

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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First Arrival of Gopalji in Kashi Ashram — August 9, 1954

MATRI - VANI

Spend more time in *Bhagavatbhāva* (thoughts of God). Everything belongs to Him, isn't it so! There is only one God, right? He is in everything; (if this be followed) there will be love, affection, reverence, forgiveness, mercy, humility (all virtues come into being).

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First of all be truthful, to develop *bhagavat prīti* (love of God). *jīvasvabhāva* (the inherent goodness), humane character will emerge. One should know this fully. When this happens, (i.e. complete surrender to God) it makes one unaware of the pains of the world. (Ma repeats it again-and again) One thing, always be truthful and do whatever will bring you close to God. (For example) if you are serving food, doing some work for someone (at that time think that) I am doing this for Him, we are all his children. Same. This way there will be no criticism. Mind will be purified.

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A small boy sits and then asks "What is this?" His father replies, "The name of this is so and so". He again asks, "What is this?" His father says, "If you continue asking like this, you will forget your own studies." (The boy says) "You only say that I must study. (For this reason) I need to ask questions (otherwise) you will say that I do not study." Father (says) "One must study. But there is a method. Do not shift to the next chapter until the first one is done. You have to follow this." Asking questions is also necessary. Keep asking, (and also keep studying). One who does not study, never asks. One who has passed does not ask anymore. You all, start your studies now. Spend your day and night until you pass. Do not touch the next book until this one is done.

Devotee — It is easy to say, but hard to do.

Ma — Go beyond all difficulties. Don't waste time.

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This body will obviously say that you do so much for yourself, your own food, family, children, whatever you can see, whatever you can do but you find no time for this (time for prayer), so you will have to suffer. Do whatever you can do, that much what you can afford to do. Do it according to your strength.

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Some people applies mind. Okay, this is such and this is so it happens — like this. What is a flower? Who made this? What should we do with this flower? Studying Nature will give you insight. If you try for this *Vidyā* (true learning), *Avidyā*

(gross learning) will go away. The *Vidyā* that transforms your self — you will know the smell of the flower. By the way, you get to know that this is a rose by hearing us. But study yourself and find out. I am not telling you to read books. This was just a metaphor. This (Nature) is an open-book. Everyone has this book.

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Anishta-Abhimāna (harm - complaint) - No complaint against God. Why should one do so for one's own? Be happy thinking "I have done this much *Japa Dhyāna*." Always think that this is not enough, I must do more. This was not done properly.

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Ksheer Sāgar. Shivji and the churning rope — the moon — because there is heat. Poison — you have to pray only then *Nīlakantha* (Shivji) will come. But, He never comes. If you call with your full spirit, then will He not come? Sure, he will. So, you have to pray from your heart in order to let Him come.

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Divya-Drishti (Divine vision) — Leaving this sight and seeing with divine vision. That is more than ordinary vision.

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When God made this world, then He made room for everyone. *Pāpa* (Sin) asked "Where is my place?" God answered "The place which is bereft of *Hari-nāma*, *Hari-kathā* (prayer in praise of God), Live there."

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No one is told to leave family and household. No one comes and no one goes.

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SHREE SHREE MA ANANDMAYEE PRASANG

VOL-5

— Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta

(continued)

Hari Baba's attraction towards Shree Shree Ma

Tuesday, 26/10/48

Today Ma started towards Jhusi. Prabhudutta's Ashram is in Jhusi. Haribaba is presently staying in Jhusi now. According to Haribaba's insistence Ma is going there and will stay there for a month.

