

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Shree Anandamayee Ma

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CONTENTS

1.	Matri Vani	1
2.	Ma Anandamayee Prasang —Prof. A.K. Dutta Gupta	3
3.	Mother and Her Playful Role —Bhaiji	6
4.	Pilgrimage to Kailas —Gurupriya Devi	...	...	9
5.	Ma's Technique of Bestowing Divine Love and Grace on One and All	...	...	13
6.	Jangala Mc Mangala Karani —Dr. Bithika Mukerji	...	...	17
7.	The Unique Mother —Br. Niranjani	...	...	19
8.	Matri Satsang in Vrindaban	...	...	23
9.	Children's Pages			
	(i) Vardhaman Mahavir —Khokan Chakravarty	...	...	27
	(ii) Impossible Bartar —R.K. Das	...	...	28
	(iii) A Formula of Being Happy —R.K. Das	...	...	29
10.	Two Approaches : Dual and Non-Dual —Melita Maschmann	...	...	31
11.	Shree Shree Ma's Divine Conversation —Collection Kirpal	33
12.	Raipur Ashram	36
13.	Ashram News	39

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MATRI - VANI

Q. Will God manifest Himself in Samyam Saptah or will He not?

Ma - Sure He will; the curtain will be removed-He Himself who is ever manifest. The work of removing the curtain is yours. Therefore do auspicious deeds. The question of what happens or what does not happen, when manifestation takes place, does not remain.

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In every place everything is present. As in a tree, there is seed in the tree. Unlimited seeds are present, unlimited ways. Tree non-tree. Tree in the form of seed and seed in tree. In you alone are the father, husband and son. All things are present in the form of numbers.

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Q. : Due to the meritorious deeds of so many births human body is given, then why does he commit sin?

Ma : Why does he forget that he has come due to the result of so much piety (in past lives)? He has got into the habit. The practice remains. He has got this life for doing (good) deeds This life is God's beautiful feat of performance. There are so many bad deeds and good deeds. The manner of doing good deed is different. The sin of so many births will be destroyed. In between if any wrong deed is done again he goes into the life of trees, birds, animals. Human life is very rare. On receiving this life it is (one's) duty to take God's beautiful way. For knowing the Self in oneself.

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He is indestructible. He is unchangeable, not the one who comes and goes. One who is in the state of going and coming, that is a different matter. He is in a *yuga* (a long period of years) like a tree, innumerable seeds, innumerable destinations, innumerable states, in this way All in All. One without a second. (*Eka Brahma dvitiyo nasthi*) Motion in rest (*sthiti*) a bird is flying away; sometimes he sits on a tree; if he gets shelter then he sits. If the *atma* which is in a state of movement stops (rests), if he finds a special place that too according to his state, how does he stay? Some can perceive. Movement is within. Still he remains in the mental state. Even in this mental state everything is in it. One without a second. In that state there is no question. That kind of state, *Puja*. If he stays in the mental state (then) he will be able to see what his ability enlightens. Some or the other higher being sees.

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Pure actions, good actions should be done immediately; one cannot trust one's next breath; good actions, pure actions should be done now. This is a true saying, do not delay (doing) auspicious *karma*.

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Our work is accomplished by taking (His) Name. If you take God's name your work (aim, desire) will be fulfilled. Guru will come on his own.

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In this world whatever is made is destroyed. Happiness, unhappiness, good and negative actions, light and darkness. Worry remains, not worryless. Your deeds remain. Something breaks, you feel sad. The erosion that takes place due to duality, that is unhappiness.

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This, the worldly thing, worldly talk. He has been in worldliness. Whatever he does it will give him nothing else but unhappiness only. (This is) the natural world. And its nature is conflict, dispute.

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God's manifestation is a Natural Manifestation. Natural Manifestation and false manifestation. (They) get caught in false manifestation. In achieving *siddhi* (esoteric power) like verbal *siddhi* - whatever one says it happens. If one does not rise above it, one says this — it happens, one says that — it happens. (Ma says one should not get caught in it. In Ma's words) Onself to organise oneself.

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(In the path of spiritual practise) It is natural to come in this path (i.e. *siddhi*) To be able to predict the future etc. will definitely come. The waking of false manifestation. Manifestation has come alive. It is also being used. When (a *sadhaka*) begins to make use of his powers then he remains static. That journey of Bliss, Supreme Bliss stops. Gets caught within want. Kept standing until manifestation (of powers) takes place; as soon as it takes place (the *sadhaka*) stops there, lizard like.

SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG

Vol. 5

—Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

Translation - Br. Niranjani

(continued)

22.10.1948 Friday

I left for Kashi by Varanasi Express with wife and both the daughters. Manomohan and his son Sriman Shakti also accompaneid us. We had reserved our seats in the sleeper so we did not have to run around for our seats.

Today morning itself Mataji reached Kolkata from Beldanga and went to Sri Trigunacharan Bandopadhyaya's house in Srirampur. She will board the train from here. At Srirampur Ma boarded the same train as ours. Many devotees have come to Kolkata from Srirampur, all of them came to the station. As soon as Mataji boarded the train Manomohan and myself did *pranam* to Ma. Ma laughed out loudly. Khukuni didi remarked 'Ma, after all you are taking Amulya dada to Kashi?' Mataji said, "Absolutely, after fixing the day and date." The train started.

Do those dependent on Sadguru get *mukti* after three lives or not —

This was the first time in my life that I got a chance to travel with Ma in this manner. Who knows whether I will be fortunate to get a chance to stay with Ma for such a long time ever agin Discussion on many topics began. I asked Mataji, "Ma, I have heard if a Sadguru gives *diksha* then, there and then the *sanchita karma* (stored *karma* of the past) is destroyed but the *prarabdha karma* (that *karma* which is incumbent and bound to be gone through) has to be undergone. But the Guru can diminish its intensity. The new *karma* of the *shishya* that is *kriyanana karma* is suffered by the Guru himself. If this is true, then why does the blessed disciple of the Sadguru have to take birth thrice to be able to get salvation (*mukti*)?"

Mataji - Some say that those dependent on Sadguru have to take three lives (births) to attain *mukti*, then some say it can take ten lives (births) also.

I- After taking *diksha* (initiation from Sadguru) what happens to the disciple's *karma* thereafter? Does the Guru have to undergo the fruits of his *karma*?

Mataji started laughing without replying.

I- You had said in Kolkata that those *karmas* (actions) are due to *bhog* (conse-

quences of the past deeds) which one desires to do, feels good while doing and feels like repeating again and again.

Mataji—The same I say even now. *Karmas* are of two kinds *karmayoga* and *karmabhoga*. *Karmayoga* is that *karma* which is done for God without the desire of fruits of labour and those *karmas* which only create desires we can call them *karmabhoga*.

I—Does the Guru suffer the fruits of the *karmas* done by his disciple, after initiation, to fulfill his desires? Sri Vijayakrishna Goswami has said those dependent on a Sadguru have no new *karma*. The Guru makes the *shishya* (disciple) his own that is takes full responsibility of the *shishya* after initiating him. Actually the Guru himself does the *sadhana* done by the *shishya* in his body and you too have said similar things. Once you had told me that even if a dependent *shishya* does bad deeds yet, know that his uplift is taking place. From this it is evident that he does not do any new *karma*.

Mataji—If in reality one gets Sadguru's shelter under such circumstances there is no question. He can give salvation (*mukti*) in a moment. He himself gets the desires of his *shishya* fulfilled. You all too must have heard of such things that the Guru himself took the *shishya* to places of fulfillment of desires and facilitated it and after seeing the signs of erosion of *karma*, he took him to another place. One who can finish the fruits of all *karma*, can he not finish the fruits of *prarabdha karma*? It is only due to the Guru's wish that the *shishya* takes more births to finish the fruits of his *karma*, some say three lives, then some say ten lives.

"The Guru himself takes the *shishya's* fruits of *karma* or distributes them among others or removes the *karma* without the undergoing of their fruits, all this is done in various *bhavas*, this in turn is the result of difference in spiritual levels. During *sadhana* all such *bhavas* come when one feels that perhaps this is the actual truth. The intensity of the *bhava* is so great that it cannot be kept hidden, as if splashing and flowing. But if the *sadhaka* on reaching this state keeps the goal in his mind and does not react, then he reaches a higher state and only then he realises the real meaning of the previous *bhava*. While doing *sadhana* someone comes to know that you were his brother in the previous life; he tells you the same. Within you, you have all other relationships of the past, there must have been thousands of brothers in so many lives, besides there must have been so many other relationships with so many people. But he did not experience all this. He only accepted you wholly as his brother of the previous life. The experience of the field of *sadhana* is also similar. A *sadhaka* many times takes a part truth as the whole truth. But if the *sadhaka* stays in surrender keeping his mind on the goal then one day he achieves the fullness of knowledge,

then nothing else remains to be known or understood."

I— If the dependent on Sadguru can take ten lives to attain *mukti* due to the Guru's will then it can take an unlimited number of years too.

Mataji—No. Why should this happen? Unlimited births are definitely there, but if once one gets His *kripa* then why should it take an unlimited number of years?

In this way discussing many topics we were travelling in the train. How the time flew we did not even come to know. The train was halting at several stations and the local devotees of each station were bringing flowers and fruits etc for Mataji and having Her *darshan*. The Post Master of Raniganj Surendra Bandopadhyaya had Mataji's *darshan* with his wife. As the time was too little everyone stood on the platform and received Ma's *darshan*. Mataji sprinkled water on them from the train itself. All took the water as *shantijal* and bowing received it on their heads. Similarly Mataji also gave fruits throwing them like balls. Devotees assembled in the same manner in Jasidih, Sitarampur and other stations. We too received the fruits, *sandesh* etc. as gifts for Mataji again and again. As night approached Mataji told us to prepare to retire. We too went to our respective reserved berths and slept.

(to be continued)

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Blessing for the New Year

"New Year ! New Life. Man should remember Truth in every moment and in every situation with a new zeal"

— *Shree Shree Ma*

MOTHER AND HER PLAYFUL ROLE

—Bhaiji

We have often heard from Mother that when She used to attend to Her household duties She was fully absorbed in the work and had not the slightest thought about Her dress, food or even Her body. She would devote Herself wholly to the tasks assigned to Her and carry out the orders of Her superiors in the family with scrupulous care. Her neighbours would always say.— "This newly married girl lacks usual common sense."

