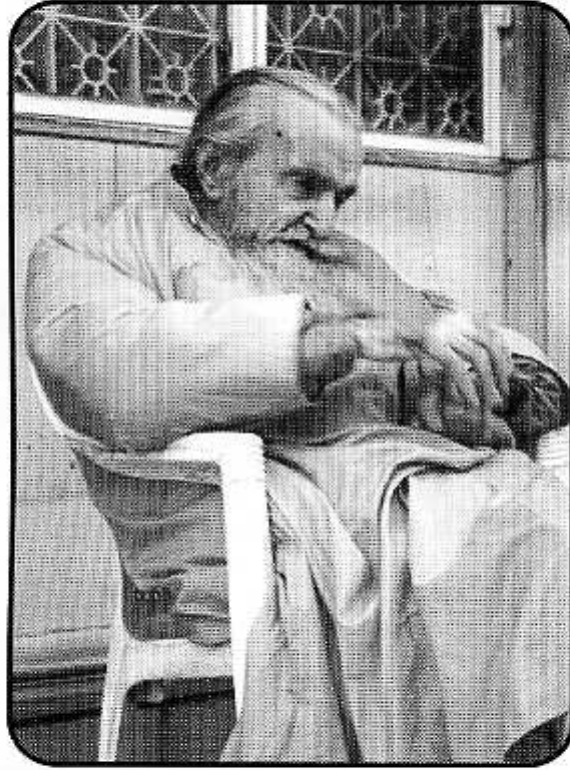
Biren dada—Ma, what is written in the Upanishads about all these incidents, as a matter of fact no one has control over these. What Nachiketa or his father had done all that had happened through the inspiration of a certain Supreme force. Apart from that the stories as related in the Upanishads have no value or realities of their own. These are mere illustrations to teach the main substance of the Upanishads.

Gopal dada—Is there any doubt that everything happens through the inspiration of the Supreme force (*Mahāshakti*)? But if it is said that the incidents narrated in the Upanishads are all false and falseless, thereby the Upanishads are only humiliated. As it is true that the stories narrated in the Upanishads are meant for explaining the teachings of the Upanishads, similarly the incidents are also real and true.

Ma—All these stories are also true.

[To continue]

IN MEMORIAM



We have the deepest grief to announce the passing away of one of our most revered *Sadhus*, Swami Vijayanandaji Maharaj (formerly Dr. Adolphe Jacques Weintrob) at Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Kankhal, Haridwar on April 5, 2010.

Having met Mata Anandamayee for the first time at her ashram in Varanasi on February 2, 1951 he never left Ma's ashram and stayed on for more than fifty nine years at a stretch till he left his mortal coil at the age of about 96.

A saint *par excellence*, who had practiced intense *sadhana* in various ashrams of Sri Ma, like Varanasi, Vindhyachal, Almora etc. and for more than three decades in his solitary room at Kankhal ashram, became almost a legendary figure and drew hundreds of seekers of Truth from various parts of the world to the ashram.

By virtue of being one of the seniormost ascetic members of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, he continued to be for a long

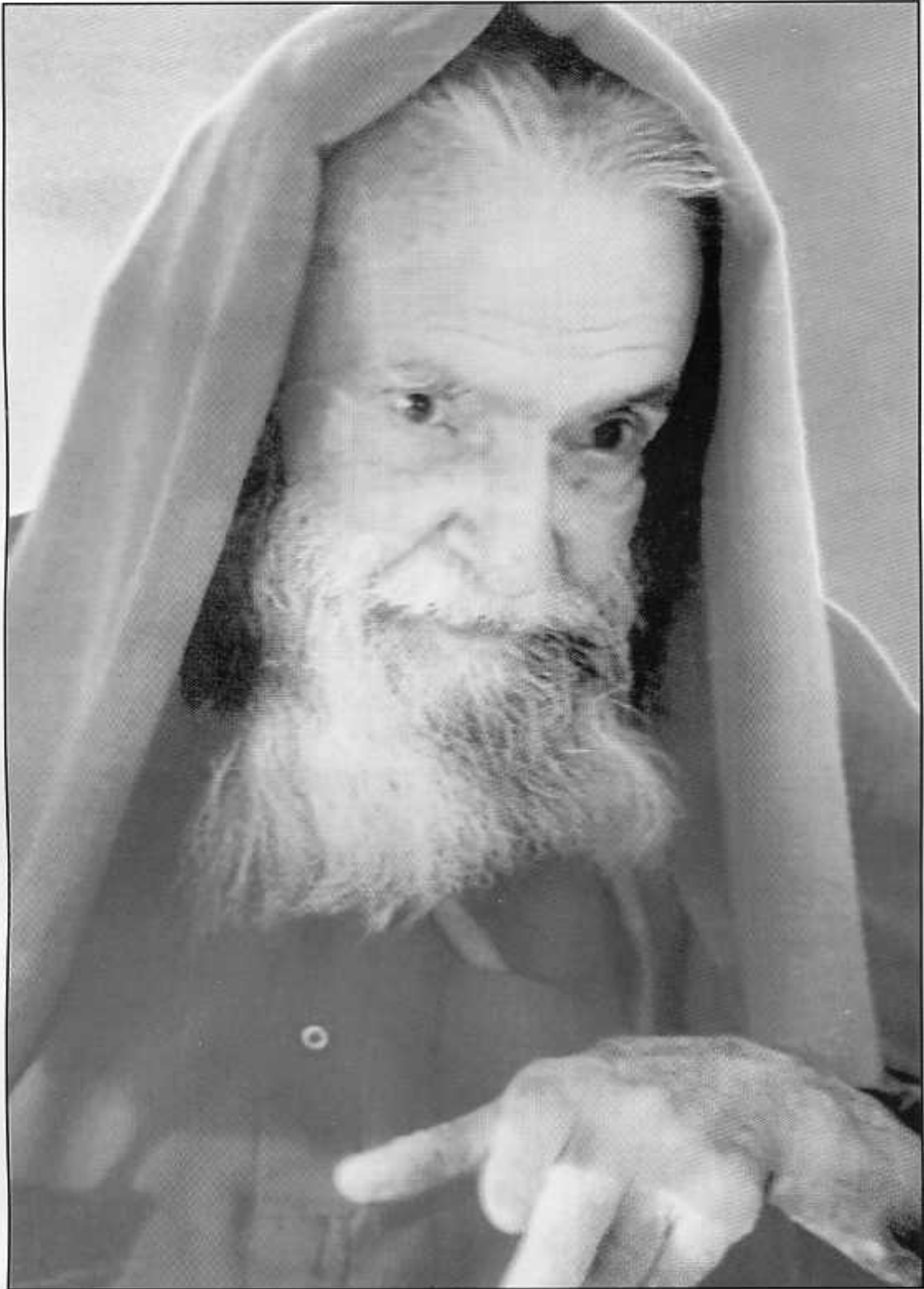
period a member of the Governing Body and also a member of the Board of Trustees of our organisation. His sound advice and valued suggestions for the betterment of Ma's organisation were always an asset to all of us.

It will be no exaggeration to state that Swami Vijayanandaji has left an indelible impress in the minds of hundreds of seekers after Truth and has practically become a living example of austerity in life, an unflinching abider of the principle of *aparigraha* (not accepting anything from anyone), a veritable personification of Purity, Chastity of character, Compassion and Love, in just three words - 'an ideal *Sadhu*.'

Having renounced everything in this world he was indeed least concerned even about the disposal of his body after his passing away. Therefore, after Swami Vijayanandaji left his mortal coil, at the earnest desire of his devotees from France, his body, instead of being immersed in the Ganga as per normal tradition of all sadhus leaving their bodies in North India, has been flown to France for a very dignified *samadhi* (burial) there. Nevertheless, in accordance with the usual rules for a *Sadhu* his body was first of all cleaned with holy Ganga water, then new ochre cloths were put on, decorated with flower garlands, proper *arati* was done in the presence of more than a hundred of his admirers and ashramites as well and was then taken in a special Medical Van to Delhi for being flown to France. The normal tradition of a special *Sadhu Bhandara* etc. on the sixteenth day of *samadhi* will also be followed in the ashram in a proper and befitting manner as a mark of our deep respect to the great man who lived amongst us for nearly six decades and has left indelible impress on the minds of all who had the fortune to come in touch with Swami Vijayanandaji.