The train to Jhusi is at 7 am in the morning, so we started early towards the station. After we reached the station we saw Ma. She was sitting on a chair on the south side of the station under a palm tree. We all sat close to Ma. After hearing that the train would reach late by an hour, Ma laughed and said, "Today Haribaba will be worried about us. He will be running hither and thither. A letter in Hindi had come, so when it was being read to Ma I could not understand. When I asked Khukunididi (Gurupriyadidi) about that letter she laughed heartily and said, "In the letter, Prabhudutta Brahmachaiji described Haribaba's conditions, after hearing about Ma's coming how he is ordering each and everyone to clean the ashram in such a way that it should shine like a mirror. He himself has joined in the work and is telling everyone, 'You people don't have any real devotion. Ma is coming and still you people are sitting idle.' Prabhudutta Brahmachari writes more, 'True, but real devotion cannot be bought in the market. If it could be done so, I would have said bring me some from Lucknow or Kashi. If one asks for real devotion from Ma, she makes light of the matter saying " I am your *bacchi* (daughter)." Every day, Haribaba is wiping the ashram clean, and every day rain spoils it; so back to square one.' Relating to this incident Prabhudutta recalls an anecdote. 'One day, a man decided that he would save his food for six days by consuming food from some one else's house. This way he would save a lot of rice and lentils. But, the day he went elsewhere, the same day a relative came over and consumed food. After six days he came back and was shocked. When the relative asked him where he had been for six days, he replied that he was at his home only.' (Everyone laughed)

Ma continued her words, "Baba gets confused as to what to do with this body. He will come with a large group to welcome me at the station. He will make seat for me in car, but will never sit himself. He will march forward with his disciples doing

kirtan, but will never let me accompany them on foot. Once, he invited all of us to his ashram in Jhusi. He had arranged for an elephant also. He told his disciples, 'Lie down, Ma will step on you to climb', so he made human-stairs. I refused to step on them to climb on the elephant. He then twisted the tail of the elephant and said, 'Step on it.' I saw that the elephant's tail was too soft to endure the weight, and out of pain the elephant might do anything. On the one hand I vehemently refused, on the other hand they ~~would~~^{would} not let me go. Now, Khukuni had already climbed on the elephant and was urging me too. She also desired that I too climb on it and start the *Jaya-yātrā* making everyone gaze in amazement at the splendid sight. (everyone laughs). Haribaba and all would be going on foot while I would ride the elephant, this did not look good! Well, after their repeated insistence I climbed on the elephant, and no one could feel the weight a bit. Really, everything is possible in *kheyal*. Pointing to the palm tree under which she was sitting, Ma said, "In *kheyal*, I can even climb on this tree."

If it is possible to extend one's lifespan after one's span ends

► In Kashi ashram what books are read in reading sessions and who reads them to others - these discussions were going on. Ma was telling a story that she had heard during one of those reading sessions. The story is this - A Vaishnav was doing his *āhnik* (rituals such as meditation and *japa* performed at dawn, midday and dusk) by the bank of the river Ganga. At that time the corpse of a child bitten by a snake came floating to him. The Vaishnav chanted Hari-nāma and it brought the child back to life. Then the child remembered everything past. Narrating this story, Ma said, "If one can recall one's life back that cannot be called rebirth. There cannot be memory of the previous life in rebirth. That means the child actually had not died by snake-bite."

Me- "Ma, I have heard that life cannot be given back if one's life span ends. Through yogic power it can be extended by two or four months. Or, one can give one's own share of life to revive someone else. You also have said something like this. When Niranajan babu's wife was in death bed, then Didima requested you to revive her. Then you said that you can grant her life by giving her your own share."

Ma - "It can also be like that. One can save another by giving one's share of life. That is a different thing altogether. What is being discussed here is that if life can be extended by 2-4 months; a powerful yogi can give a long life too."

Me - "Ma, if long life can be given then immortality can also be granted; but we have not heard of anyone who is immortal in this material body. We know Guru Gorakhnath, Lord Hanuman etc. are immortal, but nobody can tell that they still have their mortal body."