Mother says— "Just as there is a definite time-table for work at the office, school or the shop, so should we set apart for divine contemplation a few minutes out of the twenty-four hours of every day, preferably in the morning and evening. One must form a fixed resolve that this little time shall be dedicated to God throughout life. During this period no worldly activity should be allowed to encroach upon the contemplation of God. A fixed time must be allotted to all the members of the family including the servants. If this practice is continued for long, divine contemplation will become a part of your nature. Once the habit is established, the future course of your life will be made quite easy. You will feel the flow of the mysterious divine grace feeding all your thoughts and actions and giving you new strength. You get a pension or bonus after years of hard work, so that you need no longer earn your livelihood. In the spiritual realm the reward for good, sincere and selfless work is even far greater and can be obtained more easily.

"Your earthly pension expires with your life, but the Divine Pension continues long, long after death. Those who amass money, store it up in a hidden chamber of their house, add to this store what they can save from time to time and keep a constant watch over their treasure. So also reserve a little corner of your mind for God and always steal an opportunity to add to your stock in the shape of the invocation of His name or some pious work or divine thought."

One day Mother was showing the various ways of saluting God and said, — "Lose yourself altogether when bowing down to God with a single-minded devotion and you will obtain joy and power in proportion. If you cannot do anything else, at least morning and evening at the appointed time, lay down your body, mind and lie flat before Him in salutation and think of Him just a little." In this connection She added, "There are two kinds of *pranāms**: Offering to him, your whole body and mind with all thoughts, desires, sense-impressions, love, affection and devotion, just

*. Mode of salutation.

like emptying the contents of a full pitcher to its last drop. The other way is like scattering face-powder through the minute holes of a powder-box; the major portion of your thoughts and desires are kept back in a hidden chamber of your mind, and only a little dust is allowed to escape."

Pramatha Babu was transferred from Dhaka as Post Master General. He went to Mother to bid Her farewell. Mother said to him— "Who salutes whom? You bow down to your own Self." He was thrilled with wonder and joy to hear such a remark.

On one occasion Prof. Atal Behari Bhattacharji fell ill at Shah-bag during the Puja holidays. He keenly desired that Mother should come down to him, and like his own mother, massage his aching head. Mother went and passed Her hands over his whole body from head to foot. On recovery he returned to Rajshahi, the place of his work. After some days this incident was discussed at Shah-bag. I remarked,— "The gentleman lacked common sense, his intelligence was equally poor. I fail to see what purpose he had to make Mother do that job for him during his illness." As soon as Mother heard my remark, Her face changed colour. She said,— "Shall I massage your feet?" With these words She advanced towards me. I began to move away, with Mother following me. Pitaji intervened and stopped Her. Even now I remember Mother's childlike face glowing with motherly warmth, always eager to nurse, soothe and serve all Her children. At that moment Sri. Shashanka Mohan Mukherji cried out, "Ma, Ma," and fell at Her feet.

In this connection Mother said,— "Just as a human body has different parts like the head, the hands, thighs, feet, fingers and toes, I find all of you representing my various limbs. You all belong to one body,—each one has to do work of equal importance."

On a different occasion late Nirmal Chandra Chatterji of Benaras offered some flowers at Mother's feet. Just then a man was passing by, carrying flowers in a basket to perform the worship of his deity elsewhere. Mother picked up the flowers that had been presented at Her feet and placed them in the basket. Nirmal Babu enquired from Mother why She did so. Her reply was, "All people are worshipping One Being only; all hands and feet belong to One Body."

On another occasion, I observed Mother striking the ground with a bamboo chip when a fly was accidentally killed by a stroke. With great care and concern Mother picked it up and kept it in Her closed fist. Many persons were present. Four to five hours passed in conversation. Mother then opened Her fist and said to me, "Can you do anything for the good of this fly which has passed on to the other world?" I said, "I have heard people say there is heaven inside the body of man." So saying, I swallowed the fly.

Mother began to laugh and said,— "What have you done? Does not a man get ill

when he eats a fly?" I replied,— "If through your goodwill the fly meets with a better life, no harm will come to me." I did not get ill.

Referring to this incident Mother said, — "Insects, flies, spiders and men all belong to one family, — nobody knows what they were, are or will be and how they have become interrelated to one another."

I had a very pious Muslim friend, the late Moulvi Jainuddin Hossain. He used to pass nearly all his time in divine contemplation. One Thursday evening I went to Shahbag with him and Niranjan. *Kirtan* was in full swing in the *Nat-mandap*.^{*} We three stood at a distance under a tree so that we might not be seen from the place of the *kirtan*. After about half an hour we found to our surprise that Mother suddenly came out of the hall with Her devotees following Her with a lantern. With quick steps Mother came towards us, touched my friend with Her right hand and then walked on. We three followed Her footsteps. There was a very well preserved grave of a Muslim saint in a corner of Shah-bag. Mother went there and took up the postures usual to Muslims during their prayer, uttering at the same time all the particular words they use. My Muslim friend also joined Her. On returning from there the *kirtan* was resumed and my friend too sang with the party, clapped his hands with them and moved round and round. It so happened that the man in charge of the grave was absent that evening and did not light candles or offer sweets as usual.

(an excerpt from *Mother as Revealed to Me*)

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Man is born in order to experience the happiness and sorrow of this world. Those who have the good sense of wanting to go beyond happiness and pain must take their sole refuge in Him.

—Shree Shree Ma

*. An open hall meant for *kirtan* etc.

PILGRIMAGE TO KAILAS

—Gurupriya Devi

(continued)

Friday, 28 June

We set out at nine a.m. and decided to halt at a place called 'Bodhi', seven miles away, for lunch. Today the path was slightly better than yesterday's but it was undoubtedly terrifying. Our legs seemed to be giving way but we had to keep on. There was no question of halting anywhere.

At certain spots we had to hold on to coolies and walk. *Dandis* could not be used and it was a feat in itself for the coolies to carry our *dandis* along that treacherous route. How terrible the path was! One feared to even tread along it and these coolies casually lifted a *dandi* with a person in it and carried it along.

Around eleven a.m. we reached Bodhi. We took shelter in a school building. Having made a fire beside some rocks, we cooked a meal. This has been our routine for the past few days. After lunch we set out again at three p.m.

Garbiyan was only five miles away and we headed for it. As the path was very bad, we had to often get down from our *dandis*. The path had such large undulations that at times our legs were lifted high above our heads and our heads hung low while at other times our heads soared above as our legs dangled down. However, by Ma's grace we had been traversing the route without any mishaps. Sometimes a *dandi* fell, yet no one was hurt.

Bholanath was doing very well—he was not the least bit fatigued. In spite of the difficult terrain that we had crossed, he would sometimes climb to a height, look back and descend to find out about our progress! The hill folk declared, "No one can outdo Baba when it comes to walking!" He was truly enjoying the journey and trekking without tiring. In the past couple of days he had hardly got into his *dandi*. He declared, "I feel inspired!" And so it appeared—I laughed and told him "Our Lord of Kailas, Bholanath, is going to Kailas in great joy!"

As we neared Garbiyan, the scenic beauty became indescribably beautiful. We had no desire to leave the spot. Chhayilek is a spot near Garbiyan. It is a plain dotted with little hills. It seemed as though the Infinite had been personified all around it. Flowers of various hues bloomed and some one commented, "This is a floral garden designed by the Lord of Kailas." We came across snow which had collected here and

there and the water was now biting cold.

A coolie was suddenly bitten by a snake. Two days ago Ma had said, "I can see a black snake on the mountains." This snake was also black. Bholanath and the men with him attended on the coolie earnestly. Ma told the coolie to chew on a certain species of grass. His feet became swollen and he started foaming at the mouth. He was taken up the mountain along with Ma and Bholanath. Till now he has not got any worse.

At Garbiyan we put up at a school as the dak bungalow was full. To proceed from here a big group of people need to go together as the region is infested with dacoits.

As we reached Garbiyan the people who had received prior notice of Ma's arrival came to meet us. Parvati's house was only two and a half miles away and she was to go home. Some *sadhus* arrived to meet Ma. One or two of them were already acquainted with Ma.

The path has now to be covered on horse back or on yak back. We have heard that though the path is not so bad, the atmosphere is so rarefied that it becomes difficult to breathe. This is the reason why the *dandis* will not go any further.

Around one a.m. we slept. A pile of letters were awaiting us here. The post master had them delivered to us. We have decided to halt here for a couple of days.

Saturday, 29 June

As we did not have to travel today we rose a little late. Some other travellers to Kailas had received news of Ma's arrival and came to see her. A South Indian engineer was accompanying some *sadhus* from the Ramakrishna Mission to Kailas. He brought a big collection of fruits and offered them at Ma's feet. Swami Jnanananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, who had already been to Kailas thrice, was now travelling with Kumar of Dinajpur. Kumar came to meet Ma. The morning was spent thus. A wealthy gentleman called Nandaram Babu, who came to know about Ma's arrival in a letter from his daughter Randra Devi, arrived from Almora. He worshipped Ma and offered flowers and fruits.

All the people conversed about arrangements for our trip to Kailas. The Dinajpur group, the group from South India and another group planned to leave together the day after tomorrow. But they would need fifty five horses which we heard could be procured from the neighbouring jungles. They had still not arrived. We have to take a guide along. Mules and yaks were to carry our luggage and we were to ride on horses. The hire charge per horse was nineteen and a half rupees. Our trip to Kailas and back would take about three weeks. In addition, the horse keeper of each horse was to be paid twelve annas per day. The man accompanying each mule would be

paid eight annas a day and the guide would take twenty five rupees and the cost of a horse. We will have to carry all the food we need for we will not get anything on the way till Takalkot. As no shelter is to be found either, we also have to carry tents. The tents are to be hired; four people can sleep in a tent. We also have to arrange tents for the horse keepers. All the luggage will be carried by mules. The preparations to go to such an inaccessible spot are naturally tedious. Sugar and potatoes are very scarce here and are exorbitantly expensive. Kerosene is ten annas a bottle and rice is as costly as two seers a rupee.

In our anxiety over the preparations of the journey, we hardly had time to think about such minor matters as the cost of items. This was indeed a unique kind of journey. As Ma was having a cold we were to stay on for two more days. Yesterday and the day before had been extremely tedious going, except for Bholanath who was progressing merrily. It is said that on this journey even a father is unable to enquire about his son, but Bholanath was not the least bit fatigued. Instead, the manner in which he was ascending and then descending again to encourage the strugglers seemed to reveal the manifestation of some divine power in him—else it would not be possible for him to exert himself to this extent.

