

MA ANANDAMAYEE
AMRIT VARTA

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

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MATRI VANI

If one does not arrive at a state of stillness the agitation of one's whole system will manifest through every nerve and fibre of the body and render one inefficient. If one's energy is not retained the harmonious functioning of this energy in perfect tranquillity is not possible. Interest in the Supreme Quest and practices performed in search of Truth naturally have a calming effect. The preservation of energy is essential.

If he finds Kirtan helpful, he should, at the time when Kirtan is sung, try to sit absolutely still in a fixed posture and concentrate. A disturbed state of mind and body is not favourable.

* * * * *

The realization of Divine Power may be induced by any means that suits a particular person. If one feels inclined that way it may be brought about by initiation (*Dikshā*); or else it may even be effected by the Guru's touch. It is immaterial by which method one chooses to develop the capacity to live a life dedicated to God. The important thing is to remain ever immersed in the contemplation of Him and to derive bliss from it. Indeed this is a cause for great rejoicing.

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What is perceived in this world is in the nature of a dream, similar to that which one sees in dreams. The only difference is that the former takes place in the waking state and the latter during sleep. Albeit, I am always with you.

* * * * *

In dreams all kinds of things may be seen : what the mind has been busy with; also what has not been thought about, but has occurred in the past or will come about in the future. In any case everything that happens belong to the realms of dream.

* * * * *

In order to acquire the only qualification that really matters one has to contemplate the Divine. Never cease to strive after the Knowledge which will free you from all snares and ties of this world as well as from the necessity to gain any other knowledge.

* * * * *

Many feel the urge to create a new and better world. Rather than let your thought dwell on such matters you should concentrate on That by the contemplation of which there is hope of perfect peace. It is man's duty to become a seeker after God or Truth.

* * * * *

Everything in the universe is God's creation and happens according to His Divine Dispensation; everything and everyone is His own. In the realm of cause and effect (*Karma*) things manifest as best suited to particular conditions. It is incumbent on man under all circumstances to rely on God and to sustain the remembrance of Him.

* * * * *

Solely by turning to God is there any hope for man to gain peace. The world is as you have just experienced; it is futile to look for peace here. When one lacks sincerity and straightness of character and is moreover unable to grasp the actual purport of religion, this kind of disturbed state of mind, where one finds it impossible to elevate oneself by any means or device, may occur quite frequently. It is imperative to depend on God, no matter what one's condition may be.

* * * * *

Even right in the midst of troubles and vexations one has to rely on God, practise japa and meditation and aspire to grow spiritually. By enjoying the pleasures and comforts of material life nobody has yet attained to the realization of God. To contemplate the One and to enthrone Him in your heart will bring you peace—therefore cultivate the remembrance of Him. So long as He does not reveal Himself in a way that will dissolve all obstacles and obstructions, until then strive to live ever in the Presence of God.

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**PAGES FROM
"MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG"**

(Translated from Bengali)

—Prof. A.K. Dutta Gupta

[Continued from before]

In the midst of conversation Gopal dada enquired about the pain in Ma's foot fingers. Ma answered—"The pain is there in the same condition."

Gopal dada—That will not go soon. Ma does not allow us to touch her feet. But she has allowed it (the pain) to take shelter in her feet out of her grace. So, why will that leave her feet. It will remain there till Ma does not bid good-bye. (Everyone laughs).

Ma—(While laughing) I am a small girl. That's why my father is teaching me. In the *sāstras* you see the Guru teaches his disciples on *Brahma Vidya* by repeating the words, "You are that. You are that." Even if I am in the hills or forests, by pulling me even from there for the purpose of teaching me lessons you are saying to me—"You are that, you are that". (Every one laughs loudly).

The ladies were singing Kirtan in the Panchvati. Ma went there after the path and remaining there for sometime came back. I also returned to my home.

In the afternoon at about 5 p.m. I went to the ashram. The *Gitā Path* by Gopal dada had already started. Ma was also sitting in the 'Nam Ghar'. A few minutes before the *Path* was going to be concluded Ma came out of the Kirtan hall after taking permission of Gopal dada. We also came out after the reading was over. We heard that Ma had gone out somewhere in a car. We kept waiting. In the meanwhile my friend Manomohan and Manoranjan babu came and joined us. Ma returned to ashram at 11 p.m. at night.

Today is the full moon day. Kali Puja was being performed in the Annapurna Mandir. Ma said to Birendada—"Today is *Purnima* (full moon day), the day for your keeping awake the whole night." We could understand from this that previously when Kali Puja used to be performed at Shahbag on new moon and full moon days then Birendada and others used to keep awake the whole night.

After sometime Ma came and sat in the "Nam Ghar". We also were with her. Ma herself started conversation after coming here. Ma asked —"How did you hear the

discourse on Gita today?"

Birendada—The reading was very nice. The speaker has an extra-ordinary power of speaking.

Everyone supported the view whole heartedly. It was heard from Birendada that Gopal dada had been his classmate.

Ma—Gita Jayanti was celebrated this time at Vindhychal. Reading of the Gita used to be held thrice daily. Reading in the morning, discourse on the same in the noon and discussion on the Gita after evening. Gopal baba used to do the whole thing. There was the attempt to remain always engrossed in one thing—the Gita. Baba is used to do the same thing while doing *puja* also. Once the *puja* begins it continues for the whole day whether any other person joins in the same or not, Baba is least concerned.

Manoranjan babu—Ma, I have not understood properly the topic of the riddle of birth and death as mentioned in the Gita. That we are sons of the Immortal, we have no death, that has not been understood properly. Because everyone dies. Even the great souls suffer from the pangs of disease. Seeing all this it is not understood that we are beyond birth and death.

Ma—Can't you understand at all?

Manoranjan babu—Yes, I understand, but can't have faith.

Ma—Don't you have faith at all?

Manoranjan babu—Yes, there is belief, but that does not work. (Everyone laugh).

Ma—Well, why the point of physical suffering of the great souls only draw your attention? That they also eat, sleep, why donot that come to your attention? Because is there any need to take food for one who has known the Brahman and has drank the nectar well, what do you understand by the terms—One who has known his true Self or one who has known the Brahman? What are the signs for them?

Ma began asking each one of us about the signs. But none could give any satisfactory reply. At this moment a certain young man said from our back—"Yes, I can give proper reply. But in that case I have to be allowed to come near Ma." We all made space for him to come and sit near Ma. He first of all enquired—"What is meant by the term 'Knower of the Brahman'? On listening to his question Ma began laughing and we too, because one who was proud enough to utter that he would be able to say what are the signs of the 'Knower of the Brahman' is now asking himself what is meant by the word 'Knower of the Brahman'. Perhaps our laugh made him somewhat pointless and he started talking irrelevantly which appeared to all as ramblings of an insane person. Those words had no relation at all with the term, 'Knower of the

Brahman'. On the other hand it appeared to be an attempt to put Ma in a false position by uttering senseless words in an obstinate and disrespectful manner to humiliate Ma. Both Kedar Babu and Biren dada being rather hot on listening to such undignified remarks raised objections. Trouble arose at this point. It was seen that there were a few other young men also who had come here not to listen, but to create trouble. Ma dissuaded Kedar babu so that quarrel would not ensue and told a few words to the young man herself in order to make him quiet. Later on one of their group started singing with Ma's consent in order to put an end to the trouble. Before his song was over Ma was taken for her food. We also got up soon thereafter. Every one was rather aggrieved at the impolite behaviour of the few youngmen. They also went to their respective places by taking leave of Ma.

After Ma took her food the talk about those young men came up again. But no one relished that unpleasant discussion. I could gather from what was heard that they were all devotees of a young man named Biren Brahmachari. This evening itself Ma went to Sri Biren Brahmachari and talked to him. Ma remarked—"The type of talk that was held with *baba* (meaning Biren Brahmachari) has been heard from these people also." It was learnt from Khukuni didi that Bhajji's (Jyotish Chandra Roy's) wife and son were also seen in that group. However, all these talks were put to an end and other discussion ensued.

Ma began to say—"While doing *sadhana* many arrive at such a stage when doubts arise even about the existence of God. He then considers that there is nothing as God. This also is a state of *sadhana*. There also are several signs of this stage through which it can be understood if anyone has arrived at this stage or not. It is hard to say in what manner and when God attracts one to Him.

Ma continued to say—"Once I heard a certain story from a Professor from Chandausi. He had said that the incident is a true one. It runs as under—

A Yogiraj had come to a certain "Sethji" (prosperous man) for talking alms. Sethji asked one of his men to give one *paisa*. But the Yogiraj was unwilling to accept money. He begged Sethji for one thing only that he should repeat the name of God. But Sethji had no time to pay attention to God. He was deeply engrossed in his business and properties. He did not pay any heed to Yogiraj's entreaties. But Yogiraj was also stubborn in his effort. Sethji then said to Yogiraj—"In place of this prayer you take one paisa more." But Yogiraj was not ready to leave Sethji. He had only one thing to ask—"You please call God. I donot need any paisa." Sethji then being annoyed turned out the Yogiraj from his house with the help of his men.