Our deepest regards and respectful *pranam*s to the great soul.

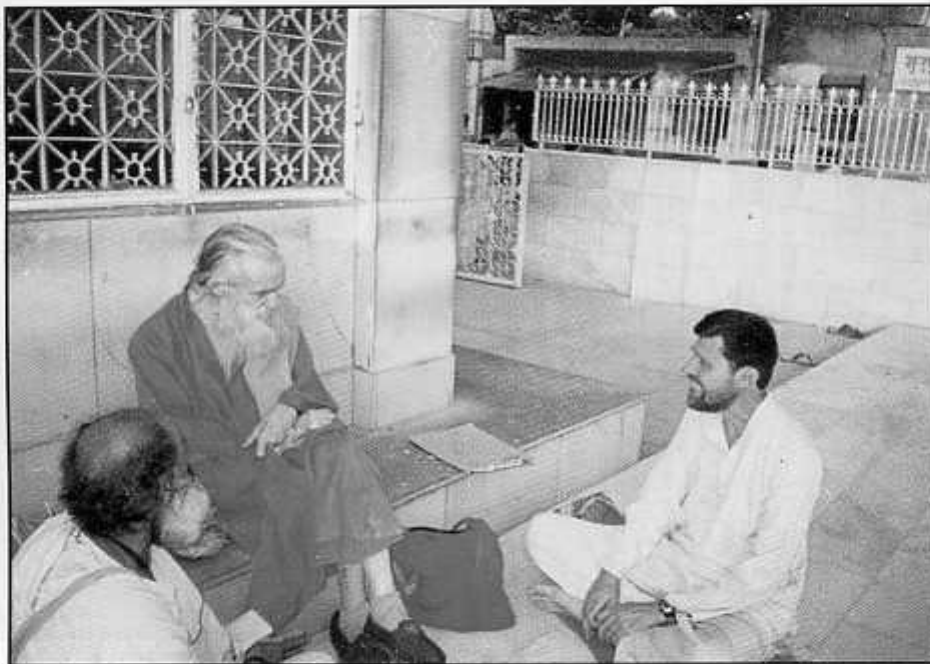
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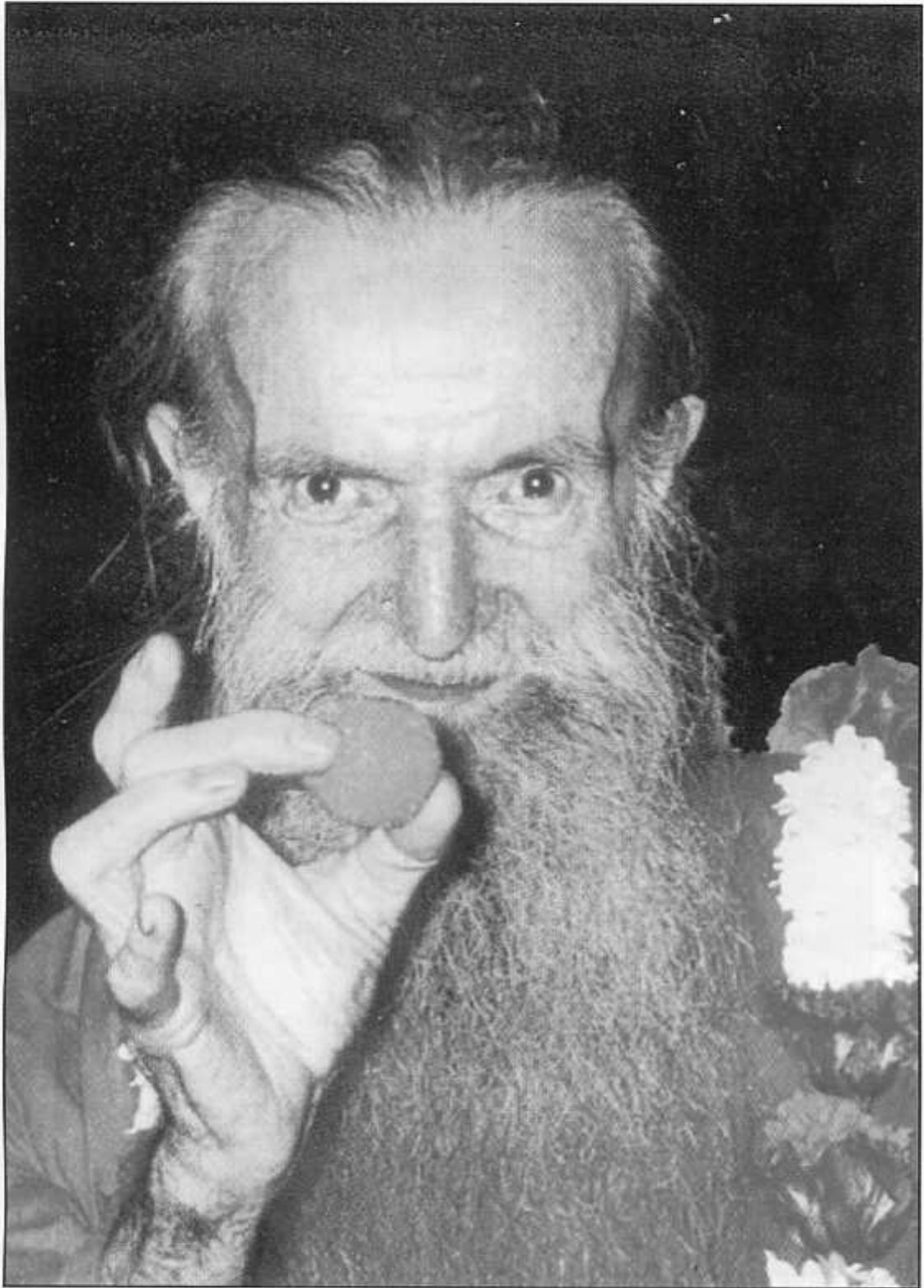
Venerable Swami Vijayanandaji Maharaj
— a very lively picture



Swamiji talking to visitors and devotees during evening sessions



Swamiji conversing with devotees in front of Ma's
Mahasamadhi Mandir



Swamiji in a very jovial mood
showing a piece of *Laddoo* to visitors



Swamiji sitting quietly on the top terrace of the
"Sadhu Niwas" at Kankhal ashram.

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE

With very heavy heart we inform all concerned that Swami Vijayanandaji (Dr. Adolphe Jacques Weintrob), a very senior Ascetic member of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, about 96 years old, has left his body (has become *Bramhaleen*) at around 5 P.M. on 5.04.2010 at Kankhal, Haridwar, where he was staying for about three decades in the Sadhu Kutia, adjacent to Shree Shree Ma's *Mahāsamādhi*. With this there has been the end of a long era of true spiritual seekers coming from the Western world to Shree Shree Ma.

During his practice as a medical doctor of repute in France, he had interactions with many saints but his inner urge was never fulfilled. Slowly, he felt attraction towards India and landed here. But ultimately, he decided to leave India as his inner urge was not satisfied. But by Ma's Divine *Kheyāl*, he came to Varanasi and met Ma in Her Ashram in February, 1951. Immediately he became a changed person and felt, as if, there was a big explosion of love in which he was totally immersed. He cancelled his return journey and stayed back in India on the path of his long *sāadhanā* and fulfilment of his Divine Goal.

His body is being flown overseas to France for *Samādhi* with due dignity.

April 7, 2010

Dr. D.P. Mukhopadhyay

General Secretary

Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE

I, Govind Narain, President of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, on behalf of the whole organisation would like to offer my very sincere and heartfelt condolence with utmost devotion, regard and humility on becoming *Bramhalecca* by our beloved senior Sadhu Swami Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj, former *Mukhya Sadhu Sanchalak* and General Secretary of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha.

Swamiji was one of the very few ascetics, who could reach the arena of close proximity of Shree Shree Ma, and received Her spiritual blessings. He was a very popular and loving *sadhu* for a large number of devotees in India and abroad and brought glory to the Sangha. We have lost a very valuable and senior ascetic member with the passing away of Swamijee. On this sombre and sensitive occasion, I send my very sincere and personal condolence in honour of Swami Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj.