We hear that it is possible to go to Kailas and return in eighteen or nineteen days, but some delay is inevitable and therefore we have to prepare ourselves for a three weeks long span. Here wheat flour is sold at four seers for a rupee and ghee at ten *chatank* for a rupee. The local people are beautifully built. After lunch we all rested. I sat outdoors admiring the scenic beauty all around—Mother Nature seemed to have ornamented Herself. This beauty rouses a lofty emotion in the heart.

There is no shop here but commodities like rice, flour, *dal* and ghee were all available from the residences of the local people. There are absolutely no flies here, but the village is very dirty. We got woollen footwear here—with soles made of string and the upper part reaching up to the knees. Tibetans and Bhutanese walk on ice with such footwear. We purchased a pair each of these footwear.

A *brahmachari* from Dehradun, who was known to us, had joined our group in the Indian Dharchula. On reaching here, he developed fever and chest pain because of the intense cold. We were hearing a variety of reports about the treacherous path ahead. Swami Jnanananda, who had been to Kailas three or four times, recounted the time he fell off his horse in a faint. We also heard many other terrifying stories. However, whatever Ma wills, will happen. We are with her and have no reason to fear. Ma has caught a cold. We all retired early to bed.

Sunday, 30 June

This morning, Kumar of Dinajpur came to offer *pranama* to Ma. He said, "I am

about to traverse a difficult path. I have, therefore, come for your blessings. You are the Primordial Sakti—please give me the strength to complete this pilgrimage safely. I have heard many terrible tales and so I have come to seek your blessings. We shall leave today." Ma laughed and said, "God alone is to be trusted—He does everything. Whatever has to happen will happen. Repeat your *Ishta mantra* and think of Him as you go on your journey." Kumar said, "Good, I shall do exactly as you say. I was unable to have your *darshan* even though I went to Dhaka. Now, I have your *darshan* in this out of the way place. This is my supreme good fortune. I hope that I shall have the *darshan* of your feet again." He bowed down before Ma and left. The other *sannyasins* who were with him and Jnanananda Swami came to Ma, did *pranama* and took her blessings.

Today they were all to set out—three or four groups together. Our day of departure was decided upon as Tuesday, the day after tomorrow. Ma's cold was worse. She said, "It will be better if you all keep healthy." We felt Ma's indisposition did not forbode good.

The local people gathered to discuss about arrangements for our journey. The beginningless and endless roar of the Ganga still echoed in our ears. Here the river was called Kali Ganga. There was talk of *dandi* being taken along for Ma, or for anyone who may chance to fall ill. The cost of taking a *dandi* to and fro would be one hundred and eighty rupees. In addition, we would have to take a horse and a tent for the coolies who would carry the *dandi*—this is the tradition here.

After lunch, we rested for some time; I spent the afternoon sitting inside a *dandi* which was out in the open. We have travelled one hundred and thirty six miles from Almora. The coolies who came with us from Dharchula had accompanied us till here and then returned. On our return journey also, Rai Bahadur in Dharchula will send us coolies when we write to him. We will not have to keep the coolies waiting here and pay for them. Food is so expensive here, it is difficult for poor people to survive. It is a different story for the natives—they own fields, gardens, cattle, goats and sheep. It is too expensive for outsiders to come and live here and therefore they return ere long.

Tonight, Parvati's mother came to meet us. She brought rice, *dal* and wheat flour with her and also a pair of Tibetan snow shoes for Ma. She had taken a '*Tapovan*' from the Raja of Askote to construct an *ashram*, which she now wished to give to Ma. (Ruma Devi lives there). She had written to the Raja, making this request. Parvati and her mother entreated Ma so earnestly that she agreed to spend one night at their village (the capital of the Raja of Nepal) which was two and a half miles away, before proceeding to Kailas on Wednesday. It was midnight by the time we retired for the night.

(to be continued)

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MA'S TECHNIQUE OF BESTOWING DIVINE LOVE AND GRACE ON ONE AND ALL

(Taken from *Svakriya Svarasamrita*, Vol-2)

One day at Sultanpur, Sushila Masima put a copper ring on Ma's finger. Shriyukta Mokshada Sundari Devi said, "It will be a great sin if you tell a lie after wearing this ring." Ma replied, "There is never any falsehood here." She (Mokshada Sundari Devi) said, "It would be a sin even to tell a lie unmindfully." Ma replied, "Alright, there will never be any mistake." Even then Mokshada Sundari Devi said, "There is no need to keep this ring at all." Therefore, Ma took it off Her finger and threw it in a nearby pond. Even this was a great pleasure for Her.

Everybody knew that Ma never uttered a lie. Therefore, if anyone wanted to find out the veracity of any statement and if Ma had been present on that occasion. She would be interrogated and Her version accepted as absolute truth. The very basis of *sadhana* is truth. As for Ma, it is so, of course, in Her own *bhava*.

Strangers and even fallen women as Ma's very own— The septum of Ma's nose had been pierced and She had been made to wear a nose ring some time back. A hole was also now bored in the nose to wear a nose-pin. The ear-lobes were pierced for wearing ear tops, etc.

At one time, on the occasion of *Durga Puja* Shriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya Mahasaya, taking Ma with him, set out one afternoon from Kheora for his sister's home in Vikrampur. The journey was performed initially on foot and later by boat. Ma was about seven to eight years old at that time. While moving by boat, they arrived at a spot when it was dusk, and Bhattacharya Mahasaya arranged for Ma to sleep at an acquaintance's place. Later on, he got *puri*¹ and *mohanbhog*² to feed Ma. This was perhaps the first time that Ma had tasted *mohanbhog*. The father said (to Ma), "This is *mohanbhog*, eat it with *puris*." Ma ate a little and later, he also had some.

The next day, when they arrived at the (steamer) station in the morning, Shriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya learnt that the steamer would arrive late. So he decided to buy some provisions for cooking. It was dawn, the sun was up and he was walking

1. *Puri*, an Indian preparation made principally of wheat flour which is first converted into dough and then flattened to round pieces of varying sizes and fried in clarified butter.
2. *Mohanbhog* or *Halva* is a sweet and delicious Indian preparation made from wheat flour, sugar and ghee.

along the bank of the river with Ma. On the way there was a quarter for professional women of easy virtue. Among them an elderly woman came near Ma with great eagerness to talk to Her and touch Her lovingly. It was a strange feeling! Father was walking ahead, the daughter close behind. Ma too was as if one of their own and suddenly stopped on the way. "What is your name, where are you going, will you eat something?"—in various such expressions conveying intense love, that woman continued talking, standing there only. And (all this was) with such a feeling, indeed, as if Ma was so much of her own, and if she could, she would have taken Ma to her home. Ma uttered Her name, refused to eat anything and said She was going to Her aunt's house with Her father. Shriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya Mahasaya was buying something from a shop close by and was not careful about Ma for a while. Afterwards, he asked Ma, "Why are you standing there? Come here, let us proceed", and took Her with him.

(How can we know) what traits of character anyone has? Attempt should be made to understand Ma's ways. She alone knew what transpired, what She bestowed in Her dealing with a stranger. She came across on the road. But, while moving away, as far as one could see, that woman had her eye fixed on Ma. She felt hurt that Ma was leaving, as if someone very close was going away! All this came also to the notice of Shriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya. The steamer arrived on time and it was noticed that the woman had come again and was standing near Ma, a little away with a forlorn face. It was clear that she had come only to see Ma. With a sad feeling, she enquired of Ma, "Are you going away now itself?" Ma replied in the affirmative with a little smile. Meanwhile, Shriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya, holding Ma's hand, took Her aboard the steamer. When Ma boarded it, that woman felt extremely unhappy, and standing there with that feeling, went on looking at the steamer so long as she could see it.

The steamer reached the destination. The house of Ma's aunt was at some distance from that place and one had to cover a part of it on foot. It was dusk, darkness was approaching, and as they walked on, at quite a distance a big fire was seen. They were walking and Shriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya Mahasaya, while moving in the dark, kept on talking a little to Ma. "Certainly, it is a strain to walk, but the house now is close by"—he was speaking in such a vein. Pointing towards the fire, Ma told Her father, "Father, what must be the condition of the inmates of the house which is on fire?" So saying She kept quiet and stood staring at the fire. Shriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya Mahasaya asked Ma. "Why have you stopped? Let us proceed." Walking along, Ma told Her father, "Look, look father, the fire is getting extinguished!" He said, "Yes it is really so; such a big fire being put out so fast!"

On deciding to spend the night (somewhere), Shriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya went to a family residence near by, with the head of which he was already on intimate terms. *Durga Puja* was being celebrated there. The ladies of the house shouted in joy. "We have the goddess *Durga*. Herself amongst us." They were so happy to have Ma that they started picking up and holding Her joyfully in their arms. What did they see? What did they get and what did they understand which gave them such a feeling? They did not know how to express their love and affection for Her. They called their neighbours and showed Ma to them. Responding to their feelings, Ma also became just one of them and did not spend that night with Her father. The next morning they bade Ma farewell with a very heavy heart after dressing Her up in new clothes. No one knows as to what all was awakened in their minds.

The next day Shriyukt Bipin Bihar Bhattacharya Mahasaya and Ma reached Tantar, his sister's residence. They were also celebrating *Durga Puja*, and were very pleased to have Ma among them. Three closely related aunts of Ma lived in that village. Two other aunts, distantly related, lived next door. Ma was taken round the village from one end to another and was picked up in arms with joy by the relations. Here also Ma made everyone happily enthusiastic. With all the children of the family, this was how Ma was there. As for Ma Herself, whatever Her nature was, the same was there at the houses of Her aunts too.

Practical Joke recoils on the Joker : Ma's Kheyala — Just to outwit Ma, one of Her cousins brought a piece of cinnamon from the house and another (similar looking) piece of bark of a tree from somewhere. Her intention was to give the ordinary bark to Ma and eat the cinnamon herself, as is done in a play. It was seen, however, (to her discomfiture) that the piece Ma had in Her mouth was cinnamon, while the one which the cousin had herself was the ordinary bark. What actually happened and how, only the One who had brought it about knew! Later, when the aunt heard about it, she reprimanded her daughter much. The girl also promised that she would never do it again. Minor incidents like this often took place even during play, but the bond of love with everybody remained unimpaired.