Sethji had the habit of going out for a walk both in the morning and evening. The day after the above incident when Sethji was out then the Yogiraj assumed the form

and dress of Sethji and entered his house. It was not at all surprising for Yogiraj to assume that dress. Seeing her husband to come back so soon Sethji's wife enquired about the reason for that. Sethji said in reply—"It has been heard that a certain person has come who can take many forms and many types of dresses and has thus been cheating people. If any one comes to you all in my dress then don't allow him to enter the house." Saying thus he went upstairs.

A short time after Sethji came back. When he was entering his house his servants & even sons tried to prevent him. The more he tried to persuade them that he was the owner of the house the more aggressive they became and threatened to beat him.

Being helpless he summoned his wife and told—"Just come and see what they are doing." His wife also considering him as the fake Sethji and being very much angry to find that unknown person had called her as his wife she even beat the Sethji with her sandal. Sethji now being totally disappointed and finding no other way appealed to the Police Station-in-charge. The officer personally knew Sethji. Hearing everything he summoned Sethji's sons to the Police Station. His sons came to the Police Officer and explained that the man who has complained to him is not their father, but a simple swindler and assumer of many forms, because their father is in their house. The Police Officer then asked them to bring their father to the Police Station.

The sons then brought the Yogiraj in the form of the Sethji. The Police Officer was so long believing the words of Sethji. But now looking at Yogiraj in the form of Sethji he became non-plussed. It was impossible for him also to find out who was the real Sethji among the two.

The Yogiraj then said to Sethji—"You want to prove yourself as the real Sethji. Well, you just tell how much money was spent for constructing your house. Sethji answered—"What do I know about that? My staff have maintained the accounts and that can be said only after looking at the account books."

The Yogiraj again enquired—"Well, you just tell how much amount was spent on the occasion of your eldest son's marriage? Sethji was unable to tell that also. He spoke that it was not possible for him to say that without consulting the account books. But Yogiraj told all the details of expenditure; as out of his Yogic powers he was able to know everything.

Hearing all this the Police Office decided to consider Yogiraj as the real Sethji and turned out Sethji. The Sethji now having lost everything started moving towards unknown direction wherever his eyes could see. Having walked in this manner he

arrived at a place where many sadhus and sannyasis used to do penance. He could find the Yogiraj also amongst those sannyasis. No sooner than he saw the Yogiraj his real sense came back. He prostrated himself before Yogiraj and narrated the whole history of his calamity. He also repeatedly entreated him to pardon him for his ill manners. The Yogiraj then seeing his repentance excused him and spoke—"My prayer to you was that you should take the name of God. As you have not listened to my words you have suffered so much. I am returning to you again your properties. But you are to use the same as my representative and will always take the name of God. Sethji agreed to that and Yogiraj then asked him to go back home. Sethji also did in the same manner. Now no one objected to his entry because Yogiraj was not there in the house at that time that anyone would suspect.

But Sethji thereafter did not live as before. He built a new temple in his house and began to spend his time in *puja* and *dhyana*.

[To continue]

*

Awake awhile.
 It does not have to be forever.
 Right now!
 One step upon
 the Sky's soft skirt would be enough.
 Awake awhile.

 Just one True moment
 of Love will last for days.
 Awake, my dear.

 Be kind to your sleeping heart.
 Take it out into the vast fields of Light
 And let it breathe.

 —Hafiz

*. Courtesy : PEACE (Monthly Journal) Shanti Ashram, East Godavari-533446

MA-THE OMNIPRESENT

—P.N. Nagu

- I worship thee, but little,
- I endeavour to serve thee through my actions,
- I feel thy form around me,
- But, I know thee, as one nearest to 'God'.

These are my humble thoughts that inspire me from within, which make me feel, an aura of inner happiness and peace of mind attributed to thy glory. For you are not only my revered 'Ma', but a shining path that can lead to the eternal force of truth to be transformed in righteous actions, with least desire of reward but for your blessings and a place at your feet and an experience of Bliss. Ma is the fountain head of *Shakti* which emanates out of her *Darshan*. I have prayed in her serene presence to feel the vibration of the *Shakti*, so that should a need arise, I may not feel any pain that comes out of so many factors in this world full of sufferings.

I feel as the 'chosen one' by 'Ma' as I have experienced pain and suffering that my destiny and *samskāra* have made me to face in recent years and been able to bear it with fortitude and courage. I am still full of joy and look forward to beautiful and meaningful things in life. All this because of *Bhakti* and unflinching faith in 'Ma' and her protective umbrella of *āshirwād* over my head.

'Ma' is immortal. Though her divine body rests in peace, her soul is Omni-present in *Triloka*. If you want to please the soul, wake up to the realities of life, serve the poor and learn to give to the needy, for in it lies the real *Puja, Bhakti, Mukti* and look for 'God in every human'.

- Ma-I am as much a sinner as others,
- For I am not thy true disciple.
- But Bless me-Bless me-Bless me,
- As you are the one and the only magnanimous Ma-Ma-Ma
- True incarnation of Goddess Durga.

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OUR RESPECTFUL HOMAGE

1. Venerable Swami Sri
Vijayanandaji Maharaj



2. Venerable Swami Sri
Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj



3. Venerable Swami Sri
Shivanandaji Maharaj



Brief mention was made in our last April, 2010 issue about the passing away in quick succession in the second week of April of two more of our most venerable *mahātmās*, Swami Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj and Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, apart from the respected Swami Vijayanandaji Maharaj, who left his body on 5th April, 2010. We very much regret that as the April issue of the journal was already in Press, it was decided to publish about those two *mahātmās* in the current issue in greater details along with a few photographs etc. *of all the three most respected mahātmās.*

—Managing Editor

VENERABLE SWAMI SRI BHASKARANANDAJI MAHARAJ

It will be no exaggeration at all to write that among more than half a dozen educated and bright young stars with good family background, who were very closely drawn to Ma Anandamayee and dedicated their lives totally at Her holy feet between the period 1946 and 1956, Swami Sri Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj, because of the admirable traits of his character and total surrender to Sri Ma soon became one of the brightest jewels of Sri Ma's organisation. His unique devotion to Ma and almost constant attendance with Her during the last decade of Her physical presence, his natural concern for all classes of devotees flocking to Sri Ma soon made him very very popular and almost a spiritual guide to them all.

After Ma's *mahāsamadhi* Swami Bhaskaranandaji, because of his constant endeavour to spread the message of Ma both far and near and also to render spiritual guidance to hundreds of seekers of Truth, even being totally oblivious of his personal health and physical comforts, became one of the most popular *mahātmās* of our organisation.

Swamiji had not been keeping good health at all for some time past and had been in rest most of the time in his very favourite solitary ashram at Bhimpura just on the bank of the sacred river Narmada, near Baroda in the State of Gujarat. There he became *Brahmaleen* (merging into the *Brahman* after leaving the mortal coil) on the early morning of 8th April, 2010. The news of the passing away of Swamiji spread almost like wild fire and hundreds of his ardent devotees and admirers flocked to Bhimpura ashram for his last darshan. Almost before sunset his body was well decorated with flowers and taken to the bank of the river Narmada, put on a decorated boat, taken to the mid-stream, accompanied by many other boats full of admirers and devotees and thereafter the pious body of Swamiji was immersed in the holy waters of the Narmada in strict accordance with the rules of the Sanyāsa order.

Thus ended the glorious life of a venerable *mahātmā* who has no doubt carved for himself a permanent place in the hearts of innumerable devotees of Sri Ma.

About the early life of Swamiji it was ascertained from him that he was born in a respectable Brahmin family on 7th February, 1918 at Bhavnagar in the then State of Saurashtra in Western India. His original name was Bharat Dave. He had his early education at Bhavnagar itself and later on joined the Law College at Ahmedabad. By strange coincidence the Principal of that Law College was Sri Mukund Madhav Thakore, a very staunch devotee of Sri Ma, who told his favourite students about Sri Ma and asked them to have her *darshan* whenever She visited Ahmedabad. Thus on one occasion Sri Bharat bhai had the first darshan of Sri Ma sometime in the forties, which immediately left a deep impress on his mind. The second darshan occurred in Mumbai (Bombay) Station, which was indeed "the turning point in his life" in the words of Swamiji himself. That was sometime in the year 1949. He had his next darshan of Sri Ma in early 1954 in Allahabad during the Kumbh Mela there under very strange circumstances where he had suddenly gone with one of his friends. From there they went to Varanasi ashram where for the first time in his life the young Bharat bhai had a private interview with Sri Ma.

Sri Bharat bhai returned to Mumbai, where he had been working temporarily. Here he was living those days at Sion, a suburb of Mumbai City and very near to that place was an old Shiva temple where Sri Ma also used to reside during her occasional visits to the city. So, as his luck would have it here also Bharat bhai used to have Sri Ma's *darshan* off and on.

It is important to note that although Bharat bhai was engaged in some job, he had the least attachment and was mentally ready to leave the job as soon as he would get a nod from Ma. He was ever ready to dedicate himself to a life of *sādhana* under the guidance of Ma Anandamayee.

That moment after all came soon thereafter. He had gone to Shimla on a trip and by chance he could gather the news that Sri Ma was also at Solan those days. Bharat bhai met Ma there and the momentous hour in his life appeared when Ma enquired from him if he was prepared to leave his job

and enter into the ashram life. Bharat bhai's joy knew no bounds and he agreed without even a moment's delay. His main object in frequently coming to Ma was fulfilled.