April 9, 2010

Govind Narain

President

Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE

Shri Govind Narain, President, on behalf of the Governing Body of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, would like to send his most sincere and deep condolence with utmost regard and humility on Swami Shivanandaji becoming *Bramhaleen* on 9th April, 2010 at 12.30 noon. This was most shocking and sudden, creating a deep sense of sorrow and bereavement in the minds of all devotees under the present difficult circumstances.

Swami Shivanandaji came to Shree Shree Ma in around 1946 and spent in rendering unparalleled service to the cause of Ma Anandamayee Vidyapeeth as *Acharaya* at various places starting from Almora and then at Baghat House, Haridwar, Vrindavan etc. He was an ascetic of high order having received spiritual blessings from Shree Shree Ma. He was a man of small requirements and used to be loved by everybody for his simplicity and amiable nature. The Sangha has lost an illustrious son of Ma, who served the Governing Body for many years also. He was a learned *Sadhu* and wrote several articles/books on Ma. The vacuum created by his departure will be very difficult to be fulfilled.

April 10, 2010

Govind Narain

President

Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

OUR HOMAGE

We tender our most respectful homage to two other great souls who have left us in very quick succession and have left a great void in the whole organisation.

- i) Revered Swami Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj left his body at our ashram at Bhimpura in Gujarat on the bank of the holy river Narmada on the early morning of 8th April, 2010. His body was given *Jal-Samadhi* the same afternoon in the river Narmada with proper rites.
- ii) Revered Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj also left his body at Kankhal, Haridwar just one day after, on 9th April, 2010 before noon. His body was also given *Jal-Samadhi* with proper rites the same afternoon in the holy Ganga at the famous "*Neeldhara*", Haridwar.

As due to unavoidable circumstances we are already very much delayed in publishing the April issue of the journal we hope to publish in details about the above two Mahatmas in our next issue along with photographs etc. Articles in any language by way of reminiscences and homage from the pens of devotees will be gratefully accepted till May 31, 2010 latest.

—*Managing Editor*

Shraddhanjali Sabha (Special Meeting to pay homage)
held at Shankaracharya Hall, Kankhal Ashram, Haridwar
on 10th April, 2010 at 5 P.M.

An august gathering of senior sadhus, devotees and general members of the Sangha noted with very heavy heart and utter grief the sad news of becoming *Bramhaleen* by the following revered *sadhus* of the Sangha :

1. Swami Vijayanandaji Maharaj - on 5th April, 2010 at Kankhal Ashram.
2. Swami Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj - on 8th April, 2010 at Bhimpura Ashram .
3. Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj - on 9th April, 2010 at Kankhal Ashram.

Such a tragic incident of the departure of three very senior *Sadhus* within a span of five days was unprecedented in the history of the Sangha, and almost shook us completely, affecting the very ascetic fabric of the organization. All the three senior and revered sadhus were very great in their own spheres, and all of them received very close company, spiritual guidance and blessings from Shree Ma. They spent almost half a century of their lives in the charged arena of Ma, gave leadership to various important activities, which were so dear to Shree Shree Ma and guided many devotees. They were highly learned persons and performed long and arduous *sāadhanā* before attaining their required place of adoration in the Hall of great Mahatmas in the order of Shree Shree Ma. The void created by their departure will be very difficult to be fulfilled.

The members/devotees present all admired their outstanding virtues of simplicity, love, concern for the poor and the needy, and real

desire to disseminate their rare possession of spiritual knowledge to all.

The entire gathering was overjoyed at the most unexpected arrival in the hall by Shri Morari Bapu, the most celebrated saint on "*Ramkatha*". He also said that according to Srimad Bhagavat Gita, *Mahatmas* just change thier bodies like clothes ; their spirit and spirituality remain to continue and benefit the people at large.

The General Secretary summed up the observation by saying that, under the difficult circumstances faced by the Sangha, all the members should take a firm resolve that they would be ever conscious and careful than the past to work hard in future for unity and taking forward the spirit and learning of Shree Shree Ma and the *mahātmās* for the benefit of the Sangha and the mankind.

Dr. Debaprasad Mukhopadhyay

General Secretary

Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

MY FIRST IMPRESSION*

—Sri Vijayananda (Dr. Adolphe Jaques Weintrob)

It is a difficult task to try and to give a reader, who often is only curious, an idea of that which for you is the most precious thing, the jewel of jewels.

There are two dangers to be avoided : The first is to let your heart run away with you, to write an account so enthusiastic, so extravagant that the reader gets the impression of having before him the product of an unbalanced mind or at least of a rank sentimentalist, and consequently hurries through the article with an amused smile full of ironic pity.

The other danger would be to endeavour to remain completely cold and detached, to write like an impartial observer. This would be even worse, because one cannot speak of One, who is the very embodiment of Love Divine, as if one were dealing with a scientific problem. I shall, therefore, try to restrain my heart, without however reducing it to complete silence.

It is bad taste to talk about oneself, but all I can do, is to relate the story of how I got in touch with "MA". For it is impossible to describe Her objectively : She is different for every one of us. "I am, whatever you think I am", She has often said.

It was on the 2nd of February, 1951, at about six o'clock in the evening that I saw Her for the first time in Her Ashram at Banaras.

Having "provisionally" placed a substitute in charge of my medical practice, I had left France in quest of spiritual guidance in this country, which since time immemorial has illumined the world.

Landing in Buddhist Ceylon, then proceeding along the East coast of India I had arrived in Banaras the previous day. Tired and disappointed, almost convinced that my journey had been in vain, and determined to return to France, I had already reserved a berth on the "Marseillaise", which was to sail from Colombo on February 21st.

I am frequently asked what was my first impression of Ma, what made me decide to leave everything—family, friends, country, profession, wealth—to follow Her. Why I have clung to Her like a shadow suffering torments whenever I am unable to see Her even for a few hours. Why, though I could not understand what She says, I spent hours at Her feet, without taking my eyes off Her.

* Translated from the original in French.

It is very difficult to reply to these questions. Not because language lacks words, but because a word has not the same meaning for different persons, unless they all have experienced the corresponding to that word. Thus one may well try with the aid of comparisons to make a child in France realize what exactly is the flavour of a mango. Even if one spent hours over it, he would only get a very vague idea and that also most likely false.

Having made room for all these unavoidable limitations I shall now make an attempt all the same.

What then was my first impression? It was in the evening of the 2nd of February, I found myself in the presence of a woman of about 55, looking younger than her age, still beautiful. But at that moment I did not notice Her beauty, it was only later that I became aware of it. I still see Her focussing Her eyes on me with that strange gaze that seemed to embrace my whole destiny.

That same evening, at about ten o'clock, She had granted me an interview which lasted for about 20 minutes. She was supposed to answer my questions, but I had nothing to ask. I simply desired to make a spiritual contact. She seemed to be in divine thought. It was She who put the questions, clear, precise, going straight to the heart of things, raising exactly the points which interested me. But Her words were only a play on the surface. In those 20 minutes She had infused something into me, which was to last for a long time, which still continues. I returned to Clark's Hotel after having secured Her permission to come back the next day to live in the Ashram.

I was in a strange state—my heart swelled with jubilation, with joyful exaltation—the state of one, who has just found what he has always yearned for in the most secret recess of his heart. Her image did not leave me anymore, even at night, and the very thought of Her drove tears into my eyes.

What exactly had happened to me? My critical sense, which had been submerged by the first wave, awoke on the 3rd or 4th day. "Take care", it told me, "you have fallen into the hands of a great magician: She has cast a spell over you to make you her obedient slave". And I began to be on the defensive, to struggle against Her influence—rather feebly, I confess, for how can one fight Love; there is no power in the world mightier than Love.

But what kind of love is this? It is not directed towards a woman. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the love one may feel for a woman. As by a strange alchemy my entire potentiality for affection, all that one can love and admire in the world, had been transferred to Her. But at the same time this love became so pure, so sublimated, that it merged into and greatly intensified the call for the Absolute that I had always felt. All worldly attachment lost its attraction and the spiritual ascent became easier,

since She had donned me the wings of Love. In one single person all that one can love, admire, respect and adore became identified with the *Sad-Guru*, the Lord. For all these years that I have spent near Her, have given me the conviction that She is the Lord Himself, incarnate in the body of a woman.

I thought that this Love (I am obliged to use this word for want of a better one, though it does not express exactly what it stands for) would disappear or at least dwindle with time. The very contrary has happened : It has only grown in intensity. For it is like with those ancient cities buried underground : as one delves deeper, even more new marvels are brought to light.