No Kheyala for Food, Clothing, etc., but Polluted Food not Acceptable— Ma never complained or bothered about food and clothing as well as any other thing that was available any time. Both the mother and father felt specially attracted towards Ma. When father went out somewhere, he would ask Ma, "What shall I bring for you?" Many a time he would be quite insistent. Occasionally, because of his insistence, Ma would say, "You may bring whatever you like," while at other times She would remain absolutely silent, as if She had nothing at all to say. Sometimes when peddlers selling their wares, such as bangles and anklets, came to the locality, chil-

dren ran about and pestered their parents with all sorts of demands. But Ma never had any *Kheyala* for such things.

Never, on any day, did the words, 'I am hungry' come out of Ma's mouth. She had to be called and fed during meal times. Others ask for varieties of eatables from their mothers, but Ma never had such a tendency. Imitating children of the same age-group, Ma once asked Her mother, "Please give me something to eat." She replied, "Help yourself, the food is there." Ma was not accustomed to taking anything Herself. In spite of that, because of mother's instructions, She kept going that side and coming back. When the mother saw Her doing this twice or thrice, she came and served food to Ma herself.

It is said that Ma could not stand (digest) the food which had become polluted or was served by someone who violated the customary rules of diet. Shriyukta Mokshada Sundari Devi would say that if anything like this happened, Ma would suffer from some kind of illness, may be even a little. That was why Ma had to be looked after carefully. In the context of such topics with neighbours, some among them would tell Mokshada Sundari Devi. "Yes, some children cannot stand violation of the established practice in regard to food and drink."

(an excerpt)

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The remembrance of God must be with a human being day and night so that he may be cleansed of his shortcomings and errors.

—Shree Shree Ma

"JANGALA ME MANGALA KARANI"

Vindhyachala, January 1943*

—Dr. Bithika Mukerji

Sri Ma arrived at the hill-top ashram at Vindhyachala on January 5, 1943. It so happened that many distinctive events took place during the following weeks. Firstly, Sri Ma's residence in the ashram attracted visitors from all nearby towns. The evenings saw groups of devotees from Mirzapur, Varanasi and Allahabad clustering round Sri Ma. One of the local ladies, whose husband being a political agitator was behind bars at this time, was in rebellious mood. She said, "Ma, why should anyone pray to God?"

"Because prayers establish a relationship with Him. It helps in the attainment of the goal which is to find Him in your life."

"I do not feel at all that I want anything to do with God."

"Look, before you were married, you had no feeling for your husband. Now that you know him well, you are concerned and are thinking of him constantly. So establish a relationship with God first. Prayers are for that. Once contact is established, then you will feel an involvement. This is to be cultivated to a greater degree.

"The husband you are concerned about has been a source of happiness for you and now he is a source of sorrow. But the Supreme Lord is ever a source of bliss; never does He forsake you once you know Him for what He is. I am not asking you to forget your concerns; it is right you should worry about your husband. But if you learn to pray it may become a supportive way of life."

It was in Vindhyachala ashram at this time that Sri Ma was seen to perform beautiful 'yogic kriyas' for a prolonged period of time almost more than two hours. Her movements were smooth, graceful and perfect in their interlocking positions. Her breath was synchronised to the movements of her body and limbs. There was radiance on her face and she seemed to be within an aura of effulgence altogether awe-inspiring.

There were five young women in her room, when Sri Ma entered in this transcendental state. As written before, the lines of demarcation between her various states of awareness were very tenuous. She would be with her audience quite normally; in one moment she would be transformed and apparently in some other

*. An extract from the manuscript of Bithika Mukerjee given by Christopher Pegler. London.

dimension of existence; but her return to her audience was as natural as her withdrawal. When asked about this phenomenon, Sri Ma had said once, "It is you who are describing the various stages of this body. I am always as I am."

One of the five witnesses (Sidhu, Renu, Buni, Udas and Kshama) of this phenomenon was Sidhu, the elder sister of Kauna, the girl who had died in Raipur a couple of months earlier. Sri Ma was very kind to her. The time was approaching for the annual puja of the Goddess of learning, Saraswati Devi. Sidhu happened to say, "How nice it would be if we could perform this puja near Ma at this time." Sri Ma had the Kheyala to grant her wish. It was as if a magic wand had been waved. The lonely rather inaccessible ashram became a place of festivity almost overnight. The Image of the Goddess was brought from Varanasi. By a coincidence, Atul Thakur, a well known savant, arrived to visit Sri Ma. He agreed to perform the puja. Other arrangements happened smoothly. A large congregation witnessed the invocation and worship of the Goddess of learning. Truly, one of Sri Ma's titles "*jangala me mangala karani*" (Onewho transforms desolation into auspicious celebration) was well deserved.

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LIST OF FESTIVALS

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Maghi Purnima | — | 14th February 2014 |
| 2. Shree Shree Vasanti
Durga Puja | — | April 5th to 9th April 2014 |
| 3. Shree Ram Navami | — | 9th April 2014 |
| 4. Swami Muktananda
Giriji's Sannyas Utsav | — | 14th April 2014 |
| 5. Shree Shree Ma's Janmotsav | — | 3rd May to 20th May 2014 |

THE UNIQUE MOTHER

(Personal Reminiscences)

(continued)

—Br. Niranjani

23.8.1965 Kankhal

We reached Ashram in the evening and went to Ma after Ramayan and *stava path*. Ma came after 5/10 minutes We all went inside the side room. Ma was seated on the wooden cot. A neighbour (lady) had brought some rice-after cleaning for the *yajna*. I offered a garland of strongly scented tropical flowers which bloom in the rainy season called maulsree to Ma and sat behind. Ma was praising the lady saying she was very keen to do work and did her job quickly and asked for more and more Ma assured her there was enough work. Then a young Sadhu came and said he was doing pilgrimage of 3 *dhams* (holy places) on foot. Ma was talking about the accident of Binadi's son in law Navakumar in Calcutta and asked Bina di to leave for Calcutta. Ma was available to all present in a very free and affectionate mood. Ma showed Yogi bhai the special Narayanashila talked about earlier. She said He ie the Narayanashila does not like Sabudana and cereal. He wants to eat with Ma. Then Ma started walking on the terrace at a fast pace. She looked preoccupied but not seriously. Ma gave flower garland and fruits to Binadi for Navakumar and bade farewell by uttering words as usual "Come safely and go safely". Ma called Rekha's daughter and pleaded her to sing a song. She shyly agreed. Ma went into the room, switched off the lights and lay down. Didi Ma asked me to straighten the mats. The singer Burron came and sang a song on the occasion of the birth of Krishna in Bengali. Ma had folded her legs and was moving them from side to side according to the beat of the song, sometimes clapping. She was behaving like Gopal. Ma enquired about the time, Kamaladi said there was still half an hour remaining for the *kirtana*. Then Ma asked for 'Hindi songs' this time, of which the last one 'Rama nama Hari nama lo' was good. Ma instructed the songers to do the *kirtana* in the same room and asked the women to sit on one side. Since the Ashram was very small Ma had brought very few brahmacharinis with Her, there was no accommodation so we had to stay outside some distance away with an escort. It was getting dark so Atmanandaji, Amritanandaji and our escort Krishnakali and we did *pranam* and got up feeling very sad that we had to leave Ma, even when She was giving such lovely *darshan*. Perhaps Ma was in this way removing the effect of our negative *karma*.

24.8.1965

We reached Ashram at 5 : 45 p.m. For 3/4 days it stops raining at this time. We did Ramayana Path (recitation) with Billoji and went upstairs. Ma came out before 7 p.m. in haste and sat on the cot. All did *pranam* and sat peacefully. Ma was in Her supreme joyful mood. Ma asked for the box of toffees. Inside it was a plastic bag full of toffees but it had holes on both sides. Ma said, 'Someone has stolen' and then asked the girls (Ma's *sevikas*) 'Shall I catch the thief?' She then refused when all said 'Yes' and said. 'It will be shameful' and made a face. Then She opened the packet and distributed them to all her 'Friends or Dostji, children both girls and boys. Pramilaji recommended Naina and Shobhadi, but I didnt like the idea as it was not spontaneous from Ma, but Ma signalled to me so, I had to take. Ma then intercepted Maitreyi di and took some fruits from the basket she was taking and asked to distribute them to a group from Shivananda Ashram. One hit Krishnakali lightly Ma asked lovingly and gently 'Did it hit you?' Then She herself recommended some devotees, I too received Her gift happily. Today was a special day in Daksheshwar Shiva temple. Ma said that the round pillars behind the Ashram on the bank of Gangaji are made by the relatives of those ladies of surrounding villages who die leaving their husbands alive (*sadhava*) to commemorate Devi Sati. Nearby there is a pond known as Sati Kund. Ma said, "Nothing very special." The Ranis of Mandi and Kuchaman rejoined and said they sit on it and even drink tea, then all knowledgeable persons and Ma agreed there is no harm in doing so. The waves of the sound of *arati* from Daksheshwar temple were coming strongly; it gave a good feel. All were enjoying Shree Ma's darshan and listening to the notes of Arati, full of devotion. Ma : "Whether anyone wishes or not everyone will have to listen to it." She said so in a positive sense. Ma told Rani Mandi the Bilwa tree in the Ashram has leaves of very good quality. "Offer 1008 leaves at one time, tell Batuda. It will take a very long time if you offer one at a time."

25.08.1965

There was much crowd today for the evening *darshan*. Ma came out at 7 p.m. A blind man had prayed to Ma to be allowed to sing a song. With permission he sang. "Durga Bhavani, Maheshwar..." His *bhava* was good, the voice not as much, though. Yet based on classical *ragas* it created a beautiful atmosphere in Ma's presence. At that moment Ma gave me an unforgettable experience. As written earlier we had to leave Ma's wonderful *darshan* and go to our respective locations with a heavy heart everyday. As I did *pranam* and got up I felt as if Ma sent Her aura in a concentrate form towards me. Immediately my sorrow vanished and I felt peaceful and quietened.

All this happend very subtly in a split of a moment unnoticed by anyone. This was Ma's love, Wholeness! Undescribable. Such is our wonderful Mother.