In accordance with Ma's instructions he proceeded soon thereafter for Vindhyachal to embark on a life of intense *sāadhanā*. So from now on he was known as Sri Bharat Brahmachari.

After two years of *sāadhanā* at Vindhyachal he was directed by Ma to go to Uttarkashi (in the Himalayas) and do *Seva-Puja* of Sri Sri Kali Mata, installed in the ancient ashram there.

The next major turning point in his life, of *sāadhanā* came when as per Sri Ma's direction he had to perform a very very rigorous three year long religious practice, "*Gāyatri Purascharan*" at Hardwar along with two other Brahmacharis Nirvanananda and Nirmalananda. Sri Bharat Brahmachari also was from now on known as Br. Bhaskarananda. Sri Bhaskaranandaji used to relate to us how rigorous *sāadhanā* that was for a long period of three years even without a day's respite and also about Sri Ma's unlimited grace, love and motherly affection which they received in abundance during that memorable period in his life. That was from 1961-64.

After the conclusion of the three year long intense *sāadhanā* and *Tapasyā* (penance) almost a new life began. Bhaskaranandaji got the supreme privilege of remaining with Sri Ma moving about with Her from place to place, to get in touch with visitors coming for Her *darshan*, to talk to them first, to enquire into their problems and then arrange for their personal interviews with Ma. He also became an interpreter at the time of interviews of foreigners with Sri Ma. Thus he became almost a "medium" for hundreds of devotees flocking to Ma for Her Divine blessings.

Another memorable chapter in the life of Sri Bhaskaranandaji began after the demise of Sri Ma's mother (Swami Muktananda Giriji) in 1970. It is well-known to all that Sri Ma never gave *mantra dikshā* to anyone in the traditional manner, save and except to only one person, who was Sri Bholanath himself, Ma's respected husband. So after the passing away of Swami Muktananda Giriji Sri Ma offered the most honourable and rare

privilege of being *Āchāryas* during *dikshā*-giving ceremonies in Ma's personal presence to Sri Bhaskarananda, Nirvanananda and Nirmalananda.

The most tragic incident in the life of Sri Bhaskaranandaji was nevertheless when Sri Ma left her body and merged into the Infinite on August 27, 1982 at Dehradun Kishenpur Ashram. Moreover, the worst thing was that being with Sri Ma almost constantly for a long period he was not physically present near Ma during the last few days of Ma. He had gone to Kailash Manas Sarovar trip during those very days along with Sri Nirvanananda and Swami Swarupananda, the then Addl. General Secretary of the Ashram organisation, Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha.

Sri Bhaskaranandaji had become so deeply attached to Ma that closely observing Ma's physical condition during those days, his inner feelings, his conscience itself repeatedly urged him not to go and to cancel the trip and remain with Ma. But alas it happened otherwise.

Another senior Brahmachari, who also used to be constantly with Ma during those fateful days, related the actual thing that happened during those last few days-

"As the days of Bhaskaranandaji's departure grew near he seemed to become more and more restive and ever brooding how to obtain Ma's permission to cancel the journey at this moment. He personally implored Ma several times to allow him to drop the trip. But Ma was very firm. She repeatedly said - "No, don't cancel." Bhaskaranandaji then requested the Brahmachari to intercede and anyhow get Ma's nod to drop the journey now. The Brahmachari also failed. Ma was firm for reason best known to Her alone. On the fateful day of departure Bhaskaranandaji did *Pranām* to Ma and left Her room with tearful eyes, looking straight at Her face. That was infact the last *darshan* of Ma, for whom he had left his home and infact everything."

This was infact the greatest shock in the life of Sri Bhaskaranandaji. The most sorrowful news of Sri Ma's leaving her body was conveyed immediately through wireless to the Ashram group when they returned to the Indian border. Bhaskaranandaji broke down like a young child. The

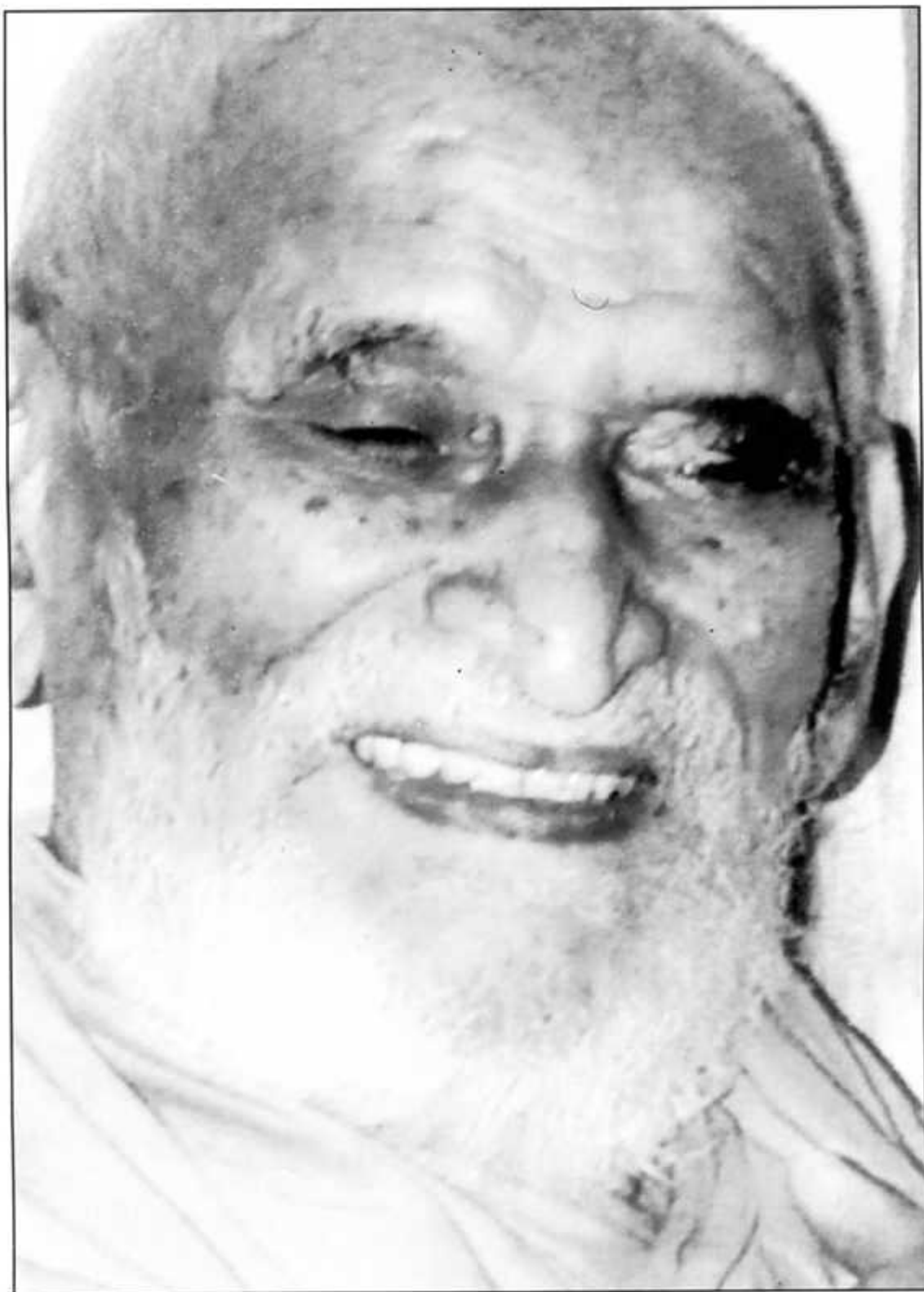
shock was almost unbearable for him. But he gathered patience anyhow and soon returned to Hardwar, Kankhal ashram along with his companions.

It of course took a considerable period for him to gain his normal composure before he commenced his normal duties. For the first 2/3 months he devoted his time entirely in meditation, *japa* and reading of the scriptures sitting in solitude. Then gradually the inspiration came to him from within that from now on his life was to be dedicated exclusively for propagation of Ma's Vani and extend spiritual guidance to all those who came to Ma's ashrams in search of real peace.

This infact became the real mission of the great man almost till the day he fell seriously ill and left his mortal coil on April 8, 2010 at the age of about 92 and merged into the Infinite. But although our beloved and respectful Swami Bhaskaranandaji, with his smiling face, will be missed by us for ever, there is no doubt at all that he will live in the hearts of hundreds of his devotees and admirers for ever.