“IMPORTANT NOTICE”

Dear Anandaswarup brothers and sisters,

With immense happiness we inform that the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the First Arrival of Shree Shree Gopalji will be held on behalf of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha on account of the completion of 60 year of his divine presence in Anandjyoti Mandir of Shree Shree Ma Anadamayee Ashram in Varanasi.

You are graciously invited to take part joyously in this blissful festivity and merriment.

Jay Maa
Swami Nirvananada
President
Shree Shree Anandamyee Sangha

Ma - "Yes, one can be immortal. Think it plainly. Isn't the soul eternal? Therefore, immortality is potent in every living being, but it is not explicitly exhibited. Not everything exhibits itself always. One passes through childhood, youth and old age. When a child becomes adult, then the child in the adult dies. But is it so? When I saw Patal (Kashi's ancient Zaminder family-member- Shri Satyendra Kumar Basu nicknamed Patal) in his child image (in a vision), he was wearing black-hemmed cloth. Then I heard that when he was a child he used to wear the same. Now, Patal is no more a child, if the child in him had died, then how could I see him? Therefore, immortality and death are all in the living being itself, it needs special vision to see them. And you talk about being immortal in material body. That can also happen. But, all of this is to be understood depending on the capacity and perception of the individual."

If it is possible to exist in plural bodies

Me - "Ma, is it possible for someone to exist in plural bodies? In Dehradun you discussed this matter. Jitenbabu asked you as to how many bodies one can inhabit at a time. You said in reply, "One may have numerous bodies. Suppose one body is enjoying a materialistic life, and again another is immersed in *yoga*."

Ma - "The thing I told you then in Dehradun, and now also I am telling, is true. We don't have much time now to discuss this. Train will be arriving soon. But, we can discuss it in brief. See, there is only one. Who are you? You are also that one. Then, your one body is enjoying material life and another one leading ascetic life, is it impossible? Just as Guru is One but he can assume multiple bodies, similarly a *jīva* (living being) can also multiply itself in many bodies. In a garland, flowers are kept together by a thread. Flowers are different and change their appearance but the thread is the same. We see them through differentiating sight that is why they look different. But when there is no difference, then it can be perceived that actually there is no change. Now, this 'Nothing' also is non-existent. Everything depends on one's state of perception. There was a boy named Kedar in Kashi. He said that he travelled to many other Worlds. This is of *khanda bhāva* (partial vision), that means whatever was within the limit of his partial vision; he could only perceive that, not more. If one has the All encompassing Vision, then there is no difference and what we call *Trikāla* (Past, Present and Future), that also does not exist then."

Just then the train arrived. We bowed to Ma. Shree Shree Ma boarded the train. She told me, "Jhusi is not far, you can go there, right?" I remained silent. I could not understand if that was an order. If it is a command then I must follow it. Let's see what happens.

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MOTHER AND HER PLAYFUL ROLE

—Bhaiji

At times, Mother shows wonderful courage and a strong disposition. There is not a trace of fear in her. What she wills or says must be carried out. If her thoughts and actions are allowed to function without any protest or hindrance, it contributes to the welfare of man. If obstructed, it causes harm. In Her younger years examples of this were of common occurrence.

When four or five years old, She used to go to Her Bara Ma (great grand mother) with a pot for fetching churned curds. One day She filled the pot almost overful with it; this irritated the old lady who said, "You eat so much curd every day! Today you won't get any." No sooner was this uttered than the old lady found to her dismay, that the churning pot cracked a hole and all the curds came out through the leak, She stared at Mother's face in surprise. After this incident she would often call Mother herself to take the curd, even when She happened to arrive late.