Something that has struck me from the very first day is the atmosphere of the miraculous in which one moves when one is with Her. Let me explain : In Europe (and no doubt here also) by the word "miracle" one conceives of a breaking away from the laws of nature, something that strikes one as impossible, as absurd. But this is only its crude, objective side. Its subtle, subjective aspect is quite different. What does it matter to me if a certain yogi has walked across the waters or flown through the air ? The real miracle is, when that which one needs, which one desires keenly or feebly, comes at the moment it is needed. And still better when it comes, not only as one desired it, but one would have loved to see it in the innermost depth of one's heart. It has been for me as if I were guided on a path beset with obstacles by the hand of the most loving mother- an All-Powerful Mother. As you advance She removes all the thorns, all the stones from your path, and when it is necessary, She even lifts you across in Her arms. And all circumstances adjust and adapt themselves with a marvellous precision, without hurt. "Coincidence". I thought at first. But a coincidence that goes on repeating itself daily cannot be called so anymore. And all this happens without apparently violating the laws of nature, for the Lord has no need to break any laws: He is the Law. Should I give examples? No, for those who do not know Her will not believe me and those who have lived near Her have already understood.

She is like the Ganges—Her very touch purifies. In Her presence one feels oneself getting better all the time. Not by the suppression of one's faults: The very fault is sublimated and becomes an aid in the search for the Divine. She does not seem to notice or does not want to notice the dark sides of the individual. She only sees our luminous aspects, enhanced considerably by Her Divine mercy.

All the *Jivan-Muktas*, all the emanations of the Divine, give in broad outline the same message; and Ma Anandamayee does not make an exception to this rule. Yet there is an aspect of Her which no other *Sad Guru* has ever before presented (not to my knowledge at least) except perhaps Sri Krishna: I am referring to Her power to attract human hearts. It seems to me (this is an entirely personal opinion) that the first

contact She makes with those who come to Her, is essentially a contact of Love. Instantaneously She recognises the dominant note in the individual's emotional nature and it is this aspect in which She appears to him or her.

For some- for the great majority-She is Mother, full of love and tenderness, to others a friend and elder sister or even their child. For others yet, who are spiritually more advanced, She is the Guru or an aspect of God: Durga, Krishna, etc. And it is not only in the imagination of the *bhakta* that She represents these various aspects: Her physical appearance, Her behaviour, Her voice are actually transformed and adapted to the part She wishes to play. To illustrate this I should like to mention a striking little incident that I witnessed. It was during the last *Janmashtami* festival (Sri Krishna's birthday) at Banaras. She had been dressed up as Lord Krishna and we were all allowed to go and see Her. I went with a certain reluctance and with a slight irritation, for I do not like disguises. But when I beheld Her, I understood that there was no question of a disguise. Her face, though one could still recognize it, was completely transformed. It shone with a Divine beauty, with a truly super-natural calm and sweetness. She had really become one with Sri Krishna Himself. This is only an example among a thousand.

I have often seen Her features assuming entirely different aspects within a single hour. According to the person who questions Her, She appears at times like an old mother with a sweet face, her features drawn and tired; a few minutes later the radiant face of a young girl of twenty emerges. At another time She takes on the noble, serious, almost severe, almost masculine countenance of the Guru, a little later again Her laughter, Her caressing voice, Her tender look conjure up those of a child.

This contact of love or affection becomes in some way the lure that will entice him, who has had the great good fortune of getting in touch with Her, away from attachment to worldly things. For it will be transmuted and turned to the Divine.

What else can I say about Her? But have I not promised to limit my effusions? Perhaps it would have been better, had acted like the friend who, when asked to write an article, replied: "All I can say is: Ma, Ma, Ma."

May these few lines be not from any ulterior motive, but as humble testimony of the love, the veneration and the gratitude I feel for Her. And may they induce some readers to come and quench their thirst at that source of Life Eternal, which is Ma Anandamayi.

*

WORDS OF THANKFULNESS

—Aurelie Simonet

After the first period of grief and mourning following the *samadhi* of Swami Vijayanandji, the strongest feeling that remains inside of me about Swamiji is of thankfulness.

Swamiji helped me open myself to Sri Ma's Grace and Love; he has helped me make deep changes in my life; and there is no way I will ever be able to describe (or even understand) the immensity of all the good Swamiji has done to me through his presence, his advice and his blessings.

I can't truly realize how much he gave me, but what I do know is how grateful I am for his amazing patience, his infinite kindness, wise suggestions, unfailing support, total selflessness, strong encouragement and pure affection.

Swami Vijayanandji was and will always be beyond the description by one human being (no matter how devoted), because one could see and feel only a few aspects of his wonderful being.

Thus the only way I can write a few words about Swamiji is by giving a humble testimony of my years in Kankhal and of the wonderful spiritual gifts I received from Sri Ma and from Swamiji ever since I had my first darshan.

By the Grace of Sri Ma, I read Swamiji's book in 2002 (Jacques Vigne had told me about it), and I arrived in Kankhal on August 3rd of the same year. It will remain my spiritual—thus my real—birthday; the day I had the first darshan of our Spiritual Mother at the Samadhi Mandir, and of Swamiji, who became my Spiritual Father.

I had planned to stay for a month, but thanks to Swamiji's support and to the welcoming attitude of the ashram, I finally lived in Kankhal for almost 3 years.

Every evening (apart from a few brief trips for visa etc. and from a seven-week stay in Dhaulchina), I listened to Swamiji speaking about Sri Ma and about his unique life as a medical doctor in France and as a sadhu in India.

Swamiji has always remained a true and very humble disciple of Sri Ma, although to me and to many other people he had become a great sadhu, a true sage, and in my eyes an authentic Satguru.

There are not enough words to describe my gratitude and deep affection for Swamiji and for the way he opened my mind and my heart to Sri Ma's divine gifts; and for being able and be allowed to share a good part of the ashram life in Kankhal, which enabled me to grow a lot and to meet marvellous people.

I grew deeply fond of the community of Sri Ma's devotees, who welcomed me very nicely. I became a life member of the Sangha, read about Hinduism and Vedanta according to Swamiji's advice, and learned to apply the wisdom and purity in my life.

At first, days were not always easy for me in India, but it was my greatest joy every evening to see Swamiji arrive, sit down and give me a look with his ever young and kind eyes.

Being close to him felt like being close to GOD Himself, for Swamiji seemed to know everything about me. There was such respect and pure love constantly emanating from him, but at the same time he had an extremely sharp mind and could say precisely the words that made me become aware of what I had to learn or to change.

Every single one of his words was at the same time to the point (sometimes painfully so!) and full of compassion. Such unconditional love, occasional toughness and constant kindness helped me so much, and nourished my soul.

Thanks to Ma's Grace, to Swamiji's guidance and great example, I was able to learn not only about Vedanta, other religions like Judaism, detailed principles of sadhana, and many other important things, but I also learned about the best way to live a life of purity by respecting the 5 *Yamas*, being devoted to Sri Ma (thus to GOD), doing daily yoga and meditation, repeating as constantly as possible a *mantra*, and doing my best to respect and love every being.

When I left Kankhal physically, I noticed that a part of me was still there by Sri Ma's Samadhi Mandir and with my dear Spiritual Father Swamiji. I called him on the phone or wrote quite often, and I always tried to live the spiritual life of a sadhaka even while studying abroad (in Jerusalem) and working in my city of origin (Geneva).

Sri Ma and Swamiji were and will remain ever present in my life.

On April 5th, 2010, Swami Vijayanandji has left his body. In my heart he remains forever my Father, just like Sri Ma is our Mother.

Sadness and joy come and go as I grieve and mourn, but now joy is more present. Most of all, I am extremely grateful for the unforgettable, incomparable and truly Divine gifts I have received from Swamiji and from Sri Ma.

As I wrote these words, tears of gratitude fell from my eyes.

I express my deep thankfulness and affection to the members of Sri Ma's ashrams, to the Sangha and to the devotees of Sri Ma who were there for Swamiji in many ways for years and until his last days.

Jai Ma Jai Ma Jai Ma

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MOTHER— A SYMBOL OF HIGHER LIFE

[Continued from before]

—Prof. G. C. Das Gupta

Q.— In what part of the body is the heart-centre located?