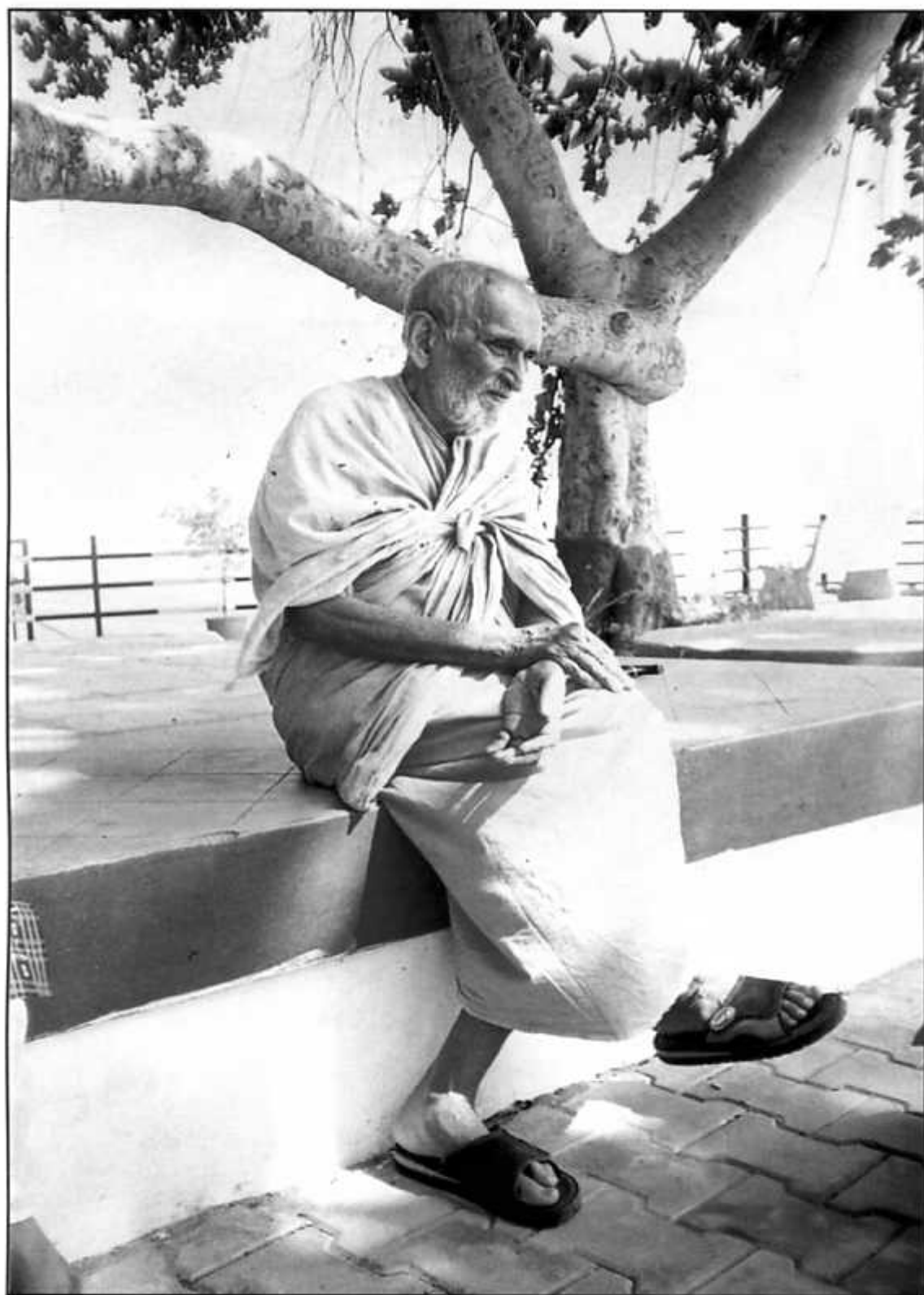
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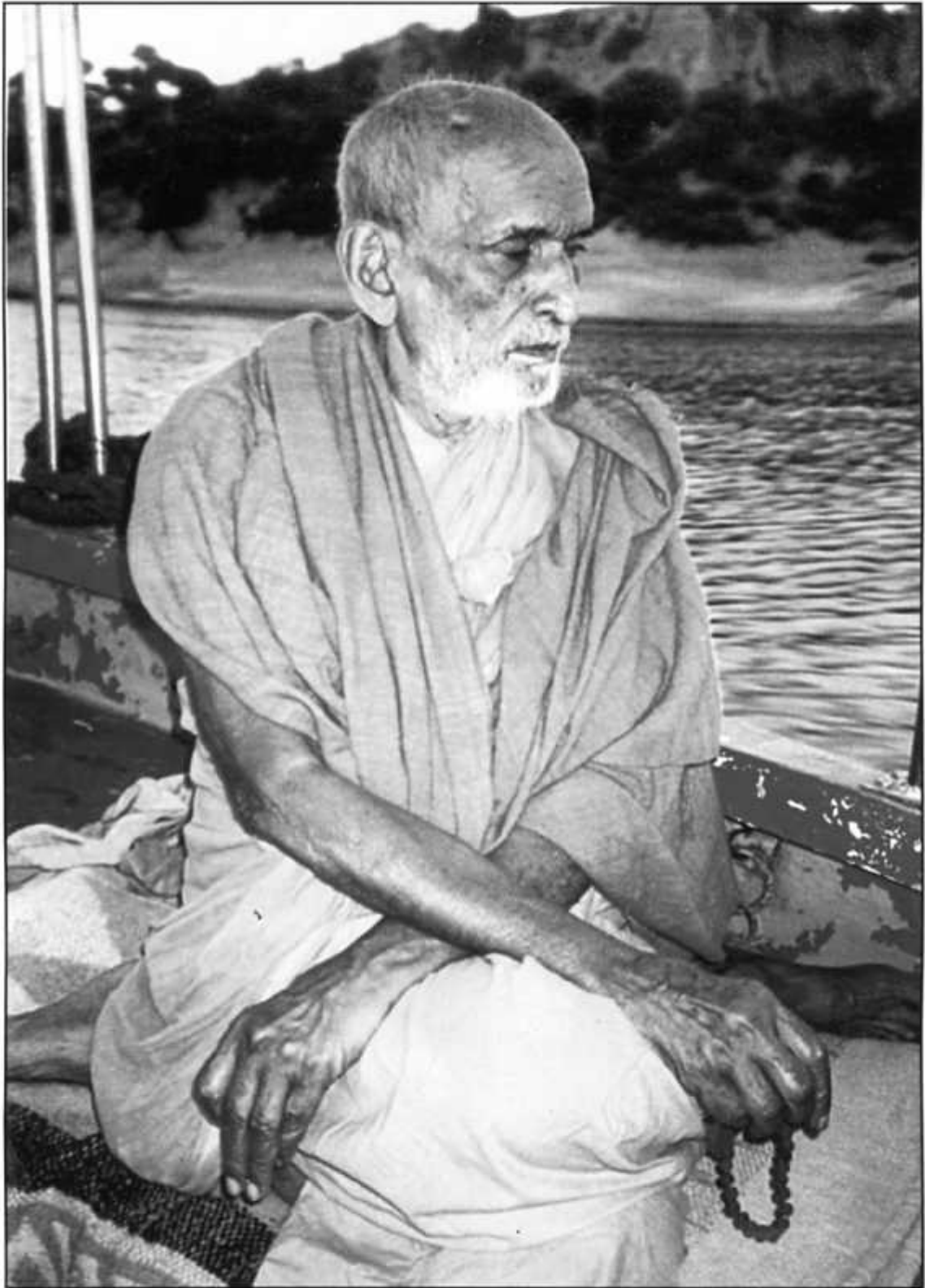




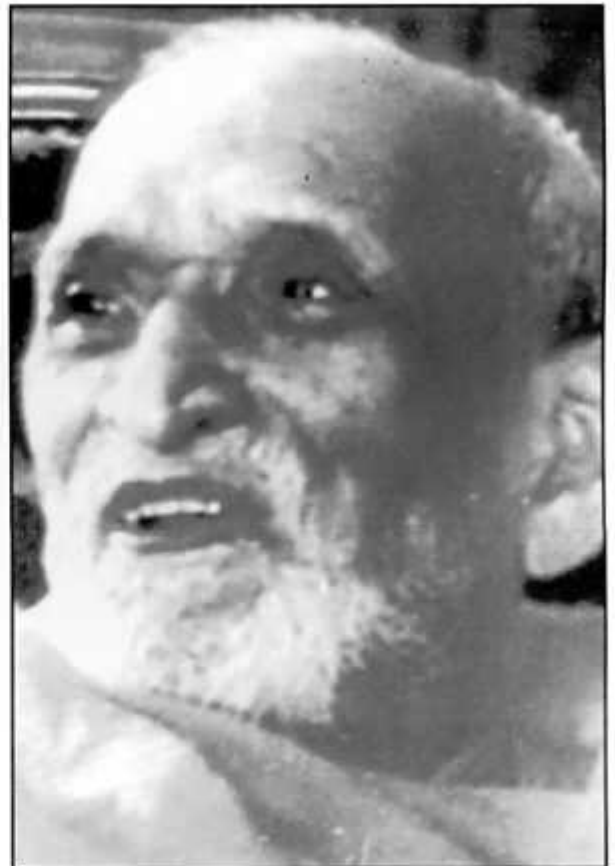
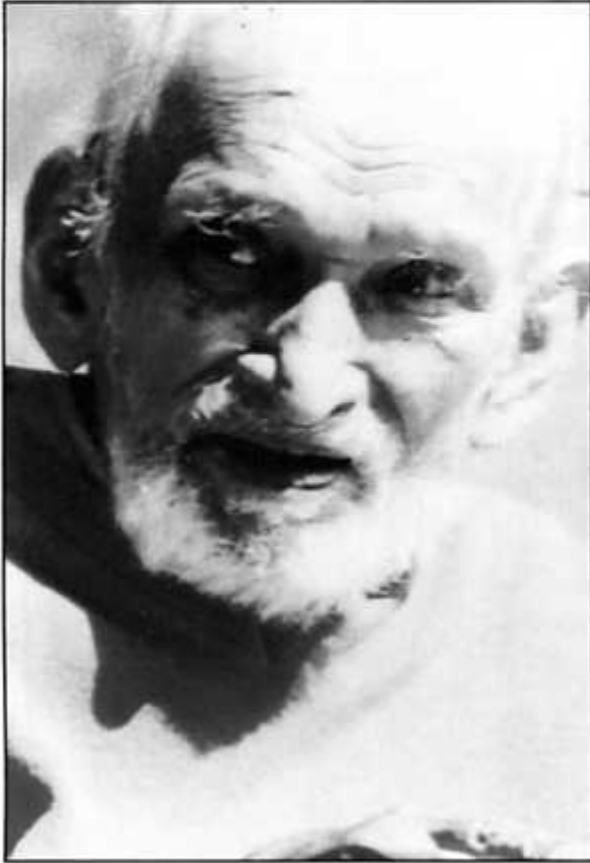