26.08.1965

Ma went to Baghat House for Devi Bhagwat. We also went. Ma's seat, decoration, stage etc were all in red and pink colour with golden borders. Ma sat on the *takht* (cot). Ma was discussing something with Lakshmi Tankha who is in charge of decoration. The pandit who would deliver discourse on Devi Bhagwat had arrived from Prabhudatta Brahmachariji's ashram. Just then a woman accompanied by some others came. She had left her hair open. All took her to be some mataji. Ma enquired about her name. She replied Jai Satchidananda is the name of her ashram. Ma asked "What are the activities"? The reply was : "In the evening practice of *samadhi* etc happens Ma" Who instructs?" She herself, she affirmed. Ma "Speak, we all will listen." She said "I will clear doubts". Ma asked brahmacharinis and others to ask questions but no one came forth. Then she commented "No one has any doubt near Ma so what will they ask?" So far so good. Sevaji and Lakshmi were talking cheerfully with her. Her back was towards me, yet I did not get a good feel about her. Then Ma took interest in her and asked about what ornaments she was wearing including an expensive wristwatch. Ma, "This is a small child (for herself); people lift her and place her (higher up)." She seemed to agree. Ma "This child is looking at Ma (the mataji). This body is big but it is a child looking at mother." Boastfully she said, "Yes, see, see" then pointing towards the decoration "What is all this show?" etc. in the same line of thought. Ma asked about her company. She introduced her family members some from England. She repeatedly commented that she came to know about Ma from Ma's devotees in Ambala and Benaras. Ma kept quiet; finally on her persistence She said "Why be taken up with introduction. This is a small child looking at the mother" After some quiet moments Ma asked "What is experience?" In reply she said "Experience is Swarup" After a while Ma asked "Who is the experiencer?" She did not understand and gave some irrelevant quotations from Vedanta. Ma explained "As one writes who experiences it?" Ma gave much attention to her and observed her with penetrating looks. There was no question of Ma testing or not testing her. Ma asked simple but meaningful questions like "From what place (plane) does one experience?" She could not understand even after much repetition. Both Ma and Kamalda (Virajanandaji) asked if she did not understand. She then flared up and told Kamalda to shut up. Now things were going astray. Ma consoled Her by folding Her hands and humbly asking for forgiveness as no one had the intention of testing her or trapping her. Ma's devotees were getting upset with her reactions and odd answers from her like. "The heart is not on the left

side; it does 'Tup Tup.'" Then she told Ma to laugh. Ma burst out laughing. Her full laughter, she tried to match but understandably could not come any where near Ma. Then she invited Ma to her place and boasted that she would show the innate miracles and powers which she possesses. Ma replied, "Ma, you've come yourself". Finally she sang some poems with noisy support from her relatives. On her departure Swami Paramanandaji and Prakashanandaji were discussing her spiritual status which was not very impressive to say the least. Prabhudatta Brahmachari's Pandit revealed that she had gone there too and sat on Swamiji's seat saying "I know all." There too she was unable to give right answers. Ma left for Kankhal and asked us to help Lakshmi.

(to be continued.)

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In this world of birth and death the pain of separation is unavoidable. Bear it, taking refuge in patience and obey the directions of your parents as much as you can. At all times keep your mind immersed in the thought of the Lord so that there may be no possibility of straying into a path that leads to misery.

—Shree Shree Ma

MATRI SATSANG IN VRINDABAN

(continued)

—Samyam Mahavrata,
November 23rd, 1969

Mataji (in reply to another question)¹: "Narayan Swami said the other day, 'So many people are sitting here together for collective meditation, each one contemplating his own *Ishta*, proceeding along his own line of approach, pursuing his own aim.' What he said was sensible and quite right from a certain point of view. You call the same person husband, son and father. He is one and the same person, not one thing more and the other less. The man who is a father is also a son, whether he be someone's husband (*pati*) at that time or not. The Supreme Lord (*Parama Pati*) is certainly present within you, whether you call him Krishna or Balgopal. In every single form is God, everywhere is He alone. Where is He not? The 'not' is also He: there is nothing that is not He. How marvellous is God's law! What has manifested in the shape of a question is also very lovely. That which occurs to the mind—Who is it that arises in the mind? There is none besides you. Whatever appears in whatever form and to whom it appears you alone ARE. You are the Beloved, you appear as Bliss. How as Bliss? You do not give pain or trouble to anyone, You are calm and tranquillity, call it God, call it the Self—there is only One Self.

"When you burn incense in the morning, its scent does not remain in one place, it spreads through the entire atmosphere, its perfume reaches everyone, it fills the whole vicinity. You take the incense all round and also to the centre and it permeates everything. Similarly, God is present in all alike. Men and women, following each their own method, are sitting together in meditation. There is only one God. He responds exactly according to the way He is appealed to by every single person. Because He is the ONE and the *only* One. Just as a mother of several children tries to satisfy each of them by giving them whatever they need individually.

"To come back to Narayan Swami's question. Svayam Bhagavan (God) is One, He is everything. Who appears in so many different shapes and forms? Who is within and without? HE and no other. Why have you gathered here, why have you united? It is God's play. He, playing with Himself, has manifested in this way. Just as it is

1. Narayan Swami had asked, "Since the Sastras say sadhana should be practised by each person in solitude, why do we come here to practise together?"

said : Thou art mother, father, friend, master, son, everything art Thou. *Swami, Swayam*—The Self verily am I. In these words is also contained '*Sva-mayi*'—The Self is all-pervading.

"You are His child, the son of the Immortal, Immortality. He comes to each one precisely in the form, the way, that will take him to his ultimate good, that will open up his path. According to whatever method a person meditates, along what current or line, God will open the path to perfection for him along that very current or line. One word can have infinite meanings. As you play so you hear the sound. According to your question and according to the way you put it, you got the reply.

Question : By practising sadhana one cannot attain. Does it not depend on God's Will, on His Grace? Please explain how he can attract God's Grace.

Mataji : God's Grace is streaming down at all times like torrential rain. If you keep your vessel turned upside down, the grace will flow down the sides. Keep your vessel straight up and open and it will be filled. This is one aspect of the matter. And for those who proceed along the line of grace, how is it possible to be vouchsafed the vision of God without His grace? You say, attainment does not come by effort. But the Lord is present right in front of you, you have only to look in His direction right from here, you have to advance towards Him. Truly, God (*Svayam Bhagavan*) is ever present. You come and go, but actually neither come nor go. The veil of ignorance is cast over you but God is ever present. He has left only this little bit of distance for you to traverse—this is called *kriya*. He is ever present right here and everywhere. His revelation cannot come by any *kriya* (practice). Why then have you taken to spiritual exercises? Lives and lives you have spent trying to gratify your desires and longings. If after wasting countless births in this manner, a person has the intelligence, (*sad buddhi*), the good idea (*subuddhi*) to decide : 'Let me get out of this endless round of birth and rebirth, let me not be reborn again,' what does he do? He takes to serious *sādhana*. While the person who does otherwise suffers misery life after life due to his cravings and longings, his desires and passions.

"There is only God and nothing else. Not to aspire to Him—this is the veil of ignorance. You should engage in the practice (*kriyā*) that is appropriate at your stage, that is within your line of approach. Who is disguised as *kriyā*? Who am I who is practising the *kriyā* in order to realize God? So long as this is not revealed, so long as the knots (*granthi*) that constitute the ego are not cut asunder, it is but natural that questions should arise.

Question : How can the knots of the ego be undone?

Mataji : By carrying out the Guru's instructions without questioning. That is not the place to use one's knowledge and intelligence. Here knowledge and intelli-

gence will not do. they are useful upto a stage. They provide you with information. The *Sāstras* have been read, studied and committed to memory. One has acquired knowledge along a particular range. This is but the knowledge of ignorance. When even this knowledge leaves one, then only can Realization come. Therefore follow the Guru's instructions without questioning. As long as the reason of the individual is in power, how can the knots be undone?

Question : How does unquestioning faith in the Guru come?

Mataji : By faith. At first one has no faith, (although to a few faith does come at once) so what is one to do? One has to think for oneself, use one's own discrimination. I have heard you people say that according to tantric teaching, one should observe and study one's Guru for one year. Then only one takes initiation. Examine and test your Guru to the limit of your capacity. How can a pupil test his teacher? You cannot test him as the professors test their disciples. All the same, do as much as you can by questioning and watching. Once you have accepted the Guru as your guide, (just as there is only one husband)* once the bond has been forged it is for all times. You may go here and there, anywhere you please, stay in any place—but you cannot leave him —provided he is a Sadguru**. He teaches you by dealing you one blow after another. What he does is all for the best, for your ultimate Good. Sometimes a child does not study. By being slapped he is taught. There is a saying that a knock brings one to one's senses. A person who has no faith in his Guru will have to continue in this manner. However, a Sadguru will never lose hold of his disciple but keep him in his grip. Once the relationship has been established, it is indissoluble. So long as faith has not come, read books of wisdom, repeat your mantra, be always engrossed in spiritual exercises. Try to remain pledged to such activity, whether you feel the inclination for it or not. To say : 'I do not like it' or 'I don't find it congenial' is not helpful. To be swayed by likes and dislikes means to remain enmeshed in worldliness. If you have the desire to realize God, endeavour to live according to the Guru's bidding. Do not relax your efforts until you are able to do so fully. Sustained effort brings about a miracle. By trying again and again, by incessantly thinking of God, what happens? The path finally opens out of itself. There is hope that such a state may supervene."

(to be continued)

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*. Hindu marriage is indissoluble. Even if the husband dies the widow cannot marry again.

***. Sadguru* The perfect Guru who shows the way to the knowledge of Reality.

VARDHAMAN MAHAVIR

—**Khokon Chakravarty**

Jain Religion is an important religion in India. The founder of this religion was Vardhaman Mahavir. According to Jain scholars there were 23 Tirthankars (Dharma Gurus) before Mahavir. However, Mahavir was the last one and he helped in the spread of Jain religion all over India.

Vardhaman was born in North India in the city of Vaishali, which is now in Bihar. His father was Siddhartha and mother Trishala. He was born in 599 B.C. His family was a rich established family. His parents died when he was of a young age. Vardhaman was married to a girl Yashoda. When he was 30 years of age Vardhaman left his family went away to observe severe penance.

After doing Tap for 12 years, he attained the ultimate knowledge. Before his period there were 23 Tirthankars who had expounded Jain Philosophy. Vardhaman collected all religious doctrines and consolidated them.

There are five important aspects of a good religious Jain life.

1. Non-Violence
2. Truth
3. Non-commitment of theft
4. Non-acceptance of donation
5. Celibacy

These five aspects became compulsory for a Shravaka. he also added nudity, as a symbol of total rejection of comfortable living by "discarding of clothes".

Regarding human life he propounded four principles.

1. Human life consists of physical and metaphysical existence.
2. Man's life is incomplete. However he can reach fulfillment.
3. Celibacy and control of desires can help in achieving eternal bliss.
4. Man is his own master who can shape his destiny by rightful behavior in daily life.