Ma— Is there any place in the body where it is not? Think of a tree—from the roots right up to the leaves—all was in one seed. Is there any spot in the tree from where a branch cannot shoot forth and put forth flowers and seeds? The seed that you sow in the soil, lies everywhere in the grown-up tree potentially.

Q— There are centres of sight and hearing in the body. Is there not any spiritual centre where God reveals Himself?

Ma— Just as in the tree there are centres of circulation, of rest and of expression, such centres are every-where in the body.

Q— Does not the word 'centre' normally mean the middle of something?

Ma— Let it be in the middle then. (Laughs). Wherever God reveals Himself—that is the heart. The heart is one and many at the same time. One says, "Here is my heart"; another says "There it is". But what is called 'heart' is one.

Q— The *Sāstras* tell us where the heart lies.

Ma— Pitajee, you have not taught your daughter *Sāstras*. The location of the heart is at one place. When you say middle, it may mean different spots to different persons. According to popular belief it lies in one's breast.*

Q— When the heart fails, is it not all over with the man?

Ma— The heart that fails and the heart centre are different things. The point from where the action of the physical organ originates is its centre. But everywhere in the tree you find the potential seed. From this standpoint the heart is everywhere: One expanding into Infinity, Infinity condensing into One. The point from where 'life unfolds' is your heart.

Q— How does the seed come into being?

Ma— It is He expressing Himself as seed. There is no seed without Him.

Q— In the *Srimat Bhāgavata* what is the secret of His *Leelā*? Why does He enter

* Note the difference between the physical organ called heart (हृदय) and the heartcentre (हृदयमर्म)

into Leela?

Ma— In all activities— these questions crop up: Whence? How? What? Why? To solve this riddle what have you to do? When you observe a thing directly with your eyes, your query ceases to disturb you. To have Direct Vision of the Divine you are asked to read the *Bhāgavata*. One who is ignorant, has no question to ask; on the other hand one who has reached the goal has no question to disturb his mental poise. What is the *Bhāgavata*? *Bhagavān* (भगवान्) and His Expression— (भगवत्) they are one and the same. All the expressions of His *Leela*, in forms and attributes, are in the *Bhāgavata*.

Q— Why did He express Himself as He did in His *Rāsa Leelā*? Does it not minimise His dignity?

Ma— This body has no personal opinion to offer. *Bhagavan* played with Himself in these *Leelās*. Some say it is His *Māyā* or power of illusion. He splits Himself into two. One cannot play with oneself. There must be two or more. So He divides Himself into these forms to intensify His Divine enjoyment of the Game of Union, Separation and Re-union. His counterpart in the game is His own *Swarupa*— *Sakti* or *Māyā Sakti* : which is ever present in Him and under His control. It is said that during the *Leela* of Rama the Rishis desired to enjoy union with Him. But He promised such union when He would re-incarnate as Krishna. All are the creative activities of God; thus He delights to play with Himself. He has absolute power to do what He pleases. All are His own images.

Q— At one place in the *Geeta* (गीता) we are asked to engage in *Karma*, or perform ceremonial rites, and at another place to give up *Karma*. How are we to reconcile these two contradictory injunctions?

Ma— Judge for yourself at what stage you are, when to practise sacrificial rites and when to give them up throwing yourself wholly unto His Mercy. These are stages with their appropriate duties and responsibilities. If you are asked to rely absolutely upon Him, is it possible for you to do it all at once? You have to train your mind and body by constant practice and to purify yourself by spiritual exercise. Read the *Geeta* every day. You will find God revealing Himself through His Words recorded there. A doubt may arise in your mind "How can words reveal Him"? You know before the *Geeta* is read, the book has to be worshipped. By book, His words and their import are meant.

As you continue to practise day after day you will gradually reach a stage when absolute reliance on God will be your final achievement; there is none higher than That.

This body tells you again,— "Read the *Geeta* every day and do some spiritual

exercise, you will find answers to your queries revealing themselves in your mind. If your desire to know Him is sincere and earnest and comes directly from the heart, the solution must come. It is inevitable.

"Without steady concentration on one aim no real result can be achieved. The word *Ekāgra* (एकग्र), one-pointed-'ness' is a combination of two words, *Eka* (एक) one and *Agra* (अग्र) pointedness. Our mind is the swiftest thing in creation. Let the mind move at its own speed constantly towards the One Aim which is God. He will reveal Himself. As long as He is not revealed through His words in the *Geetā*, never give up the practice of reading sacred texts".

Q.—Living in the meshes of *Māyā*, how can one secure one's deliverance?

Ma—Suppose you are asked to convert a forest into a bare plain. What will you do? You must yourself be in the jungle and start cutting down the trees one after another. To whom does *Maya* belong? It is His miracle—making power. Like Him, She too has no beginning. But there is a way out. Just as you cut your way out through the woods, strive on with the work of forest clearing; the forest will become an open plain. When your utensils are scrubbed they shine with their own lustre. Remove the coat of dirt that hides their brightness and their surface will shine with their own lustre.

Be in the company of holy men as suggested by your Guru. Always bear in mind—all names of God are His Names, all forms of life and matter are His Forms, all virtues are His Radiations. Let the whole of your being be possessed by this thought—"How shall I be free from *Maya*, what pathway will lead me out?" Constant meditation on Him will enable you to become free from *Maya**. Your sole effort must be to keep Him in mind. Remember all talks of love and light on God are the ways that lead to the Lord. Other talks are but useless, in vain. They cause only pain and loss of thy poise.#

[To continue]

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*. Says the *Geeta*, Chapter VII, verse 140

मामेव ते प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां स्मरन्ति ते।

#. Mother always says :

हरिकृष्णइ कथा, और सब वृथा व्यथा।

SOMETHING ABOUT THE TEMPLES IN DEHRADUN ASHRAMS

—Atmananda

In 1937 Shri Bholanathji* took *Mahāsamādhi* at the Kishenpur Ashram. Several years after he passed away, one of Mataji's devotees, Srimati Nihar Kana Ghosh of Calcutta dreamt that Bholanathji, whom she had never seen in his lifetime, suggested to her to take *diksha*. She attached no special importance to the dream until it was repeated again the following night which made her thoughtful. When in the third night at about 4 a. m. Bholanathji appeared to her once more asking her with a peremptory voice to rise and have a bath, she obeyed and initiation was then actually given by Bholanathji according to the full rites prescribed in the *Shastras*, notwithstanding the fact that Sri Bholanathji had passed away years before. She hurried to her husband and said, "Bholanathji has just given me a *mantra*." Her husband advised her not to pronounce the *mantra* to anyone, but to sit in their prayer room and she at once began to practise the repetition (*japa*) of the *mantra* and to continue this practice regularly day by day. Her husband was of the opinion that everything must have happened in a dream. She herself, however, felt that there was no more necessity for her to take *diksha* again in the physical as well. When she uttered the *mantra* before Mataji, Mataji confirmed that it was one of the *mantras* to be found in the *Shastras*. But nothing was at that time mentioned to Mataji about the strange dream.

The new disciple conceived an ardent desire to have a memorial shrine erected for her Guru in the Kishenpur Ashram, where he had breathed his last. She discussed the matter with Sri Jogesh Brahmachari, one of Mataji's oldest devotees. A few hundred rupees were collected by her and other devotees for the purpose. However with such a small sum one could not even think of building anything. The money was therefore given into Sri Jogesh Brahmachari's custody.

A few years later another interesting thing happened. Srimati Bhabani, wife of Sri Ranjit Banerji of Calcutta, dreamt of three temples: Two were close together and made to the same pattern, the third one was some distance away, small and somewhat round in shape. Her dream was vivid and impressive. She related it to Mataji and requested Her to present her with a *Shiva Linga*. By Mataji's grace she was so fortu-

*. Mataji's husband.

nate as to receive a *Shiva Linga* that had been brought from the holy river Narmada, of which it is said that every stone there is a *Shiva Linga*. When visiting Hardwar with Mataji after some time she was surprised to find that the Shiva temple built by the Raja Saheb of Solan at Hardwar somewhat resembled the one she had perceived in her dream. During her stay at Hardwar her *Shiva Linga* was given the name of "*Gangeshwar*".