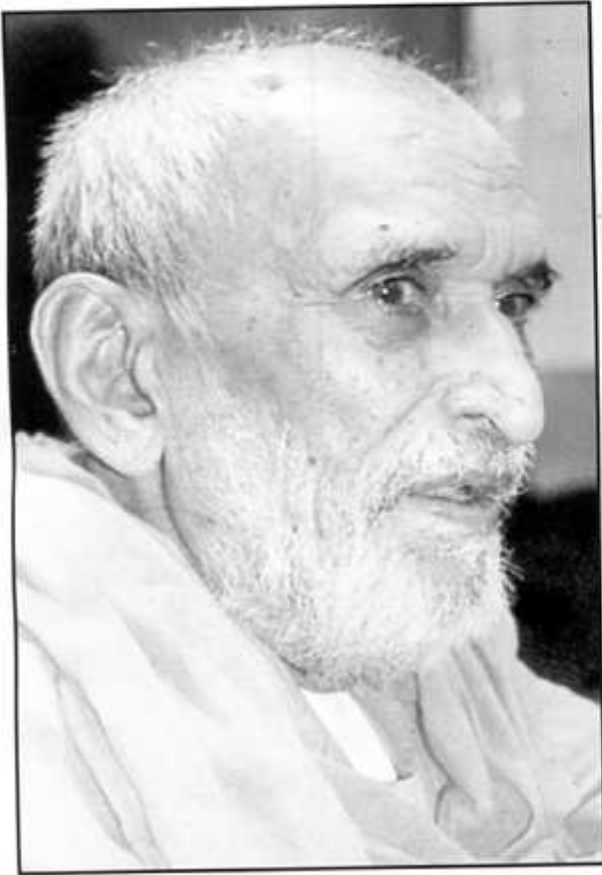














Last photo of Pujya Swamiji



Swamiji in *Mahāsamādhi*

VENERABLE SWAMI SRI SHIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

Fair complexioned and tall with flowing hair and beard, looking like a veritable sage, ever smiling and with a highly amiable nature Swami Sri Shivanandaji Maharaj, who had been a great asset to our organisation left his body at the age of ninety three at Kankhal, Hardwar on 9th April, 2010.

Swamiji had been ailing for sometime past and on the same day as Swami Bhaskaranandaji Maharaj left his body in our ashram at Bhimpura, on the bank of the holy river Narmada, his physical complications somewhat aggravated, he was shifted to the nearby Rama Krishna Mission Hospital at Kankhal and breathed his last almost in the noon of April 9, 2010. His body was brought back to the "Sadhu Niwas", where he used to live, cleaned with Ganga water, new ochre cloths were put on, decorated with flowers and as per tradition of the *sanyāsa* order taken to Hardwar and was immersed in the Ganga with proper rituals.

Thus ended the life of a great man, who had served this organisation with exemplary dedication and utter humility for long sixty four years.

Born in a respectable family of Bengali Brahmins, settled in Allahabad, Swamiji whose original name was Sri Sailesh Banerjee first met Ma at Allahabad itself sometime in the forties. The very first darshan of Ma, which he had in the famous Satya Gopal Ashram there left an indelible impression on his mind and he was heavily drawn to Ma from that very day. This was indeed the turning point in his life. From then onward he would try to meet Ma whenever possible and finally leaving everything surrendered his whole life at the Divine feet of Ma sometime in the year 1946. It was learnt that he was then prosecuting his Post Graduate studies in Kolkata (Calcutta).

It is indeed very interesting to note that just several months before that his next brother Sri Kusum Kumar Banerjee, who was also a very bright student, just after completing his Master of Science Course left his home and surrendered himself at the feet of Ma. The said Sri Kusum Kumar is

now known as Swami Nirvananandaji Maharaj and is recognised as one of the most respectable and senior *mahātmās* of our organisation.

Soon after Sri Sailesh Kumar joined the ashram he was directed by Ma to proceed to Almora (in the Himalayas) and take charge of the young boy's educational institution, Ma Anandamayee Vidyapeeth there. From now on he began to live the life of a Brahmachari and came to be known as "Brahmachari Sailesh."

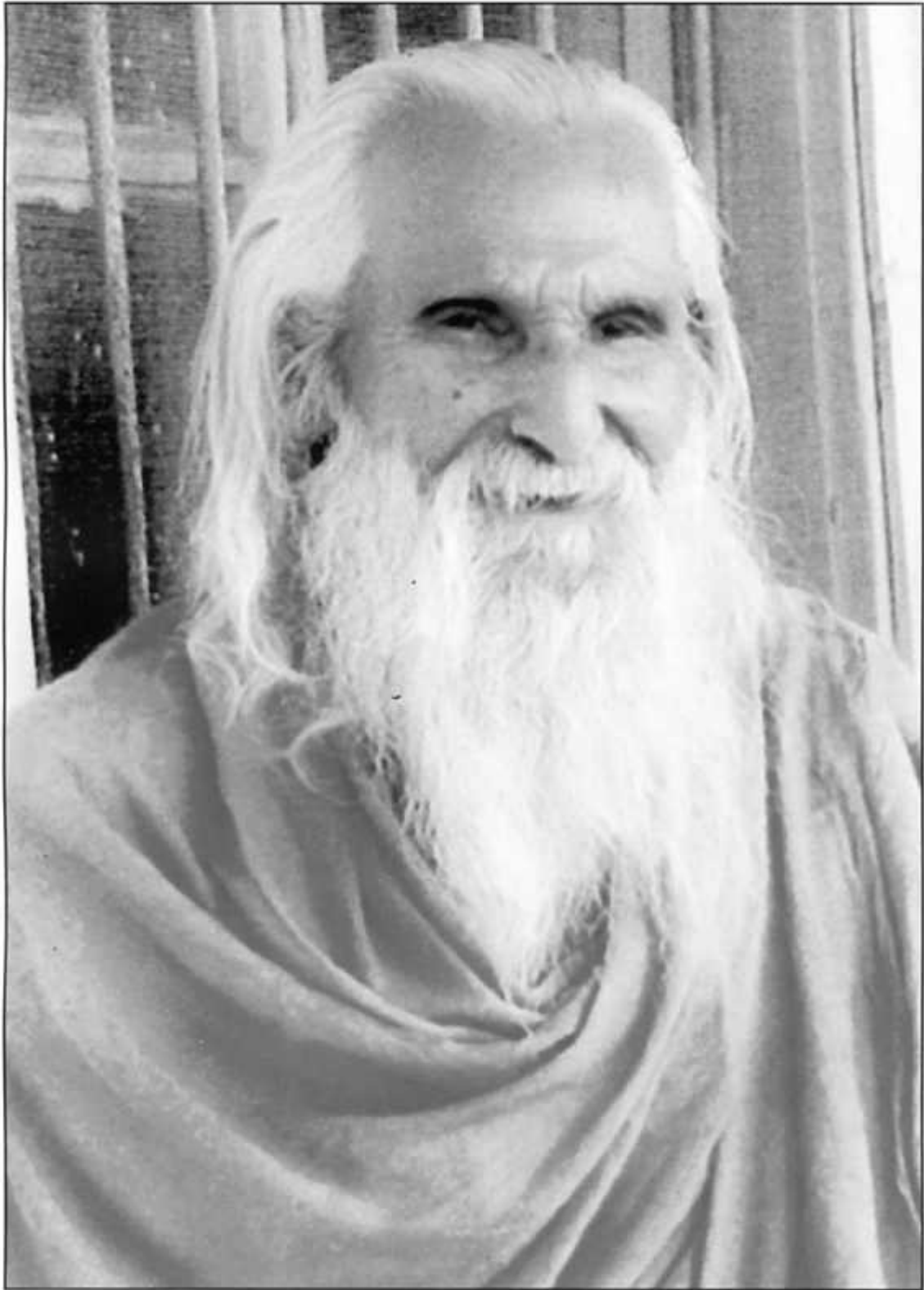
The wonderful service which he rendered for the sake of the Vidyapeeth for nearly three decades was really unique. He was the father, mother, guardian and teacher all in one of the very young brahmachari boys, undergoing their studies there in the ancient *Gurukula* tradition. His spirit of service was really unparalleled and his ex-students scattered all over the country even now very fondly remember about their most respected "Saileshda".