A man can attain Moksha (Salvation) through,

1. Firm belief in religious doctrines.
2. Full knowledge of mental life.
3. By going through a correct path of life avoiding bad / evil things and

carrying out an ethical life.

Jain religion believes in the existence of God, but does not believe that He created this universe and that He is the controller of destiny.

Vardhaman Mahavir created Shravak — an organization through which the religion is propagated and correct path of life is shown to ordinary persons through examples. A Shravak or Muni has to follow a very strict life of self—denial. The Digambar type do not wear clothes, so they will not have other accessories. After some decades the religion was divided into two sects. Digambar and Shwetambar. But both of them respect and worship Vardhaman.

Mahavir attained Nirvana at Pavapuri at the age of 72 years in 527 B.C. (2523 years ago). Mahavir's new religion believes in God, Soul and Nirvana but it states firmly that man is the master of his destiny. One should tread the path of moral rectitude for the benefit of the individual and society. Thus Jain religion is based on ethics and moral philosophy. Due to this inner strength and intelligent humane approach this religion is firmly and deeply rooted in India even after 2535 years.

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Action directed towards God is alone action — all else is worthless, non-action, activity of the path of death. To become absorbed in svakriya, the action that ends in Self-revelation, is man's duty as a human being.

—Shree Shree Ma

IMPOSSIBLE BARTER

—R.K. Das

Lord Buddha (c. 563 BC-483 BC) was living in the Venuvana (a bamboo-forest) of Rajagriha. There came an angry Brahmin whose close relative had joined the monk order of the saint. He outpoured his choicest dirty abuses against Buddha. The composed Lord observed absolute silence until the Brahmin finished with his explosives. Now, Buddha asked him sweetly, 'My friend, I am not angry with you for your abuses but have some queries. Would you mind answering them?'

—Not at all. Ask me whatever you want to.

—Do your friends and relatives visit your place sometimes?

—Yes, they do.

—Do you offer them hospitality and food.

—Yes, I do.

—What do you do with the foodstuff that they refuse to take?

—They remain with us only.

—So my dear, I refuse to accept your abuses.

(from *Inspiring Stories*)

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Never remain without the presence of the name of the deity you worship. While moving about, while eating and sleeping, at all times sustain the flow of His name. A plant will grow more or less rapidly exactly according to the measure in which you provide it with water and manurre. If you do not progress quickly you should understand that it is entirely your own fault. Call to mind that you have not been able to go beyond the way of thinking fostered life after life and dedicate yourself wholly at His feet. The wrong lies all on your side.

—Shree Shree Ma

OM MA

SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE KANYAPEETH

PLATINUM JUBILEE

We are happy to announce that Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth, Bhadaini, Varanasi has arrived at the threshold of its Platinum Jubilee. This residential school-cum-college for girls which intends to impart holistic and character building education in the Gurukul Parampara came into existence by Shree Shree Ma's special kheyal and with Her blessings on Shukla Pratipada Tithi of Sharadiya Navaratri (25 September) in the year 1938. Fondly planted with much care and strenuous efforts by Revered Gurupriya Devi, showered by Shree Shree Ma's constant Blessings and rejoicing in Her Love, this tender sapling has grown up to its mellow fruitfulness. At this juncture, we propose to launch befitting programmes of Kanyapeeth Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in keeping with the solemnity and auspiciousness of the occasion. We have thought of inaugurating the celebrations with a special Puja offering to Shree Shree Ma on 5 October, 2013 that coincides with the lunar date of Navaratri Pratipada. Further on, we Contemplate realizing some other programmes such as—

1. Celebration of Kanyapeeth Annual Day, also called the Founder's Day, on or around the Birth Day Anniversary of its Founder, Shree Gurupriya Devi.
2. Publication of books.
3. Bringing out the Annual Magazine of Kanyapeeth, *Adarini*, as a special issue. We request our alumnae to enrich this issue with their reminiscences and views about Shree Shree Ma and Gurupriya Didi. Articles in Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali and English are published in this magazine.

In this regard we invite advice, suggestions and guidance from our well wishers and devotees of Shree Shree Ma. We would thankfully accept any gesture of goodwill.

Jai Ma.

Managing Committee

"There are many schools and colleges outside (in the world) to impart teaching. Let it be remembered that the aim here is the formation of ideal character."

Shree Shree Mata Anandamayee Hospital



Prof. (Dr.) H.S. Bajpai
'Ma Anandamayee Chikitsa Ratna' -2013
A GOLD MEDALIST

Dr. Bajpai at present is the Vice President and Med. Suptd. of our hospital. Before, he was Head, Dean of Medicine and Director, IMS, B.H.U. He has been attached to this hospital as MA's Devotee and senior consultant physician for decades.

He has contributed much to the development of the hospital through his OPD and Indoor patient care services, participated in various hospital functions, Indoor/Rural health programmes and guided the hospital when ever late Panuda required his services in hours of need.

Prof. (Dr.) Shail Dubey
'Ma Anandamayee Chikitsa Ratna' - 2013



At present she is the senior gynaecologist at this hospital. She was Head of OBS and Gynaecology Deptt. IMS., B.H.U. She is one of the highly reputed and qualified gynaecologist of Varanasi - with rare qualification of D.R.C.O.G. from (Lon.) UK. She has been attached to this hospital as MA's devotee and gynaecologist for more then 20 years and has helped in the development of the hospital in cash and kind through her OPD/Indoor services, construction of a room for our newly built Spl. Ward and 'Sant Niwas' a residence for the 'HOLY MEN' within our hospital premises.

Sri D.N. Gupta

Sri D.N. Gupta has been working here for the last 33 yrs, as ward master. He resides in the Hospital Campus, working hard whenever his services are required attending to patients, keeping accounts of medicines, Admission/ Discharge of the patient etc.

"Service to God in the form of Disease."

—Shree Shree Ma
(Courtesy : Sri Swapan Gangulie)

A FORMULA OF BEING HAPPY

—R.K. Das

There was a house of thousand mirrors in a village. Once a little dog, serious and reserved by nature, visited the house. Being unfriendly and complaining about his ill-fate, he looked unpleasing too. He slowly climbed the stairs of the house of mirrors. As he had a sad face, he saw the images of one thousand unhappy dogs around him. He became tense looking at them and growled to scare them off. He did not realize that the images of the mirrors were his own reflections. He saw numerous growling dogs staring ferociously at him. He got frightened by such a large number of opponents. Though none of them were attacking him physically yet his tail automatically went between his legs beneath the fatless tummy. To him, it seemed a very unpleasant place. He did not relish the idea of visiting the house again in the future.

There was a happy little dog too in that village. One day he visited this place and saw his images in the mirrors. He wagged his tail, moved his ears and jumped around happily. As he was doing so, he saw one thousand other happy dogs imitating him. He was very glad to see others enjoying his playful deeds. He smiled at the mirrors and saw others smiling at him, to his great pleasure and surprise. He felt it was a wonderful place to visit again and again.

It is truly said that all the faces in the world are mirrors and our life is actually a reflection of our thoughts and actions.

(from *Inspiring Stories*)

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You have not seen Him; but are yearning for Him — because He is your very own. Does one pine for what one is seeing? One's own has been lost, or rather is hidden behind a screen; this is why one is hankering after it.

—Shree Shree Ma

TWO APPROACHES : DUAL AND NON-DUAL

—Melita Maschmann

With me I had a letter from Germany. A Catholic friend of mine had made some points in it, and I wanted to give her an apt reply from the viewpoint of Hinduism.

The first principle of Hinduism, she had written, is monistic pantheism, whereas Jewish-Christian thinking considers that God and Creation are two entities. "This difference appears to me to be absolute. Whether besides the existence of God there is another existence, created by Him, but a real existence of a different form, or whether everything besides the deity is only illusion. It could not be said that monistic pantheism and the Christian viewpoint are (both) correct."

I asked a sadhu-I'd met him often at "*Anandamayi Ashram*" and we sat down on the banks of the Ganges. The sadhu listened patiently to my translation of the letter : "We distinguish two aspects of *Brahman*," he said. "The Highest *Brahman*—we call it transcendent and acosmic—is without any characteristics and is above time, space and causality. Thus the question about a creation of the universe cannot arise from this aspect, because all that exists is *Brahman*. It is perceived only by the eye of the one who is enlightened. It is enshrouded, thanks to *maya*, as a phenomenal cosmic *Brahman* of infinitely diverse forms and figures. An unenlightened eye perceives this second aspect of *Brahman*. What it sees is reality from the level of its knowledge.

"The relative *Brahman* is manifested also as a personal god. Water remains essentially water, even if it takes the form of ice. God does not cease to be *Brahman*. He is *Brahman* that has become a person. We speak about God, in this realm of the 'second level' as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the world. To this extent, our thinking combined the strict monism that is expressed in the doctrine of the duality-less highest *Brahman* with the concept of a creation, which can be differentiated from its creator. There are Vedic myths of creation as there are Biblical myths of creation."

My second question : "What happens in the soul of a person, when he succeeds, thanks to his religious nature and his acquired technique in bringing about this condition? Is it correct, if I say that it is perception of God's image in oneself? This would be an explanation that can be understood by a Christian. But he usually doubts that there is a direct or even an absolute perception of God Himself in *samadhi*. A

man, according to scholastic theology, must experience first an intense metamorphosis in eternal life, to be able to endure the eternal divine light."

The sadhu's response : "Among the prerequisites necessary for attaining *samadhi*, you have forgotten the most important one that Ma has repeatedly pointed out : Grace of God. All efforts are meaningless without it. Both dualistic and non-dualistic explanations are possible in Hinduism. 'How does it help me to become sugar? I want to taste sugar! I want to taste sugar!' That is the viewpoint of a dualist who experiences himself as God's servant. There is always duality in the blissful unity with God. A non-dualist 'becomes sugar'; he believes that there is one *Brahman*, and he penetrates all the veils of *maya*, over all stages of *samadhi* to reach the mysterious border, at which God's grace receives him into an absolute unity with *Brahman*. Not only can a man see the eternal divine light, he can become one with it."

from Encountering Bliss.

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What is *satsang*? *Sva* (own, self) means Sa (He), God, Being-Consciousness-Bliss (*Saccidānanda*), the *Ātmā*—call it what you will *Sva* is *Svayam*— that Itself, He in the Person, *Sva-anga* signifies that God is eternally revealed in every part of creation. This is why it is said : seek *satsang* so that you may know yourself to be *Sva-anga* (His own limb) and know that He is ever revealed in every atom of creation.