On returning to Calcutta she told her husband about her dream vision and expressed a keen desire to have a temple for '*Gangeshwar*' constructed in their own compound. However, on thinking over the matter her husband had serious misgivings as one could not be sure whether after he and his wife left this world, the puja would be continued regularly by their descendants. Such neglect is considered most inauspicious for the whole family. He therefore suggested that the temple should be built in one of Mataji's Ashrams and he made an offering of Rs. 5000/- for the purpose. It was subsequently decided to erect the Shiva temple in memory of Sri Bholanathji in the grounds of the Kishenpur Ashram.

As fate would have it, devotees from various places felt inspired to contribute towards the expenses of the temple, the construction of which was begun in September, 1957. It seems appropriate to say here a few words about those who helped in this pious cause.

Srimati Shanti Devi, wife of the late Sri Choudhury Sher Singh, Zemindar of Dehradun, died of an operation shortly after the building work had been taken in hand. Before going to hospital she deposited Rs. 5000/- with her relatives, requesting them to pass this sum on to the Ashram in case she did not recover. The money was added to the building fund and a *Shiva linga* named '*Shāntishwar*' was set up in memory of the deceased. Srimati Maharatan Jaspal, a Punjabi devotee (who by the way did not even know that temples were being constructed) suddenly offered Rs. 5000/- to Mataji to be used for any purpose required. Prof. Nalini Kanta Brahma, whose son had recently lost his life in a tragic accident, donated Rs. 1000/- for the installation of a *Shiva Linga* in memory of the departed. The *Linga* was named '*Kalyāneshwar*'. Further, a *bhakta* of many years' standing, Srimati Lakshmi Tankha, widow of Pandit Kashinarayan Tankha, the architect who built the main Kishenpur Ashram, presented Rs. 1000/- in memory of her husband. A *linga* called '*Kāshishwar*' was therefore added. Yet another old and faithful devotee, Kumari Sharada Sharma (Sevā) donated Rs. 500/- with the request for a *linga* in her father's memory, which was given the name of '*Māmuleshwar*'. Finally, a *linga* called '*Kirtishwar*' was in-

stalled in memory of the son of Sri Rameshwar Sahai, Chief Conservator of Forests, U.P. who bore the expenses for the construction of the altar of the temple. At the desire of Sri Ranjit Banerji and his wife 'Gangeshwar' was consecrated; and by the consecration of the *Shiva Linga* named 'Bholānāth' the heart's desire of Srimati Nihar Kana was at last fulfilled and thus the new Shiva temple came to house in all seven *Shiva Lingas*.

When Mataji first visited the Saptā Rishi Ashram at Hardwar, the thought suddenly occurred to Her about seven Shivas in the memory of seven sages. She went into the temple there and touched the *Shiva-Lingas* with Her hands. Strangely enough, when seven *Shiva-Lingas* were installed in our new temple, Mataji one day was heard to say like this; "Look, Dehradun is so near Rishikesh and Hardwar, all in the *Uttarākhānd*. 'Bholānāth' and 'Gangeshwar' have become the main cause of the installation of seven Shivas, *Mahāyogeshwars*, on one and the same altar."

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Now about the second temple, *Mātri Mandir*. During the opening ceremony of the Kishenpur Ashram a raised platform with a sacrificial pit (*homa kunda*) in the centre had been erected and one lakh of libations were offered into the sacrificial fire on that occasion. Bhaiji (Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy) was too eager to build over that platform a temple dedicated to Mataji. But during the few years that were still left to him he had no opportunity to see his pious wish materialize. Therefore Sri Gurupriya Debi tried ever since he passed away to fulfil what he had left undone and she kept on collecting and putting aside small sums of money for the purpose. When the construction of the Shiva Temple was now taken in hand the construction of the *Mātri Mandir* too proceeded along with it and both temples were consecrated on the Shiva Rātri day¹.

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The small shrine at Kalyānvan has also a history of its own. Late Sachi Kanta Ghosh, Retired Assst. Income Tax Commissioner, who many years ago bought a plot of land now called 'Kaivānvan' on Rajpur Road about 3 furlongs above the Ashram, had fixed a place in it for a special room for Mataji. He laid the foundation stone and buried the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and other sacred scriptures also in that spot. He later presented the whole of the plot to the *Vidyapeeth*.² But he died

1. After a number of years a marble statue of Mataji was got prepared through the ardent desire of Didi Gurupriya and was kept covered for long inside the Matri Mandir, which was formally installed after Mataji left her body.
2. A small residential school run by Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha where boys are educated according to the ancient ideals of the *Brahmacharya* ashram, while they are taught all modern subjects at the same time. The *Vidyapeeth* was thereafter shifted to our Ashram at Almora and is now established on permanent basis at Kankhal, Hardwar.

soon after and his desire to construct the room for Mataji in the grounds of Kalyānvan did not materialize.

When the two temples at the Kishenpur Ashram were in the process of being constructed, Mataji suddenly said one day: "I see that you are building a Shiva Temple here. Sachibābā bought Kalyānvan for the use of the Vidyapith. There is no sign to mark the blessed spot where he has buried so many holy books and people walk over it. Is this right? Suppose you dug up the ground and found the place where the foundation-stone was laid and the scriptures buried, how would it be if a *Shiva Linga* were erected over it? Think it over and decide!"

Thus shortly before Shiva Ratri a small Siva shrine named '*Maheshwara*' was built over the spot where the sacred scriptures had been found buried. The shrine was consecrated along with the other two temples of the Kishenpur Ashram on March 7th, 1959.

Readers will remember that Srimati Bhabani Banerjee had dreamt of three temples. When she arrived at Kishenpur to be present at the consecration, she found only two temples there and exclaimed: "In my dream I saw another small round temple at a short distance. I cannot see it here." Swami Paramananda said: "Go to Kalyanvan and you will find it." When she reached the garden she stood speechless with amazement: The three temples she had dreamt of had actually been completed as they had appeared to her in the dream. This can surely not be explained by ordinary commonsense or reason. By Mataji's grace the impossible becomes possible. Who could have foretold that the pious wishes of all the devotees concerned would materialize in this way! While supervising the construction of the temples Swami Paramananda felt that the two temples in the Ashram grounds should be made to the same pattern, but the third one to a different one. Thus Srimati Bhabani's dream came true.

Mataji always says: "The Will of the Almighty is fulfilled."

*

MOTHER IN SOUTH INDIA

[From the Diary of Gurupriya Devi]

(Continued from before)

Madura, November 14, 1952

We reached Madura at 6 P.M. Our arrival had been widely advertised, so a large number of people including prominent citizens were present at the Station. Excellent arrangements had been made at the Marwari Dharamshala for Mother's and the Mahatmas' stay. After a short rest, Mother went to the Minakshi temple where the usual Satsang took place from 7 to 9 P.M. As Mother reached the temple, music began to play as at other places and Brahmins came forward to receive Mother with garlands and sandal paste. Many prostrated themselves. A number of people with badges lined up linking their hands to allow a passage for Mother through the crowd. Brahmins walked in front with silver staff. Mother and the Sadhu Babas were escorted to a raised platform fitted with mikes. About 3 to 4 thousand people had assembled there. After Kirtan Mother sang "He Bhagawan" for a short while at the request of the people. After 15 minutes' *Mauna* (silence) Mother was escorted out in the same manner as She had been brought in by the temple officers and other prominent persons. In this manner Mother was taken to the temples of Shiva, Ganesh, etc.

Next morning i.e. on November 15th we went to see several other temples. In fact Madura is famous for its temples, and we visited a number of them during our stay. The temple authorities had arranged for the evening Satsang in a more spacious place within the temple premises to accommodate a larger crowd. When Mother arrived we found the temple authorities and their men waiting at the gate. Mother was escorted inside the same way as the preceding day. Although about 10 thousand people were present this time, it was very quiet and there was no confusion.

After a few songs and the usual Kirtan by Sri Hari Babaji and his followers, the gathering pressed Mother again & again to speak. But as Mother does not deliver speeches, She sang for sometime "Sita Ram, Sita Ram" which the crowd repeated after Her in chorus. The entire audience became absorbed in the Kirtan, but it could not continue for long as it was time for the usual 15 minutes' silence. Afterwards, Mother was again requested to speak a few words. Someone asked: "Mother, what is your message to your children, all these men and women assembled here?" Mother

replied as so often : "He alone should be talked about ; all other talk is in vain and fruitless. Where Rama is, there is bliss ; where Rama is not, there is misery." Someone else asked "Mother, we are suffering because of drought, the crops have been destroyed. So many important persons have visited this place. We are all praying for rain. What will happen to us?" Mother - "Leave it to Him who has created this world and who protects it. You are parents in charge of small families. Do your children have to tell you what you should do for them? Do they even understand their needs ? In the same way the Father of all knows and does whatever is necessary for His children. Try to leave everything to Him. His will be done." Everyone seemed pleased with this reply.