After rendering exemplary service to the Vidyapeeth for quite a long period Sri Sailesh Brahmachariji thereafter engrossed himself fully in spiritual practices and after Ma's *mahā samādhi* he began performing the task of being one of the *Āchāryas* at the time of giving *dikshā* to devotees. His most affectionate way of giving instructions to the spiritual aspirants and all who became privileged to receive *dikshā* was something really exemplary and made him very very popular among all concerned. After sometime he took *sanyāsa* and from that time onwards he came to be known as "Swami Shivananda Maharaj."

It is very significant to note that Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, apart from all his other qualities, was a very good writer in Bengali and a known poet. His writings and poems used to be published in various journals all over the country.

There is nodoubt whatsoever that he will be remembered by hundreds for many many years to come for all the qualities of his head and heart.

*



Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj
— a very natural photo

MIRACLES STILL HAPPEN

—Sri Vijayananda

Miracles still happen nowadays, and sometimes the most wild dreams become true; and this is what happened to me when I met Sri Ma Anandamayee for the first time on the 2nd of February, 1951 at Her Varanasi Ashram.

I had come to India in search of a real *Guru*, not just a teacher, but one of those mysterious Great Beings, who can by their mere presence awaken in us the inner power which makes real *sādhana* possible.

I knew nothing about Sri Ma Anandamayee. The first time her name was mentioned before me was at Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. One Canadian who was coming from Northern India advised me to visit the Ashram of Sri Ma Anandamayee beautifully rested on the bank of the Ganges and to have the *darshan* of Sri Ma. It did not awaken in me any interest. Nevertheless, I noted down Her name among other things worthwhile to be seen at Banaras. Anyhow, I had already lost any hope to find the sage I was looking for and my passage back to France was already booked on the 21st of February from Colombo.

I reached Varanasi on the second of February and got my accommodation at the Clark's Hotel, near the Cantonment Station. In the afternoon a young man (I had an introduction letter from his uncle) accompanied me to Bhadaini area of the town. We crossed a narrow lane, entered through a small door and found us all of a sudden in a vast majestic *ashram* overlooking the Ganges with a breathtaking view along the Ghats. It was the *Ashram* of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee.

My first idea was to have to look and go away. My companion introduced me to Her. They were talking in Bengali. The young man told me : "Ma says, you are good". She was looking at me with her strange look which is so familiar to me now. She looks at you, but also far beyond, in your past, your future, your whole destiny.

Can I recollect my first impression? Surprise, I believe. I expected to see an old lady with white hair but I found myself before a person looking fairly young with Her jet black hair falling on Her shoulders; but surprisingly, I did not notice Her beauty at that time.

But the real happening was inside of me. How to explain this? It was like somebody throwing a lighted match in gun-powder. You know that something extraordinary is going to happen, although it does not happen at the very moment. In that

moment, I felt something strange which I could not define. But, indeed, a few hours later after I had gone to my hotel the explosion occurred a feeling of unearthly joy and happiness : "I have found the Guru I was looking for". There was no shadow of doubt about that in my mind. What gave me this conviction?

People will call it "Love". But the English word is misleading for this wonderful relationship between *Guru* and disciple. The *Guru* is not only dearer than a mother, a father or a friend. All the shades of love and veneration are contained in this relationship. Any worldly love, whatever pure and sublimated it may be, ever ends in disillusion and sorrow. But the love of the *Guru* purifies the mind and liberates him from worldly attachment. It is like a flawless mirror which reflects our own higher Self, and leads to the discovery of the eternal source of peace and happiness which is inside ourselves. It is through this love that one can renounce all of a sudden the comforts of a luxurious life and devote oneself entirely to the search of the Supreme. It is through this love that one gets the strength to conquer *kāma*, *krodha* and *lobha* (lust, anger and greediness) This is *Guru-kripā*.

To sit at Ma's holy feet was not only a source of peace and bliss, it was also a powerful *sādhana*. Her very presence purified the mind, loosening age-long fetters. Without telling a word she could open the way of the *nādis*, granting one in a few minutes what would have taken many years of hard strenuous *sādhana*.

My relation with Ma was that with a *Guru*. But she was much more than this. She was doubtlessly a Divine Being. Sri Ma had told us that she had not come on earth as a result of some *prārabdha karma* and that she had no previous birth. Was she an *Avatāra*? Or the embodiment of the Divine Mother? Or a perfect sage who had come down to help humanity? Much had been written or speculated about it. What is certain is that the lady we called Sri Ma Anandamayee was a vehicle for an immense power of infinite Love. Once as I had complained to Her that She had built a boundary around Her against foreigners, She told: There is no question of any boundary; I and you are one; this (showing Her body) is only an appearance. I am all-pervading". She had only an elementary schooling, and had read no scripture, but Her wisdom bluffed the greatest of *Pundits*. In a few words, she could resolve the most intricate philosophical problems and one was left wondering how simple it was. There was no path of *sādhana* which was unknown to her and she would advise everyone on the path which was best suitable to him. What struck me specially was Her extraordinary skill in opening and closing (when needed) the *nādis* of *sādhakas* without any effort, just playfully.

I travelled with Ma during the first 19 months without a break (except one day), for after having found such miraculous being, how could I leave her. Travelling with Ma was not just travelling; it was an unique experience. One was moving in a world of miracles. By "miracle" I do not mean something which strikes imagination as a

disruption of natural laws (although this too happened sometimes) but the fulfilment of a wish or a desire at the moment one had desired it, and just the way one would have liked it. We know that whatever might happen, "Ma will arrange", that we were under the protection of a great being for which the word "impossible" does not exist. Of course, this was not only while travelling, but wherever Ma was and for all those who had some connection with her. And it happened in such simple, spontaneous way that at the moment one was hardly aware of it.

For example, it is well known among Ma's devotees that whenever she distributed fruits or sweets, there was ever enough for all those present, whatever might have been the number of fruits and the number of persons. In this connection one instance comes to my mind when I was personally involved. It happened at Ma's Ashram at Vrindavan. One day, it was late in the evening, may be 10 pm. I went to Ma's room to tell her that I would like to leave the next day for Almora and secure her permission and her blessings. In the ground-floor of Ma's building there are two rooms; the first room fairly big which serves as a reception room, and another on the back for Ma's private residence. When I came, Ma was sitting in the front room, near the door of the second room. The room was filled to capacity by many people standing close to one another. It was not possible to enter the room or to cross the dense crowd. So I stood outside together with other people. Ma was distributing oranges and that was why the crowd had assembled, everyone being eager to get *prasād* from Ma's own hands. There was a basket of big oranges (perhaps the Nagpur type) before Ma. But whatever big the basket might have been, it could not be enough for so many people. I decided not to take an orange for myself. Anyhow, I had not come for this but for having a talk with Ma before starting for Almora and Daulchina. To be certain that she would not notice me, I hid myself behind the people, and as I knew She could feel my *bhāva*, I made my mind completely blank.

After some time the distribution was over and surprisingly, everyone got an orange. Then Ma asked "*sabko milā*" ? (did everybody get?). All over the assembly one could hear satisfied "yes, yes, yes." I kept quiet and hid myself much more behind the people. Then I heard Ma's voice telling, "*Ek ko nahi milā*" (One did not get). As soon as She had uttered these words, the dense crowd splitted itself in two as if by magic leaving open a way straight towards Ma, and I was sucked inside this way almost against my will until I came to Her, made *pranam*, and She gave me a big orange with Her wonderful happy smile.

But the most striking miraculous power displayed almost daily by Ma was her astonishing skill to attract people through her love and transform unbelievers into religious people and sinners into religious men. Her power of attraction was indeed legendary. She would at once find the dominant effective feature of the individual and appear to him in the aspect dearest to him. To some, she was the mother; to others

a daughter or a close friend, some again would see her as *Ishta*, *Krishna*, *Durga*, *Shiva*, etc..., or their *Guru*. But to the great majority of people, "*she was our Ma*," the all powerful loving Mother ever ready to help and protect Her children whatever race or creed they may belong to.

I remember a boy from Peru, South America, who had come for the first time to Ma, did not know any English but could converse in French, and I was the only person in the *Ashram* to whom he could talk directly. On one occasion we were both *sitting* in *satsang* in the presence of Ma, fairly apart from each other. At one moment, he was so stunned by what he had seen that he got up in the midst of the *satsang* and came to the place where I was sitting. His face had an expression of utter amazement when he told me: "Oh! She looks just like my mother".

Sometimes, on special occasion like during *Kali-puja* and *Janmashtami*, etc., her features, her behaviour, her *bhava* would be so transformed as she had become the embodiment of the deity worshipped. I had myself the great fortune of witnessing such transformation. It was *Janmashtami* (the birthday of *Krishna*) at night and the Kanyapeeth girls had dressed Sri Ma like *Krishna*. She was in a small room in the upper storey of the Kanyapeeth building and we were allowed to go up and have her *darshan* (usually males are not allowed in this building). I went rather reluctantly feeling rather annoyed that Ma had been dressed in what, I thought, was a disguise. But when I entered the room, I stood in awe, before bending to make *pranam*. There was no question of disguise. Her features had a majestic luminous beauty almost masculine. Her attitude, her way of sitting conjured those of a royal sage receiving us with his benign smile. She was really identified with *Krishna*.