—Shree Shree Ma

**SHREE SHREE MA'S DIVINE CONVERSION
COLLECTION—KIRPAL
(Trans : Mrs. Rohini Purang)**

(continued)

(Some people from Ceylon-now Sri Lanka— had come for Ma's *darshan*).

Ma (to Sarvananda for the Ceylonese visitors) : You tell them that in whichever language they feel comfortable....

(One of them asked a question).

Ma : Whatever method the guru says, (by) that method only.....

(Another question was asked.)

Ma : (The) name¹ leads to success.² If you take the name, the guru will automatically appear.

Q : How to continue with what we have learned in this *samyam saptah*?

Sunder Lal : A record of what has been experienced....

Ma : Some tell of their experiences, (but) everyone does not like to speak of them in front of others. Whatever has been experienced as Pitaji is saying — write it down and give it to this body.

Sunder Lal : You advise not to speak of what has been experienced because then whatever has been gained is lost. During the *samyam saptah* many people have gained much — I want the whole world to do *samyam saptah*.

Ma : All *sadhus* and *mahatmas* advocate practising *samyam* — they hold a staff...

(Ma points to a *dandi swami*).

(They) wear only particular clothes — eat only in this particular way — this is not *samyam*³.

(It is a) very beautiful thing— *anuloma-viloma* (regular and reverse order)-to reach one's own place—that one's own place becomes manifest. This manifestation of *anuloma-viloma*, within this (lies) the connection with your world of *prakriti*—

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1. The Lord's name
 2. A rough translation of Ma's exact words in Hindi : *Nāma se kāma ban jātā hai*.
 3. What is meant here is that rules such as these govern outward conduct, *samyam* pertains to an inner discipline.

the connection should be like this wearing clothes with ease, moving around with ease, eating with ease --(this is) activity—*vyāpār*— (but) that for which there is no beyond, that which is *bepār*¹ - one should work for that. There is (also) the *vyāpār*² of the trader — and movement with the body is also *vyāpār*. The body movement by which one becomes entangled with the world is *vyāpār*² of the world.

Being with two — happiness and sorrow — being with sorrow, one searches for happiness — (this is) the way of the world : to desire happiness — the happiness that you desire. You build a house, make all the arrangements — (you) worry about it catching fire.....

(You) build a house according to what your mind says so your mind feels light. What you did - that is dual - to build and the fact that it was built. Then there is its (the house's) future journey — it falls. Whatever is built in this world is (eventually) destroyed. Sorrow and happiness, sin and merit, light and darkness - the world of duality is being created. Again while there is connection with the world there is duality — worry remains, not freedom from worry — (around) your actions there is worry. If something breaks, it gives sorrow. What flows from duality is called sorrow, its law is sorrow. What belongs to the world, (any) matter pertaining to the world, anything that is adopted by the world — whatever it does will reach sorrow and not give anything (else) at all - (it is) the world of *prakriti* — and the nature of the world of *prakriti* is duality.

Ma (talking with Pannalal) : Practical - not theoretical.

(To Rani Sherkoh) : More time must be spent in thinking of the Lord - (one must) remain in *satsang*.

(To Bhargava from Mathura) : Wherever the body keeps (you) - you all also go.

(Bhargava was running to be in time for the *samyam* session. He had corrected his watch the previous night and his watch now showed 8.02 am. This meant that he was late by two minutes; the doors were normally closed for the morning session by 8 am sharp. Today, however, Bhargava found that they were still open.)

Bhargava : Ma, save me !

Ma : I was also saying "Bhargava! Bhargava!". (He has) come for (just) two days — look, he is running!

(Ma smiled and said to the ladies in the audience) : It sometimes happens like this. (I) gave you a *darshan* of *samyam*.

1. A play on the words '*vyāpār*' and '*bepār*'.
2. Hindi word meaning 'trade' or 'commerce'.

(After Avadhootji had spoken). Sarvanananda : (It is) you only who speaks.

Ma : It is you only who speaks, none else. This is a fact.

(Ma now left the hall for a few minutes.)

Sarvananda (as he started his speech). Ma, you speak.

Ma (returning after Sarvananda's talk) : When you said "Ma...", I heard and replied from there, "*Kirtan*".

Ma (beginning kirtan) : *Hey bhagavan, hey bhagavan.... shreyo bhagavan...*

Ma (talking about the venue of that year's *samyam saptah*) : The banks of the Ganga - Rishikesh — is very good. Then this body said — (if) those people cannot manage it for some reason — when it has come forth from this body's mouth—you people — (it is) you people (who) caused it to be spoken—to escape from the mouth. That is why it took place here — it took place here for that reason. Last year there was talk of it happening here — (but) it did not happen here for some reason. This year you people do it here — a *shubha karma, a satkarma*.

(You) cannot be certain about certainty — (about doing) *shubha karma, satkarma* this is what I actually mean — there should be no delay in doing *shubha karma* — you all try within the year (to hold it there). Avadhutaji said, "There is a place there Ramnagar." It has pulled - Rishikesh Ganga has pulled you into her lap.

(Ma distributed fruits with Her own hands).

(to be continued)

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Become drinkers of nectar, all of you — drinkers of the wine of immortality. Tread the path of immortality, where no death exists and no disease.

—Shree Shree Ma

THE DISTINCT CHARACTER OF SHREE MA'S ASHRAM AT RAIPUR, DEHRA DUN

—Br. Geeta

(continued from the previous issue)

Building of a New *Bhavan* (House)

A new house for Ma was made in front of the ancient temple in 1963. Alongside many rooms, bathrooms and kitchen were built.

Description of Raipur Ashram by Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta.

The author of *Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Prasang* respected Shree Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta has presented a beautiful picture of Raipur Ashram in his book—

"Raipur is a small village. There are one or two shops and one post office. The Mussourie range of mountains is spread over a long distance on the eastern side of this village. The Ashram is located on a small hill. When Shree Shree Ma came here with Baba Bholanathji and Bhajji for the first time, then there was a dilapidated Shiva temple and only two dilapidated rooms. Now the *pujaris* of the temple have donated all these to Ma. Thereafter only, the renovation of the temple and construction of new rooms took place.

"To go to the Ashram one has to climb the hill from the bottom. After a short distance one finds steps, after that there is a flat ground for a short distance. On the right side of this flat area there are two small rooms. They did not have doors or windows. This couple of rooms was used as a dharmashala earlier. Now both these rooms have been re-built. Now they are fit for stay. On the right side a new building has been constructed. There are three rooms in it. The room below is quite large; 20-25 people can stay in it. Pictures of deities are hung in this room. Adjacent to this, on the northern side there is one more room. That room is Ma's room. Ma stays in this room in the afternoon. There is a courtyard between the dharmashala and the building on the right. From here there are a flight of steps to go above. On reaching the top one can see a small courtyard. On the left of this courtyard is the Shiva temple and on the right a room has been constructed for Ma's stay. The floor of this room is made of marble. It has a balcony on the eastern side. From there one can see flat ground 40-50 hands below (Indian way of counting a-yard-one hand in those days). From this place, the ground below looks like a collection of clouds on a range of hills. The scenery is very beautiful indeed when one's glance is extended in front, the heart is

awed by the feeling of vastness. Besides the Shiva temple there is one more small temple. Ganga Mata's statue is installed there. Besides, a figure of Mahaveer too is carved in the wall. There are two trees in the courtyard, one is of neem and the other of mango. A platform is built around the mango tree. This tree is spread over a wide space. It is said that this tree has remained so since ancient times. After climbing from the courtyard immediately one can see three rooms. When Ma had first come here then there was only one room and a verandah. Shree Shree Ma, Baba Bholanath and Bhaiji used to stay there. Now this room has been extended to three rooms."

Instructions to a Brahmachārini to do *kirtana* and *Gita Pāth* by Ma.

Ma's *Janmotsava* took place in Uttarkashi in 1973. After the celebrations Ma came to Raipur for a few days along with a brahmachārini from Kanyāpeeth. There was a *bhandārā* one day. The brahmachārini went to cook. All of a sudden Ma called the brahmachārini and asked her, "At what time do you all get up in Kanyapeeth? At what time do you do morning *kīrtana*?" On receiving reply from the brahmachārini Ma said, "Why did not *kīrtana* take place today? None of you felt, 'Ma's body is not well, let me sit near the door and sing a little *kirtana* for Ma'? Gita, Chandi Pāth also did not take place." The brahmachārini had stayed awake with Ma the night before and there was *bhandārā* the next day; therefore she had gone to cook in the early hours of the morning. She had to do Ma's work with Udāsji also. Ma said "You could have put water in the *dāl* on fire and then read one *śloka* of Gita (at least.)"

In this way Ma instructed us to be alert about Ashram rules and regulations.

Ma's Outstanding *Leela*

Once Bhaiji was passing through Varanasi to go to Dhaka from Raipur. They went to bathe in the Ganga. But he slipped and fell into the water and was drowning. Just then an unknown person was seen picking him up and putting him on his feet. At that moment exactly Ma was lying down in her room in Raipur Ashram. Brahmachārī Kamalākānta saw that Ma's clothes were fully wet. In this way Bhaiji's life was saved by Ma's Unlimited Grace. These facts were verified later.

Ma's Hidden *Leela*

One day in Raipur Ashram, Ashram sadhus sat to do *dhyāna* according to daily routine. At that time Ma called Gurupriya Didi and said, "Sit on my bed in the same manner as I sit there" Saying this She wore ochre clothes, covered Her face and went and sat amongst the sadhus in an erect posture.

No one was able to recognize Ma. Just then a sadhu from the Ashram came and sat right in front of Ma. As the period of *dhyāna* got over all were getting restless waiting for Ma. They were losing patience. Some left their *āsan* and went away.

Some even went out during the *dhyāna* fanning themselves due to heat.

Then Ma removed the cover from Her face and laughingly said, "This body observed how much love you all have for *satsang* and the insistence on doing *satsang* on time." Ma also remarked that one should not sit in front of a person doing *dhyāna* even though there may be space available.

In this way Ma practically demonstrated to the sannyāsins how one should sit erect for *dhyāna*.

Ma's Equanimity towards praise or criticism

It was in Raipur Ashram that the incident took place when an unknown sadhu hurled abusive language at Ma and the Punjabi Mahatma Swami Krishnananda Avadhootji was highly impressed at Ma's unperturbed, equanimous response and expressed his spontaneous high praise for Ma.