Then Mrs. Taleyar Khan spoke a few words, "Mother has blessed South India by Her gracious visit. She has of course no need to see places or to go on pilgrimages. She has come only to bless us all and to sanctify the holy places. She has come to see Herself only. Everyone should try to observe the 15 minutes' silence in whatever manner and wherever he or she may be. If we do this and remember Mother, She will certainly be with us. We shall then be under Her guidance."

On November 16th we went to Trichur, the birth place of Sri Ramana Maharshi. In this small village there is a very old temple of Shiva. The legends about its sanctity are numerous. We were shown the house in which the Maharshi was born; pictures of his own and his parents are kept there and daily 'Puja' is offered before them.

At the evening Satsang there was a vast gathering of about 10 to 12 thousand people. At the request of many Mother sang "He Bhagawan" for some time. Several people sang songs about Mother, among others there was also a young lady, who is a relation and devotee of a well known Sadhu of Rishikesh. The crowd started to clamour for a better view of Mother, so She was requested to stand on the platform for a while.

After the Satsang many people came to see Mother in the *Dharam-Shala*. One of them, a disciple of Sri Maharshi, said "I feel a peculiar yearning for Mother's *darshan*, so I come to see Her again and again." Mother replied, "It is but natural that parents should long to see their little daughter." The gentleman said, "Though I have a great veneration for Mother as for my Guru, yet when I think of Mother's simple ways and frank laughter, I feel as if she were but a girl of 6 or 7." Everybody burst into laughter at this.

Next morning, i.e. on the 17th, Mother went to Palan, about 66 miles away, where a temple of Kartikeya, is towering on the top of a hill. We found a large crowd there. In the afternoon we again went to the big temple where daily Satsang was being held. No intimation of our visit had been sent and so there was no crowd. Since

we had come unexpectedly we were told that we could not enter as special permission is necessary for this. Mother said that we all should have our '*Darshan*' from outside. At that very moment the Executive Officer of the temple hastened to us and invited Mother to go inside the temple. He said that he had once told Mother that his wife could not come to see Her as his son was suffering from typhoid. Soon after, however, his son got well. He had now come with his wife and his son bringing flowers and offerings for Mother. He was very sad to hear that Mother was leaving shortly. However, his providential arrival at that moment enabled us to enter the temple and see the deity, Minakshi Devi, which some of us, particularly Sri Avadhutji, had not been able to do earlier, owing to the crowd.

We then went to the nearby temple of Shankara. During '*Arati*' the crown of flowers adorning the head of the deity slipped to the ground. After the '*Arati*', Mother said, "Shiva has himself taken down the crown, let us ask for it." The priest placed it in Mother's hands. She offered it for salutation to Sri Avadhutji and others as a gift of Shiva. Later, I was told to hold and carry it carefully.

We then went to the temple of Sri Ramana Maharshi situated within the same compound. His portraits are kept there in a room in which he stayed as a youth and practised *sadhana* and where he first saw a vision of light. The evening *satsang* passed off in the same manner as on other days, the gathering being equally large. Mother sang "Hari Bol, Hari Bol." This time *Mauna* was observed in an excellent manner. It is really a wonder, that such a vast assembly of strangers should be able to observe 15 minutes' silence in this manner. As Mother was leaving, the crowd could hardly be stemmed, so great was the rush of people eager to come near Mother and do obeisance just for once on the last day of Her stay. Many people, including the chairman of the temple, and others came down to the temple, and others came down to the Dharamshala and stayed till late talking to Mother. The Chairman placed his car at our disposal to take Mother to Kanya Kumari.

Kanya Kumari, 18th & 19th November., 1952.

We left Madura on the 18th morning and halted at Tiruchendu, 30 miles off, to see the temple of Kartikeya. It was situated at a very beautiful spot with the sea surrounding it on three sides. The Manager of the temple had read about Mother in the papers and, therefore, took great interest to show us round. At 1-30 P.M. we reached Kanya Kumari, 150 miles from Madura. We put up at the Dharamshala attached to the temple of Kanya Kumari Devi, by the sea-side. The same evening we went to the temple at 7 P.M. and had our *Darshan*.

Next morning Mother again went to the temple. The deity was being bathed with milk, curd, honey, etc., (*Panchāmrita*) followed by *Arati* and *Bhoga* each time.

Then the deity was dressed and decorated with sandal-paste and flowers. Some of us felt something very special in the atmosphere of the place. The spot where Swami Akhandanandaji (my father) had a vision of Mother as he sat in meditation on the occasion of Mother's first visit to Kanya Kumari was pointed out to Sri Hari Babaji at his request.

In the evening as we went to the temple to see *Arati*, Mother walked along the road, saying, "Didi, let us go to that house", pointing to a cluster of houses before us. Mother walked very fast and halted before one of them. A middle-aged woman was standing at the door. Seeing her, Mother exclaimed, as if in great delight: "Didi, this is the woman. We went to this house. The *Kumaris* were fed here." The woman who did not know Hindi could not understand Mother's words. A local inhabitant who was accompanying us interpreted and she soon recalled all the facts. I also recollected that the *Kumaris* were fed here when Mother visited the South about 25 years ago. Mother said: "Mataji, we have come here to see you". We were told that the woman was the wife of the chief priest of the temple. She beseeched Mother to step inside the house but since Mother does not go inside the residences of *Grihasthas*, She asked the rest of us to go in instead.

Trivandrum, 20th & 21st November, 1952

On the 20th morning we left Kanya Kumari for Trivandrum, 56 miles off. On the way we stopped to see the Suchidram temple and the old palace of the Maharaja of Travancore. We reached Trivandrum at 11 A.M. A thatched cottage tastefully decorated with flowers had been put up for Mother. At the Maharaja's urgent request Mother was taken to his palace in the afternoon. She was led into the garden and seated there. The Maharaja and the members of his family including the Maharani, his mother, brothers and others came to pay their respects to Mother. They offered thick garlands skilfully made, home grown plantains and cocoanuts and also a beautiful *Asana* made of the bark of trees with silk lining and border. The Secretary came bare-bodied clad in a sild Dhoti and saluted Mother according to the custom of his country when visiting temples.

[To continue]

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BHAGAVAD GITA—A CELESTIAL COMBINATION OF VEDANTA & YOGA

—Sri S.C. Banerjee

The Scriptural Trinity (Prasthanā Traya) :

1. **Upanishad:** The *Vedas* have two principal divisions, viz, *Mantras* and *Brahmanas*. The three classes of *Mantras* have been compiled into four books called *samhitas* and are commonly known as *Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sama-Veda* and *Atharva Veda samhitas*. Some part of the *Brahmanas* used to be taught in the forest to those who observed specific vows. This part was called the *Āranyaka*. The *Upanishads* are usually the portions of the *Āranyakas*. The *Vedas* fall into two distinct thematic parts. The first part being the performance of rituals i.e., *Karma kānda* and the other devoted to knowledge i.e., *Jnana kānda*. The *Upanishads* fall into the latter class. The *Upanishads* constitute the crux of the wisdom reflecting the records of the spiritual experience of the *rishi's*. Knowledge of the *Brahman*, the ultimate Truth of the universe, called the *Brahma Vidyā* is the quintessence of the *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* are also called *Vedānta*, because they convey the essence or the conclusions of the *Vedas*. The ultimate truth that is preached by *Vedānta* is that the individual self manifests as the ego, but is identical with the omnipresent Supreme Self and the four principal *Upanishads* forming the genesis of the Philosophy of *Vedānta* have held aloft this great truth in the four *Mahāvākyas*. These four *Mahāvākyas* or the great Upanishadic doctrines are:

- a) Consciousness is *Brahman*- (*Aiteriya Upanishad*)
- b) I am *Brahman* - (*Bṛihadārn̄yaka Upanishad*)
- c) Thou art that - (*Chāndogya Upanishad*) and
- d) This Atman is *Brahman* - (*Māndukya Upanishad*)

In short, *Vedānta* is the knowledge that has for its aim the solution of the mystery of all existence. *Vedānta* is that which being known everything becomes known and which being attained nothing else remains to be attained.