We have seen Mother become as stern as thunderbolt, although She is by nature as soft and tender as a flower. On one occasion She was so severe with me for talking thoughtlessly that She commanded, "Go, get out of my sight!" On another occasion I disobeyed Her and the result was that Mother observed silence for some days. There were many instances in which I was fortunate enough to receive Her highest chastisement. If anybody does any wrong and expresses his repentance, Her sweet, merciful looks shed so much ineffable grace that the transgressor's mind changes altogether and becomes pure and blissful. But if one's mind is agitated with anger and self-pride at Her words, one feels terrible anguish until there is repentance. Once Pitaji took my side and pleaded for me, but Mother said, "Severe punishment is awarded to those who are able to stand it. If you want to fell a tree, you have to use an axe at first; then a hatchet and a knife may be employed to cut off the boughs and little branches. Thus chastisement will be severe or slight, as the case requires."

For the relief of the sick and distressed Her kindness manifests itself in various ways. On many occasions Mother has said, "I don't do anything with a motive or by an effort or will. It is your thoughts and desire that move this body to say or do things for your welfare. I often see what will or will not happen in the future, but words do not always find their way out."

Cases are too numerous to mention where boys and girls, men and women have obtained help and relief directly or indirectly in cases of disease, in their trades or

professions, in their examinations or selection or studies, marriages and the like. To rid people of the ills of life, She made wounds in Her own body or took upon Herself the sufferings of the patient. Such cases are without number. Instances are also frequent in which it was found that appeals from strangers, when brought to Her notice through a third party, produced a picture of their sufferings in her mind and they were relieved of their distress. We have been told by Mother that when She heard sincere prayers for the redress of the misfortune of a person, relief in some shape would come to him. Many persons saw Her in their dreams and felt Her blessings in their bereavements or illnesses.

The parents of a girl suffering from paralysis approached Mother for cure, Mother saw that the girl could not move at all; she could not even turn round. Mother was clipping betel-nuts into tiny pieces for the worship of a deity. A few pieces were thrown at the girl and she was asked to stretch out her hand and catch them. With great difficulty she could catch some. After that the family left. At her home the girl was lying in bed. On the following afternoon she heard the rumbling noise of a passing car; she suddenly jumped out of bed and ran towards it. Thereafter she gradually began to move about.

One day a carriage was driving along the road across the Ramna grounds. Mother asked me to hire it. She got into it. The coachman enquired, "Where would you go?" "To your own house", was Mother's prompt reply. Without saying a single word, he drove to his home. On arriving there, it was found that an old man was about to die; by his side his relations were weeping. Mother asked me to bring some sweets which were distributed amongst the people present and she came away. We learnt subsequently that the old man had recovered.

Mother had other ways as well to give relief to sufferers. She would ask a person in distress to use anything he could lay his hands on, at dusk, shutting his eyes. By using such articles he was found to recover. Sometimes she would ask a patient to eat the food prepared for Her and She would Herself eat the sick-diet intended for him. In cases of fever or serious bowel-complaints, patients following Mother's direction ate food not considered beneficial by physicians, with the result that they were restored to their former health in no time.

When my son was fifteen or sixteen years old, he was suffering from dysentery for about ten or twelve days. Mother came to see him one night. From that night he began to recover but Mother had dysentery for a few days. It has also been found, if any patient was destined not to come round, he would either wilfully violate Mother's directions or fail, by the pressure of circumstances, to follow them. In these cases the final outcome could be foreseen from Mother's ways. The Hindu *shastras* enjoin that

the results of our past actions in this birth or of those done during our previous births, can only be neutralized by steady good work in this life with the help of Divine Grace; But work that calls forth divine intervention is very difficult to perform, unless some saint out of compassion voluntarily aids such efforts.

Mother says, - "As long as you see this objective world, creation exists for you. There is conflict so long as the notions of you and I, happiness and misery, light and darkness, prevail. Consider yourself an integral part of Nature and let there be stress on Nature's work or on Her Laws of work instead of on your own self as the embodiment of your sense perceptions; then all your senses will be quiescent and your inner being will gradually awaken; the problem of the self and of creation will be solved. Then all your wants will vanish, the impact of life's basic urges will gradually wear off like a smoke screen at the first breath of wind, your soul will resume its full glory like the morning sun and the time will arrive for you to fix your eyes upon the Supreme Being.