When the Lord has come on earth to play with us the wonderful play of love, which leads to liberation from wordly bondage, how can one forego even for a short time His divine presence. But Ma did not encourage sole attachment for her physical form. It was a stepping stone for discovering the all-pervading Ma and finally the Divine which is seated in our own heart, and which is our Real Eternal Being. Ma used to say: "From *moha* (attachment) to this Body (Ma), all other *moha* will vanish". And also: "To know *Bhagavān* is to know one's Real Self and to know one's Real Self is to know *Bhagavān*".

With Vijayananda (as She had named me) she did indeed try to wean him away. She had a hard time but finally succeeded, and this happened in 1954. In the month of May, Ma's birthday celebrations were to be held at Almora *Ashram*. I was in the Varanasi Ashram in the month of April, and came to Almora after having received Sri Ma's permission shortly before the celebrations. I had indeed tried to free myself from the strong attachment I was feeling for Sri Ma's presence in its physical aspect, and thought that I had succeeded. But then, it came again more intensely than before. After reaching Almora I asked for a private interview, and told her frankly about this. She smiled and told me: "You stay for three years at Almora". I was taken aback and

burst out: "Ma! this is impossible. "Then, one year only." was her reply. How it could come out I do not know, but I agreed and had bound myself to a dreadful promise, to stay one full year without Ma's physical *darshan*. Sri Ma did not leave Almora immediately after the celebrations but remained until the end of June. I was certain that knowing my state of mind she could not leave me at Almora and would tell me at the last moment to accompany her. The dreadful moment of her departure finally came. I was standing near her car watching her, but the words I expected did not come. The car started its way down to the plains and my gaze followed it as long as it was possible. Perhaps, I thought, she would send somebody to call me, but nobody came. Of course, I could have followed Ma to the plain, and she would have laughed it away as she had done on previous occasions. But I had given my word. And also I understood it would be beneficial for me to stay in seclusion.

During the celebrations, as the *Ashram* was overcrowded, I had been accommodated in the small Kutia down, adjacent to the Patal Devi Mandir. After Ma's departure, I had to shift in one of the *Ashram* rooms, and was taking my belongings up to the small path leading to the *Ashram*. My mind was in very gloomy mood bordering despair, Ma has gone and so many days are going to pass without her *darshan*. The bracing climate, the majestic beauty of the mountain peaks, what is it without Ma's *darshan*, I was thinking while looking sadly towards Kasar Devi, a small mountain above Almora.

All of a sudden, something extraordinary happened. How can I describe a vision which is not seen with the eyes? Ma was before me, Her subtle body permeating the space. It was a form almost melting in the formless. Her long black hair fling along the mountain ridges and Her wonderful smile filling my heart with inexpressible peace and joy. She was outside, but also inside of me. "Why do you lament, fool," she was telling me without words. "I am ever with you, very near to you".

Several years after a similar experience had happened in similar condition at Raipur, near Dehra Dun, but at that time, there was no form. Only a divine presence pervading everything, including myself with solemn peace and happiness. It was like a taste of eternity. But although I did not see any form, there was no doubt in my mind that it was Ma who had come in that aspect. But the vision was soon forgotten, and the intense yearning for Ma's physical presence came up again. This time I had failed the test. But later on, I was able to stay lengthy periods without Sri Ma's physical presence. Her Divine Body was not there, but her Love was ever with me.

Ma had told once: "Whoever has loved even once this Body (Herself) will never be able to erase it from his mind, whatever hard he may try". Many years have elapsed since she has withdrawn "this Body", so dear to us, from our sight. But Her love is ever present. Tears come in our eyes when we think of Her. These are not the bitter tears of sorrow, but tears of love, which keep all alive, the eternal link we have with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee.

MA ANANDAMAYEE — THE IMPACT OF HER MAHĀ ĀVIRBHĀVA

—Dr. D. P. Mukhopadhyay

While it is true that Ma had religiously shunned all publicity and did never encourage any propaganda throughout Her *leelā* spread over a span of 86 years, it is saddening that no major literature or assessment or research papers are available on Ma Anandamayee who has been hailed with very great esteem by all the saints and scholars of our holy and ancient country as well as by devotees and scholars from abroad.

The objective of this article is to directly touch on the impact created by Ma's *Mahā Āvirbhāva*, taking account of the fact that she did not take birth out of any *Prārabdhā Karma* and she did neither have any *sankalpa* or *vikalpa*, Ma used to play Her act of *leelā* on the strength of spontaneity, as an act of God the Supreme, which Ma otherwise termed "*Jo hojāi*" and Her *Khcyāl* (as the things happen spontaneously).

At the concluding function of Ma's Centenary Celebration at Kankhal (Haridwar) on 8th June, 1996, where a representative gathering of very learned sadhus, *mahātmās*, scholars, indologists from India and even Theosophists from abroad were present to pay their homage to Ma Anandamayee, it was concluded that.

*"janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvatah
tyaktvā deham punarjanma
nai 'ti mameti so' rjuna"* (*Gīta iv. 9*)

It was concluded that both Ma's birth and playful act of *leelā* were unique, unnatural and Divine. She was not an ordinary human being with mundane objectives, pre-conceived plans of action and desire for any particular results or, otherwise. Dr. Radhakrishnan comments, "The Divine greatness is conveyed to us in and through these great individuals. Their lives dramatize for us the essential constituents of human life ascending to the fulfilment of its destiny. "In Ma Anandamayee there was neither sorrow nor happiness, nor pain nor suffering, nor desires, nor failure nor promise, nor frustration. Ma maintained the same constant status or *sthiti* right from the time of Her birth to Her *Mahā-Samādhi* at Dehradun on 27th August, 1982. On this Ma Herself confirmed, "I am what I was earlier and shall remain the same in

future too. "It was held by elevated souls that Ma Anandamayee was constantly immersed in *Brahman* at all times, and she was fully at the state of *Brāhmi-stithi*, as explained in Bhagavad Gita in Chapter 11.56.

The foregoing para was essential to give some glimpse of Ma's *swarupa* in common man's language, as without that it would be impossible to attempt or, to even gauge Ma Anandamayee's possible impact on Indian culture and civilization. In this great country many *Avatāras*, *Mahātmās*, public leaders, scholars and social reformers were born, who left an everlasting impression on the country's heritage, culture and its civilization. From that context, Ma Anandamayee's *leelā* could not be termed strictly social or cultural in nature or for that matter, any Missionary attempt to change any existing system through conversion or for that matter, preaching any particular dogma or religion. Then what did Ma want to establish or stood for the benefit of mankind and civilization? There has neither been any systematic debate nor, studies before on this important question. There are records to substantiate the fact as Ma confirmed, "I have no particular work to do here. You prayed for this body and it is here before you. Take it as a musical instrument. You will hear as you play." This statement clarifies to some extent Ma's real *swarupa* in the context of possible existence of any of Her mission or any particular mundane objective, if at all it ever existed. The great speaker and religious leader Swami Dayanand Saraswati once came to see Ma and asked "Mother, what you are in fact?" Ma replied, "You want to know what I am? Well, I am what you consider me to be not more not less." Swamijee again asked, "What is the nature of your *Samādhi*? Is it *Savikalpa* or *Nirvikalpa*?" Ma again replied, "All that I can say is that in the midst of all apparent changes of state in body and mind, I feel that in me there is no change of state. Call it in any name you like. Is it *Samādhi*?"

We can go into further depth now while analyzing the foregoing paragraphs as to what area or parameter Ma had touched upon or indicated or hinted at during Her playful act of *leelā*, as we are now fortunately placed more than one hundred years after Her *Mahā Ābirbhāva*, and some of the writings, though sketchy, are available including some of Ma Anandamayee's own admission on Her self. It now seems clear from the existing records and analyses by the greatest scholars and Mahatmas of India that Ma Anandamayee had been the primordial (*Ādi Parāshakti* or *Mahāmāyā*) Herself, descending before us in human form at a critical juncture, when value system had completely eroded, as mankind in general lost its basic objects and natural virtues of love and compassion, truth and humanity, and even forgot its own identity and purpose of human life. People took upon religion rather easily and selfishly and did not hesitate even to mix it up with all sorts of distorted meanings and imposing

restrictions. However, a country like India whose main artery stands on religion, as promulgated by Swami Vivekananda, cannot thrive in such atmosphere for long.

Soon after Ma's *Mahā Ābirbhāva* in 1896 at Village Kheora of the then East Bengal (now Bangladesh), this holy country went through an unforgettable and tumultuous experience-*Banga Bhanga Āndolan* in 1905 and the Swadeshi Movement that followed (1905-1919), the agitation over the partition of Bengal, massive destruction of the Second World War (1939-45) and the great famine of Bengal (1945). The innate beauty of *Sanātana Vedic Dharma* seemed to be lost. People became natively imitative to their master's style of operations for getting petty favours and so-called prosperity. Western materialism started tightening its grip. People largely forgot their own civilization as illustrated and convincingly proved by the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and the *Rishis* and *Munis* dating back 5000 years and more.