2. *Brahmasutra (also called Vedānta-Sutra) :*

In the *Upanishads* the highest truths are narrated as they were glimpsed by the ancient sages. Being direct communications as it is said, of the actual experiences according as they came, it was quite natural that they lacked the systematic arrangement which is expected of convenient and leisurely deliberation. There are about 108 *Upanishads* out of which only ten or eleven *Upanishads* could be thoroughly explored. Passing into multiple hands the interpreters made obviously self-contradictory statements; all terse and obscure, with the result that the true concept of *Brahman* was covered by clouds of confusion. Maharshi Vedavyasa (also called Bādarāyana because his Ashram in the Himalayas was named Badari) tried to devise aphorisms (*sutras*) to remove the clouds of confusions and present the salient thoughts of the *Upanishads* in a lucid and methodical way. Among the authors of *Vedānta sutra* aphorisms, Maharshi Veda vyasa is accepted to have composed the best and the last compilation. His attempts at upholding the true concept of the *Brahman* stand out as the most authoritative and illustrative exercise in the field. In short Vyas Deva summarised the philosophy of the *Vedānta* and held aloft the Supreme Truth in his *Vedānta Sutra* or *Brahma Sutra*. The ultimate Truth is Bhagavan Krishna. Krishna says, "I am the compiler of *Vedānta* and I am the knower of the *Vedas*". This brings to the concept *Ishvara* (God) and for that *Bhagavad Gita* provides the most appropriate means to know the Lord, *Ishvara* or God.

3. *Bhagavad Gita:*

Bhagavad Gita is the last and the practical part of *Prasthanā Traya* of the scriptural Trinity.

Bhagavad Gita is both *Vedānta* and *Yoga* at the same time. Often called *Gitopanishad*, it contains within itself, the essence of the *Upanishads*. *Gita* is the vehicle of the essence of all the *Upanishads*. In the invocation to *Bhagavad Gita*, it has been said:

*"Sarvopanishado gāvo dogdhā gopālā nandana pārtho vatsah
sudhir bhoktā dugdham gitāmritam mahat."*

"All the *Upanishads* are the cows, the milker is Krishna, the cowherd boy, Partha is the calf, men of purified intellect are the drinkers, the milk is the supreme nectar of the *Gita*".

Bhagavad Gita is both *Vedānta* and *Yoga* at the same time. The purpose of a religion that is grounded upon a combination of *Vedānta* and *Yoga* is to retire

man's emotions and to sublimate them so as to transform his whole life. The doctrine of Divine Incarnation in the Gita points to the Vedantic doctrine of the divinity of man and acknowledges the possibility of divine manifestation whenever virtue subsides and irreligion prevails. (BG, IV.7)

Bhagavad Gita and Yoga:- Yoga is actually an unfathomable ocean of extraordinary and supersensory experiences. Maharshi Patanjali presented Yoga as a science and demonstrated methods of developing the supernatural powers, latent in man, as well as controlling the breath and the central and sympathetic nervous system. 'Yoga' is the final union of the embodied soul with the all-pervading Supreme Self. On that score no other scholastic treatment can stand anywhere near Bhagavad Gita. Bhagavad Gita starts with a lesson on Karma Yoga amidst dense darkness of ignorance (hesitation and despondency) of Arjuna and leads him to supreme enlightenment. The teaching of the Gita is synthetic yoga and the teacher is *Yogeshvara*. The Gita is essentially a *Yogashāstra* and not merely a *Dharmashāstra*. Its range, appeal and compass are all universal. Here it may be noted that the word 'Yoga' in Gita is used in its primary sense of union or fellowship with God. 'Moksa' in Gita is the final result of union with the Infinite.

Lord Krishna declared :-

*Aham ātmā gudakesa
Sarvabhūtāsayasthita
aham ādis ca madhyamas ca
bhūtānam anta evacā"*

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan translated it into English as: "I, O *Gudākesa* (Arjuna), am the Self seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the very end of beings". (BG X/20)

In fact the world is a living whole, a vast inter-connectedness, a cosmic harmony inspired and sustained by the One Supreme—that is what the Master said. Gita is also an Upanishad. A beautiful instance is that the idea of *karmayoga* so marvellously developed in the Gita is found in germ in the opening two *mantras* of the *Isopanishad*. The teaching i.e., the 'Yoga' in the Gita imparts to all of us the essential lesson that we have to pass through the world, doing our duty to society in a spirit of detachment and reach our home in God. This home in God is the ultimate aim of all Yogas; this is the heaven of freedom, the supreme abode of the Lord, reaching where there is no turning back. "The Unmanifested is called the

Imperishable. Him they speak of as the Supreme status. Those who attain to Him return not. That is My supreme abode". (BG, VIII/21) The most interesting fact is that the Teacher (*Yogeshvara*) makes a clear illustration of the Yoga to attain to that last goal-goal of eternal freedom. The Lord says, "Doing continually all actions whatsoever, taking refuge in me, he reaches My grace, the eternal undying abode" Reiterating the prime need of absolute surrender, the Lord continues. "Surrendering in thought all actions to Me, regarding Me as the Supreme and resorting to steadfastness in understanding, do thou fix thy thought constantly on Me" (BG. XVIII/56,57).

It was left to Arjuna, God's favourite devotee, to conclude the song celestial with his final submission to the Lord, "Destroyed is my delusion and recognition has been gained by me through thy grace, O *Acyuta* (Krishna). I stand firm with my doubts dispelled. I shall act according to Thy word". (BG. XVII/73).

This is the *Yogi's* submission to *Yogeshvara* in the *Yogashastra*. Gita is the ultimate scripture of all yoga-aspirants across the universe, as it gives a wonderful synthesis of *Jnana Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga* and *Rāja Yoga* (*Dhyana Yoga* or *Abhyasa Yoga*).

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MEMORABLE MOMENTS WITH INDU-DI

—Mohua

I won't say that I knew Indu di very well but I had a string of attachment with her. I saw and met her for the first time in 2000 during Durga Puja arranged at Bhimpura ashram. A few of the Kanyapeeth inmates had come to attend and give their invaluable precision and their skilled hands in the preparation and arrangement for the Puja. The ways and rituals of Durga puja are very strict and one has to take utmost care that it is adhered to and done exactly in the manner required. Only the Kanyapeeth inmates are taught and are well aware of all the rules and rituals.

I remember Gita di and Indu di from the seniors and a few other girls who were quite young then, from Kanyapeeth, who had come for the puja. They would be usually very busy making all arrangements for the puja. Still we would get a few moments together when we could also give a hand to them in their work. At times we would share a few merry moments, getting acquainted to each other.

But the most memorable moment for me was the time I got to spend with Indu di while weaving a garland for Joy Ma. Indu di asked me if I could help her in it. I was only too eager to help. The garland was to be put around Joy Ma on her statue kept in the hall. That reason was enough to make me feel blessed and leave me beaming inside with joy. I joined her without losing any time. We didn't speak much as we both were engrossed in our work. There was a peaceful silence around which we broke only sometimes when we spoke about the flowers we were using for the garland.

Finally we completed. We had two garlands, one done by her and one by me. One was kept aside to be given later. And there was a beautiful garland waiting to adorn Joy Ma. We both went to the hall and Indu di placed it around Ma. We both were feeling so effusive to see the garland on Ma. The garland seemed to bloom more now in ecstasy. Each flower held in the garland seemed to be smiling with their joy knowing no bounds. We both left after some time feeling very pleased. The essence of the beautiful moment was still seeping inside our hearts.

After this, we met at Kankhal ashram several times during Durga puja whenever she could come. And we would never forget to remember those moments we had in Bhimpura together, of the joy and the blessing we had felt that time.

When I remember Indu di, I always remember the time I got to spend with her. We bonded just like the flowers in the garland. Each flowers was separate and different, unknown to each other. But they were held together and closely by a string, for Joy Ma.

I feel sad that I won't be able to remember those moments with her again, but I feel a peaceful silence around me when I think about the bond that grew between us like the garland of flowers.

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"You may try to remove 'this body' from your minds, but this body did never depart, does not depart and never will it depart."

— Ma Anandamayee