In Mother's early life, opportunities for Her education were rather meagre, neither did she pay much attention to it. But it was surprising to find that the examiners would ask Her questions from only those topics which She had glanced over beforehand. For this reason She was looked upon as a bright pupil in the class. From Her girlhood She did not, of Her own accord, read any book nor did she practise handwriting. Still the groundwork of Her knowledge appeared to be quite sound. Whatever she studied She could master thoroughly.

One day Mother enquired, "What is Italy?" A few days later an Italian Professor named Tucci came to Mother at Shah-bag. He had come to visit the University of Dhaka. He asked a question in English and it was to be translated into Bengali for Her, but before this could be done She gave the proper answer in Sanskrit.

(an excerpt from *MOTHER AS REVEALED TO ME*)

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THE TIME HAS COME

—Mohua

The time has come
Much awaited and welcomed by all
With a pace of a long year behind and still more eager moments to go.
The mere mortals all swarming to the point of universal pull
Not wanting to be left out, it's filling up the tiniest sense with the fullness of
Your Being.

Life invisible to the eyes, crawling on the uneven, seem rushing steadily
on their defined paths.
Each breath is falling heavily in anticipation and rising in childlike impatience.
A cuckoo's cooing at times makes the air sound so silent,
The most inaudible decidels echo the Holy chants of Your name.

The waves of a spiritual fervor grow through the layers of a discreet motion.
It takes everything coming within its embrace beyond the senses
of time and space.
The small chirps and the sweet calls from the foliage above,
Break in to spell an overwhelming joy.

The subdued orange glow moving to plunge to its abode is waiting to wake
up with a misty eyed dawn.
The day is growing into lighter shades of time, each moment closing down to
be reborn through the deepening hours.
Time is growing and it's moving closer, to the point where all the mortals flock.
The pace has slowed down with the celebration growing effusively.

The joy, euphoria, the devotion, spirituality,
The emotions are growing in a deluge not to hold within, any longer.
The time has come
Much awaited and welcomed by all
In the elation of Your Motherly incarnation on this earth.

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EXTRACTS FROM *MANISHI KI LOK YATRA*

(translated from Hindi)

—M. M. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj, Padmavibhushan

1. DESCRIPTION OF SIDDHASHRAMS :—

The place called Yogeshwara is situated at a lower plane. It is neither covered by snow, nor by trees. The ground here is sparkling white like a *sphatik* (crystal) *dyotirlinga*. There is no temple, just a vast field. Thakur Mahashaya noticed that there were four pillars in the four corners. These have stones a top them. Slightly more at a height, there ^{was} an *asan*. A *muni* in meditation was seated there. He was radiant and serene and a *Devi murti* was looking towards him, steadily. The face of the *muni* was covered by matted hair and there was extraordinary beauty. The young girl (*kumārī*) was Gauri Herself. Thakur Mahashaya spent 5 days there. Just at some distance from the ashram, there was a mountain spring and he used to get water from there. Everyday, in the ashram, a 12 year old girl who was covered by ornaments made of flowers, used to garland Shiva and Gauri and sing and dance before them. Thakur used to have *Darshan* of this Divine Girl everyday. After *sandhyā* (dusk) was over, she used to go away, still singing. The language of her songs was 'Pahari' (of the mountain), that was why he could not understand them. Thakur Mahashaya used to say that the beautiful atmosphere of this ashram was not to be found on the worldly plane.

On going farther, together with 4 other people, he had to pass a very large and dark tunnel. After travelling for quite a few days, they reached a place, where it was neither day nor night. Just like the light at dusk, a soft light was always present there. After staying there for some time, they came to realize that the light did not arise from any outward source. After going somewhat farther, they came upon a place, which was very dark. They saw a *Mahapurush*, who was vary tall, seated there. That soft light was emanating from his body. Actually except for that light, the rest of the place was in complete darkness. On coming out of that cave, they saw the light of the sun. It was his belief that the tunnel was going towards the northern direction, after passing through the mountains from the south. After crossing the tunnel, he climbed a tall mountain peak. Below this was the line of the Kaushika mountains. He climbed down and went there.