Swami Vivekananda earlier tried to exhort people of the then subservient India and popularized the original glory of this ancient country and the beauty of Hindu religion vis-a-vis others before the Religious leaders of the world (1893-1897). His efforts bore fruit. People became exposed to the magnanimity, liberalism and vastness of Hindu religion. Vast treasure of Indian civilization and respect for Hindu religion somewhat improved.

But Swami Vivekananda's own mission and his singular effort could not continue for long as he decided to leave this world, rather at an early age of 38 in 1902, although the Ramakrishna Mission established by him continued to follow his tenets.

It was a crucial time in the history of Indian spiritual evolution and *Sanātana Dharma* after the departure of Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1886), that Ma Anandamayee appeared on the scene and started Her unique style of operation, after throwing away all shackles of a Hindu housewife in an ancient and traditional society of the then East Bengal. While Ramakrishna Paramhansa gave a serious jolt and placed on the right track the then swaying away Hindu religion amidst confusion of urban Westernization and distortion by self-styled rural Pandits; Ma Anandamayee rather daringly liberalized it further and gave a clarion call of salvation to even common men and women. It was in early 1920s that Ma Anandamayee's spontaneous expression of various spiritual *Bhāvas* and *Vibhūtis* surprised the people at Bajitpur (Mymensingh) and later scholars and elites of Dhaka, and by the end of 1930 Ma left Dhaka on Her sojourn to conquer the spiritual arena of India and beyond to lead mankind from darkness to its glory. At this juncture Ma proclaimed, "Those who do not have any refuge or shelter or any direction on the path of religion or those who are absolutely blind, helpless or insecured, I need them most and them in particular."

Emanating from Her own admission, many learned scholars, *Mahātmās* and Indologists today believe that Ma appeared on this earth for the salvation of mankind



Āchāryas & Mahamandaleshwars of the Mahanirvani Akhāḍa being received in our ashram at Kankhal during Purna Kumbh Mela on March 7, 2010



A scene from the special Sadhu bhandara of the dignitaries of the Mahanirvani Akhāḍa on March 7, 2010



Āchāryas - Mahamandaleshwars of the Niranjani Akhāḍa paying homage to Ma during the special bhandara in Kankhal Ashram on March 8, 2010



Āchāryas, Mahamandaleshwars & Mahants of the Niranjani Akhāḍa participating in the special Sadhu bhandara in the Shankaracharya hall, Kankhal Ashram.



Mahamandaleshwars & Mahants of the Udasin Ākhāḍas attending the function in Kankhal ashram on April 8, 2010



A scene from the special Sadhu Bhandara of the top *mahātmās* of the Udasin Akhāḍa on April 8, 2010



A view of one of the special Sadhu bhandaras in Kankhal Ashram on the occasion of the Purna Kumbh at Hardwar.

and humanity at large, and to give them a new direction depending on our centuries-old heritage of Vedic culture and civilization. Ma Anandamayee made Her available to millions of such helpless people in the years to come (1932-1982) by constantly moving across the length and breadth of the country in Her ceaseless sojourn. She never bothered of Her own comforts, convenience, fatigue or pain or state of Her health. She continuously exhorted all of us that human birth is a rare one and we should not miss this opportunity. Ma Anandamayee did not mince words in saying in Her very lucid and motherly tone that the path towards God, the Almighty (*Bhagabat Path*) is the only path to be treaded upon and any deviation would bring miseries and sorrows.

She said, "God's favour (*Kripā*) and blessings are ever pouring on!" Ma Anandamayee, without making any compromise to pure spiritualism, brought the means and practices of religion to common men and women at ease. She confirmed, "The ultimate aim of this human birth is God realization. You can start treading the path of God from any point wherever you may be at present. There is nothing to despair! You are all children of the *Rishis* and *Munis* (*Amritasya Putrā*). Believe my words! Stick to God's Name. Everything is possible with that!"

In an age when the decadent Hindu orthodoxy was provoking censure and even revolt, Ramakrishna (1836-1886) afforded a new valid ideal of quintessential Hindu devotion. A few years later in the first quarter of the twentieth century, Ma Anandamayee seemed to break all the barriers first by Her manifestation as the divine Mother and later by reestablishing the original tenets of pure *Sanātan Dharma*. For that Ma Anandamayee neither felt any need to visit the West nor did She send any of Her own ascetic follower to visit abroad. This is a great and bold step indeed to revitalize and rejuvenate the decaying trend of our religion, and at the same time everything, as if such tendencies got swept away under Ma Anandamayee's gigantic presence, and an opposite of life's goal and discovering the secret of fulfilment of human birth.

In fact, what Ma Anandamayee preached or seemed to have propagated was Universal World Religion- full of love, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, unity and self-fulfilment. It propagates peace, shuns violence, stands on truth and is against all types of fanaticism and hegemony. She laid maximum emphasis on human endeavour and potential, which was infinite. Very plainly and simply, she repeatedly pronounced that, "To Know yourself is to know God". She said, "Whatever you perceive is alright. All religions lead to the same direction, all religious trends are identical - we are all one." Shree Ma hints at a cosmic religion which is eternal, all comprehensive, universal, spontaneous and vital." Ma said, "To know one's self is to know God. When this is known, nothing else remains to be known. It is the essence of peace, bliss, the essence of Being!".

Prof. Alexander Lipski of California University nicely summed up by saying, "Her teaching is always adjusted to the need of the individual and varies in accordance to his or her religious background. It does not matter whether one is monist, dualist, Muslim, Buddhist or Christian. Anandamayee Ma had the ability to attune Herself to the particular religious point of view and the level of understanding of those who would consult Her"

The above attributes to Ma Anandamayee and Her unique treatment to the contemporary religions and messages clearly established the fact that She thoroughly churned up our *Sanātan Vedic Dharma*, made its complete integration and presented to the world its innate beauty up to the core of its strength at a critical juncture, when it was needed most by all. Such feat was achieved never before in the contemporary spiritual history of India. Despite the fact that Ma did not tour the western countries and no publicity or campaign was ever made in those lands, scores of people visited India to have Her *darshan* and confirmed loudly as having quenched their spiritual thirst or, having received the answer for which they longed so much. Amidst confusion in values, multiplicity of ideas or dogmas and cruel materialism amounting to rat race, Ma Anandamayee's mere sight made them dumbfounded! What they saw was unbelievable! There was no need of any spoken language! Communication had already taken place through hearts and their questions answered! Ma transcended all limits and barriers of time and space, yet She accepted everybody whoever came to Her, and from any level whatsoever it may be. She said, "You have to go beyond the mirage of getting or not getting, achieving or not achieving. That is the supreme achievement in one's life. She called it '*Charam Param*'. The super blissful state! Ma said, "Don't brood over anything excepting the *Chidananda* (Super Bliss).

It has to be appreciated that as an integral part of Ma's playful act of *Leelā* for a considerable period of time (1896-1982), Ma Anandamayee advocated and established norms and means of our *Sanatan Dharma* e.g. Yagnas, worshipping gods and goddesses strictly as per *Puranic* rites and principles, publicity of the Vedas and Upanishads and its spread to common man through spiritual discourses by eminent Mahatmas, establishment of the Vedic and Puranic Research Institute at Naimisharanya, the place of origin of the eighteen Puranas, successful establishment of the Kanyapeeth at Varanasi for girls (*Brahmachārinis*) in strict *Gurukula* system for more than seven decades now, popularizing *Srimad Bhāgavat Pārāyan* and Bhagvad Gita etc. only to make us conscious of our heritage.

Similarly, *Sāvitrī Mahā Yagna* was held in Varanasi (1947-1950) in an unprecedented scale for three years continuously. A large congregation of very senior saints from all over India assembled around Ma Anandamayee and memorable *satsangs* were held. In Ma Anandamayee's *Leela* we find that a prominent place has been

allotted to orthodox *Yagnas* and kindling of sacrificial fires as performed by *Rishis* in the days of yore. Again, *Ati Rudra Maha Yagna* was held at Kankhal (Haridwar) in 1981 which was unprecedented in modern times and considered a model for posterity to emulate. All these had remained our rich Vedic culture for the benefit of mankind!

Ma never took *sannyās* or *dikshā* from any outside *Guru*. In Her play of *sāadhanā* She initiated Herself, when *Guru, Mantra* and all the ingredients of initiation came from Her within and mingled back in Her. (Bajitpur, 1922). Ma's humbleness, show of respect and concern for the ochre robe and *Sadhus, Mahatmas* and saints of the country were exemplary in nature. Ma was their true protector and natural guardian. At the same time all *Sadhus-Mahatmas*, including very senior ones, used to give their utmost regard and recognized Ma as "*Bhagavati Incarnate*". The pronouncement of Lord Krishna in Gita became truly alive in Ma Anandamayee *Leclā* :

*puritrānāya sādhanām
vināsāya ca duskritam
dharma-samsthāpanārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge-yuge (4.8)*

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and evil forces; and for the establishment of righteousness and *Sanātan Dharma* I come into being from age to age.

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