Sri Avadhootji and Swami Paramanandaji for many days together studied scriptures in Uttarkashi and Gangotri and did *sadhana*. Often he used to tell Paramananda Swamiji, "You are a Vedantin sadhu and you seek the company of Mataji?" Swamiji replied, "The signs of a Sthitaprajna—(One who is unperturbed by either praise or criticism) can be seen here (ie in Ma)" Later Avadhootji himself came to Raipur Ashram. *Satsang* was going on in Ma's presence. By chance Avadhootji too that day entered Ma's room and stood by the wall in a corner. Just then a sadhu with a matted hair presented himself with some disciples. Immediately he sat with his back towards Ma and started speaking abusively targetting Ma. Ma's devotees were ready to throw the sadhu out. But Ma told them to keep their peace and said, "All are forms of God." For a long time the sadhu kept on speaking but seeing Ma's equanimity after some time he got up and went away with his disciples. After witnessing this scene Avadhootji paid obeisance at Ma's feet and said, "Everyone is happy when someone praises him but to be able to bear such vicious language is an unusual example". He continued "Only Ma could do this that is to listen to unthinkably foul words from an unknown sadhu." He was overwhelmed by Ma's equanimous state in praise and criticism and later started living in the Ashram. He left his body in Ma's Vrindaban Ashram.

Peaceful, beautiful and pleasant to the eyes-located in such environs this Ashram is very suitable for sadhus to do their *sadhana*. Ma said, "This place was the location of sadhus for their *sadhana*."

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ASHRAM NEWS

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Anandaswarup Brothers and Sisters,

This year *Durga Puja* was held in Kankhal Ashram in Haridwar as usual. It was attended by a large number of devotees, especially on the day of *Sandhi Puja*. With Sri Ma's Grace, despite some initial difficulties, the *puja* went off very well. From the awe inspiring ceremony of *chakshu dāna*-literally meaning giving of Eyes to the statue of the Devi-on October 9, through the powerful *Mahashtami Puja* and the beautiful *Mahanavami Puja*, till *Darpan Visarjan* on October 14, all ceremonies were performed, obstacle free with much *bhava* by Br. Ashish. He felt special blessing from Ma during the *Puja*. The daily musical programme in the evenings was of a high standard.

Durga Puja was celebrated in Varanasi Ananda Jyoti Mandir on Sri Ma's statue with all details by Br. Jaya with full participation by Kanyapeeth girls. Kolkata Agarpara Ashram and Ranchi Ashram too celebrated *Durga Puja* with much enthusiasm.

Thereafter *Kali Puja* was celebrated, specially in Varanasi, Ranchi and Uttarkashi, where Mahakali statues are installed and have a history of special association with Ma. In Varanasi, though the statue is small yet it is *jāgrat*-live, Brahmacharinis from Kanyapeeth enlivened the occasion with songs and *kirtana* composed by Bengal's much revered great devotees of Kali like Kamalakana and Ramprasad. The Brahmacharinis sang with deep feeling of devotion. Such is the legacy of our beloved Mother, Kali incarnate Anandamayee Ma! To add to the ambience was the hour past midnight when Kali removes the darkness of ignorance with Her *khadag*, symbolizing knowledge. The breeze from holy Ganga gently blowing over the walls of the Ashram and the location of the city of Vishwanath and Annapurna added to the glory of the occasion indeed!

Far away in the Himalayan Valley of Bhagirathi Kali Puja was celebrated with fervour, in Sri Ma's small but beautiful Ashram in Uttarkashi where Baba Bholanathji and Sri Ma installed the powerful Kali statue with their own hands. It was followed by the traditional Annakuta, special in the city of Annapurna in Varanasi. The rice preparation was decorated with much affection by Kanyapeeth girls besides offering of 56 varieties of *bhog*, accompanied by Annapurna chants and *kirtana* again by

Kanyapeeth girls and Brahmacharinis. In all the pujas, Kumari Puja was given a special place of honour with the choicest selection of the Kumari. All devotees eagerly sought Her blessings and felt gratified.

On the 9th of November the 64th Samyam Saptah Mahavrat was inaugurated formally by the General Secretary Somesh Chandra Banerjee under the auspices of Shree Anandamayee Sangha. President Swami Nirvananandaji Maharaj, Swami Parameshanandaji Mahamandaleshwar of Sadhana Sadan and MM Dr. Shyam Sundar Das of Garibdasi Ashram. It was preceded by Vedic Chants by Kanyapeeth Brahmacharinis. They also sang welcome song Anandam Anandam, a *stuti* to welcome all *vratees*. Sri Somesh Chandra Banerjee then welcomed all *vratees* and informed them about the rules and regulations which were to be followed strictly. 250 devotees and 150 *vratees* participated. There were a few foreigners too. From 10th November onwards the Samyam Programme began with the wake up bell at 4 a.m. Announcement of the Tithi (Lunar day of the month) and day and auspicious chant Mangalam Bhagwan Vishnu by Br. Geeta Banerjee and Kanyapeeth at 5.15 a.m. were followed by Prabhat (Morning) kirtana by Ashramites as well as female devotees. Then, Vishnu Sahasranama and the daily morning programme in the Samadhi Sthal including Vedic chant by Br. Vishuddhadi and Br. Arunadi. Puja and Arati specially by Br. Pramod were a series of wonderful experience. Shree Ma charged the devotees with Her personal touch in *sukshma*. At 7.30 Ved Path by Gopal Shastri specially Ganapati Atharvashirsh transported the devotees to the ancient times when the Rishis chanted the Supreme Truth for the benefit of mankind. Thus the *vratees* prepared themselves mentally and physically for the *dhyana*. At 7.45 the *vratees* were taken to a higher plane by Shree Ma's very special Satyam Jnananam Anantam.... and Hey Hita Hey Pitah after the *dhyana*. Three Swamijis from Kailash Ashram, Rishikesh gave discourses. They were Sw. Divyananda Acharya, Sw. Vijayanandaji, whose learned discourse on Chhandogya Upanishad was very inspiring and Sw. Devendra Chaitanya, who spoke on Bhagwat and enlightened the *vratees* with a new and in depth approach to many incidents from the Purana. Swami Chinmayanandaji of Paramarth Nikitan Rishikesh was an experienced speaker; besides Sw. Ravi Shastriji of Garibdasi Ashram spoke on Samyam. The oldest but not the least of all Swamis was (Sw) M.M. of Garibdasi Ashram Dr. Shyam Sunder who has not broken the thread of association since Sree Ma's live presence. He spoke very powerfully and effectively mainly on Samyam Mahavrat quoting instances of his experience of Shree Ma's greatness. Swami Adhyatmananda of Shivananda Ashram Ahmedabad Chapter, was at his best with

his innumerable and closely observed experiences with Ma as a young novice sadhu with a highly intellectual background. With his typical humour he brought the devotees closer to Ma. Swami Padmanabham of Shivananda Ashram Rishikesh too graced the occasion on the 12th and spoke on Samyam as a continuous practice in life. The discourses were on various topics, all close to the central theme of Samyam. The rest of the programme was as in all of the 63 yrs of Samyam. It definitely brought the *Vratees* very close to Purna Brahma Narayana Ma, which is the spiritual intent of this holy exercise. The Matri Prasang after 9 p.m. was on various topics. Some were research oriented on Shree Ma's hitherto unspecified aspects, some were personal touching and revealing aspects, some highlighted Ma's divinity usually not revealed, some dwelt on Her Oneness and kindness towards all beings, some elaborated Her insightfulness penetrating timeless Awareness. In all Ma emerged as an Extraordinary Being full of compassion. All the speakers were, highly experienced old devotees of Ma beginning with Achyutananda Swamiji, Br. Chandandi, Br. Vishuddhadi, Br. Gunita, Br. Geeta, Br. Niranjani, Golokanandaji, Sandeep Dutta (Gobluda) Pushpa Khanna, Malati Behen, Raman Pandya, last but not the least, Somuda and Keshuda.

On the 16th after Maun Shree Shree Ma's rare videos from Sri Krishna Pandya's collection were viewed. From 11.45 to 12.15 past midnight-Maha Nisha dhyaan took place. Prior to this Yajna bhasma and roli were distributed as prasad to smear on the forehead. Vishuddhadi sang in her vibrating bold voice Nahi Surya Nahi Jyoti, then all joined in Jai Jai Ma, Maiya Tera bana rahe durbar, and finally Ma's short and sweet Arati. Later Sw. Achyutanandaji and Br. Chandan di distributed prasad to all the devotees. On the 17th morning an awe inspiring Special Puja was offered to Ma at Ananda Jyoti Peeth. A Grand Arati took place, thereafter one and all present were allowed to enter the Samadhi Sthal and offer garland and prayers at Ma's feet and take Her Blessings and prasad. Simultaneously Yajna with purnahuti was performed at the yajnashala, followed by Sadhu Bhandara for 108 Sadhu with the chanting of Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma and a grand sumptuous bhandara for the devotees. Thus ended a meticulously organised and a very successful 64th Samyam Saptah at Kankhal, a beautiful homage to Shree Ma. The same evening Adhivas took place and Akhanda Nama Yajna on Ras Purnima day. Ladies did jagaran and kirtana whole night and gents the whole day till after sunset. The next day the programme ended with Malsa bhog at noon in true spirit as originally designed by our beloved Mother, finally the occasion was wound up with the Lord's sweet name in our heart and mind to carry home and nourish the devotees the whole year at least if not more.

News received late from Pune Ashram —

Shiva Mahapurana Saptah was held from 7th to 14th August. Shri Gopal Bhai Dave explained the scripture from the Vyaspeeth. It was accompanied by Laghu Rudra, Havan and Mahaprasad. Shrimad Bhagwat Saptah was held from 28/08/2013 to 01/09/2013. Sri Rajesh Goswami from Vrindavan was the Katha Vachak. It was accompanied by Sri Vishnusahasranama path along with Gita and Saptashati path and Nama Sankirtana.

With this we end the Ashram news for this quarter. May we all have Ma's choicest blessings in the New Year 2014.

**Jai Ma
The Editorial Board.**

"He Is! If He were not, where would I be? He is actually touching me." If you keep up this attitude of mind, you will see Him and Him alone. "If I remain, let me be His servant, His handmaid. Thus I shall not be separate from him anymore." In order that this spirit may prevail, sustain uninterrupted japa. The more you think of your Beloved (Ista) the more your faith will increase. Do not allow your mind to wander in many directions, but become one-pointed. Why should there be fear and anxiety? Solely because I imagine He is not near me. He is holding you. Why fear If you cling to the One in whom fear is not, how can there be even a question of fear?

—Shree Shree Ma