He saw an extremely beautiful place called Kaushik ashram in the Kaushika range. This was in the form of a lotus, and was spread out for miles. There was only snow to be seen all around it, but the astonishing thing was, there was no snow inside

the ashram. The ground there was stony. Just below the ashram, there was a river which was flowing very fast. The name of the river was Mandakini. It was very difficult to cross the river. You had to go across very carefully by stepping on stones. There were various types of flowers and fruit trees, which are not to be seen in India. There were 13 *āsans*, laid out in the ashram. Out of these, 10 *āsans* were placed in such a way, that the people seated on them could not see each other. The other 3 *āsans* were placed before them. They were placed in such a way that the people seated on the other 10 *āsans* would be able to see those seated on them.

Thakur Mahashaya saw ten *Mahāpurushas* seated on the 10 *āsans*. They had absolutely still minds with absolutely no movement of body. They were completely motionless and still, like stone figures (*murti*). Both hands were down. Their skin was as rough as stone and torn in some places. Some of their *jatās* had opened up and had fallen down on their shoulders. They were so tall that inspite of standing before them Thakur Mahashaya had to stand on a stone to put a garland around their necks. Their eyes were covered by hanging leatherlike strips (lids) and their pupils were deeper than 6 inches. Their faces had a reddish hue. It is not possible to guess the amount of *yugas* they had been sitting in this place. I asked Thakur Mahashaya "Had these *Mahāpurushas* undergone *kāyā kalpa*?" Thakur Mahashaya said, "No, by undergoing *kāyākalpa*, one can have a new body, it does not remain the way it is. Their bodies have become "*Chinmaya*" as a result of *tapasyā* (penance)."

The 3 remaining *āsans* were empty. Those *Mahāpurushas* had descended to lower planes for the well being of the people. Ram Thakur stayed in this ashram for 15 days. He performed service for the *Mahātmās* regularly by supplying them with fruits, flowers and *naivedya*. At the time of *sandhyā* (dusk) he used to leave fruits for them. The next day when he returned to serve them, he found the skins remaining there. On the 16th day, he performed *sāshṭāṅga dandawat pranām* to each *Mahāpurush*, and took his leave of them. On doing that each *Mahāpurush* raised his hand in *abhaya mudrā* and blessed him. During the 15 days he stayed with them Thakur Mahashaya saw only this one movement in their bodies. As to the whereabouts of this ashram, Thakur Mahashaya said that it is very far north of Mansarovar. I inquired of him. "A lot of very well known travelers have searched the area near the locations of their travels, they have not mentioned either of these two ashrams or the *tapasvis* mentioned by you. What is the reason for this?" Thakur Mahashaya said, "These divine ashrams are not easily seen. Only those people who have bodies which are *yoga-siddha* are able to find them."

There are several other stories about this extraordinary Mahapurush. They are not to be discussed. It is difficult to judge his *ādhyātmic* (spiritual) state. He had a very thin, short body and he was very humble in all respects, but internally he had infinite power and unending light. He left his body on April 1949.

2. BABA SITARAMDAS OMKARNATH

Baba Sitaramdas Omkarnath is a Mahatma from Bengal and of a very high calibre. I had heard of him a very long time back. At that time, his sect (*Sampradaya*) was known as "Jayaguru", but I was actually able to obtain his *darshan* in Puri, in May 1948. He was keeping silence (*moun*) at that time. It was to be seen that his *shishyas* and devotees were always seen around him, performing *Harinām Kīrtan*. This was what was so very special about him whenever he travelled, he always did so with a group of *Kīrtankāras* (people performing kirtan) with him. His life was absolutely astonishing. It is not necessary to describe this here, since it is already recorded in other books. Babaji was born on 6th Falgun 1889 in Hoogly. His father was Shri Ramhari Chattopadhyaya. It was seen that he had always had *Bhagvat Kripā* (God's grace) bestowed on him since childhood. At that time he was studying Sanskrit & Chatushpathi. He received *dīkshā* in 1912 at a place near Hoogly. He was married in 1915. In 1917, Shivji himself gave him *darshan* and also *dīkshā*. In 1930, his wife passed away. Since then, being free of householder's life, (*grihasthi*), he started to do *ārādhana* (*sādhanā*) with total one pointedness (*ekāgratā*). In 1931, he obtained *Brāhmīdīkshā* in his dreams, after which he was in total silence (*akhnada moun*) for 2 years. In pure in 1935, he got some instructions from Deva Himself and took to preaching the greatness of the name (*nāmā prachāra*) with all his heart.

Omkarnathji used to know me quite well from the beginning, I used to get a periodical called, "Devayān" which was published by him, but I became very well acquainted with him when he was in Omkareshwar performing *Sādhanā* and in complete silence (*moun*). Later on, his devotees made a request that I write a foreward for the book. This was in 1953. I wrote a foreward according to Babaji's request and sent it to him. He was so pleased to read it, that he wrote a long letter back in reply at once. In that letter, he conveyed his great satisfaction. He also gave a complete description of his *ādhyātmic* (spiritual) life. In childhood, while he was studying in school in Chinsura, he had *sākshātkar* of the greatest Guru (Panam Guru), Lord Shankar, together with the Devi Jagadamba. This had a very long lasting and great influence on him.

After that he had described all his experiences on the path of his *Sādhanā* (Spiritual Path) in that letter. He sent me several letters. In this way, several subjects were discussed between us. It is not necessary to discuss this.

After this, I sent Babaji Gurudeva Shri. Swami Vishuddanandaji's life story (which has been completed in 5 parts and written by me). I also sent him the magazine, "Vishuddha Vani" which has been printed by the ashram. On reading this, he was so eager to meet me, that he came to Kashi. Since then, whenever he came to Kashi. I

always had his *darshan*, for quite a few years, whenever he came to Kashi, he went to Shri Vishuddhanand Kanan straight from the station and had *darshan* of the Panchamundi āsan. After then, he used to come to my house, then go to his own ashram at Bengali Tola. There was a band of devotees always accompanying him, performing *Kirtan*. On his leaving this company of devotees used to accompany him far.

Babaji ~~was~~^{is} very well versed and competent in the *Omkar Sādhamā*. He has expressed his own views in several books which have been written by him. In spite of being a devotee of the Vaishnava Sect, he ~~was~~^{is} a jñānī as well as a yogi.

Acharya Ramdayal Majumdar's name has been mentioned previously. He is a great bhakta of Babaji and believes him to be a "Guru kalpa". He was influenced by Mahatma Shivram kinkar. Yoga trayananda when he was younger. Babaji had a great belief in Varnashrama (caste) and believed in the Shastras without any question or doubts. He is the author of several journals and magazines in different languages. This was in order to spread *dharmā* (religion). In these, the main ones in Bengali are :- "Pather Alok" and "Devayan" besides "Mother" in English and "Prabhav Parijatam" in Sanskrit. Some journals have been published in Hindi, Urdiya and southern languages. At the same time, he used to have books published and have them distributed by his devotees. It is not necessary to discuss his personal doctrines, since they are well known everywhere through books, which have been published by him, as also through current literature. There is intense *tapasyā*, *Guru bhakti* (devotion to the Guru) in his life. He has the right (*adhikār*) to enter *Nirmal* (Purest) *Samādhi*. I can not repay the debt I owe to him for the sincere love he has for me.

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"PILGRIMAGE TO KAILAS"

—Gurupriya Devi

Friday, 5 July

Today we have to cross the Lipu hill (that is the Lipu Pass). We have been hearing right from the start this is the most difficult part of this journey. We have to climb very high. We are already at a height of sixteen thousand feet and Lipu is at a height of eighteen or nineteen thousand feet. The descent from there is also perilous. The ice is not thick enough, it may give way; in such a place it is practically impossible to proceed in the rain.

In the morning the sky was slightly clear and the grooms got the horses ready to start immediately. But then it started raining and so we decided to halt for the day and camp where we were. The guide did not have the confidence to set out in wet weather. We were to have set out in the morning and reached Taklakot by the evening. Therefore some food had been cooked the previous evening so that we could eat it on the way without halting. Now we ate the same food in the afternoon. Jyotish Dada had loose motions so he had some barley. Hands and feet are numb with cold and it is difficult to write—my fingers refuse to straighten out. The downpour continues incessantly. The Indian *brahmachari* from Dehradun has been travelling with us—he had nothing with him and it would have been impossible for him to travel along. It has been decided that we will start tomorrow morning if the weather clears up.

Taklakot is an important place. We have been told that we can procure many necessities there. The coolies in Dharchula wore *dhotis* but the coolies here wear trousers and coats... it is impossible to walk around without that. At three p.m. some rays of sunshine broke through the clouds. We put our wet clothing out to dry. In a short while there was darkness again... but the brief spell of sunshine warmed our bodies, hands and feet. We even strolled outside for a few minutes and then hastened into our tents, unable to bear the cold.

Tomorrow we have to cross the Lipu Pass. We hear that some people are prone to faint and therefore we have to take necessary precautions. As it was likely to get colder, we wore warm trousers and coats and got ready. We are to start early next morning for otherwise we will not make it to Taklakot. Ma told everyone what to keep handy in case of giddiness or breathlessness. We were already experiencing some breathlessness here. Though the place was flat like a field we used to pant by

the time we walked even a little distance. We were getting frozen by the cold but there was no way in which we could light a fire for we had no wood. The coolies were fetching damp sticks from a great distance to cook food. Ma has said, "If expense is not a problem then a hot bag and a camp cot should also be kept handy."

Saturday, 6 July

I woke up early and found that it was still raining-it had rained all night. But our guide, Sandal Singh, had the horses brought from the mountains and got ready to go, for halting any longer meant too much of a loss for him. It is beneficial for him to finish the trip as quickly as possible. We took Ma's name as we dressed up and got ready to leave by seven a.m. The rain poured. Everyone was saying that if we covered the distance intended today, the rest of the journey would be nothing to worry about.

Taklakot is about ten miles away. The sight that met our eyes when we reached Lipu was unforgettable! At first we had to traverse a steep climb; even the very remembrance of the way the horses negotiated that route is frightening. Then we saw snow around us here and there. A little farther, there seemed to be a sea of ice on either side with the black mountain in between. The mountain was also dotted with snow. It seemed as if we were atop a bridge over the sea. Then we started the descent. We all had to walk only with the help of the coolies because our feet slipped with every step. At that time it felt as if we had stepped into a sea of ice. Each one of us slipped and fell, sometimes to great depths, but no one was hurt as we only fell on soft snow. It was very difficult to manage to keep the layers of clothing on amidst all this. Our hands were numb and our fingers were crooked. We were sucking lime pickle and preparation of black papper. I put some of these into Ma's mouth. I was unaware of which hand I was using to feed Ma... such was my condition! But honestly, even though the journey was so perilous, we did not experience any serious trouble. The exquisite scenery all around us in our present condition gave rise to a feeling of deep bliss within. Dasu Babu was so overwhelmed with joy that he said, "Ma! Ma!" and burst into tears. Bholanath did not eat anything saying that he would eat only after we reached Taklakot. He was walking with obvious relish. Swamiji had been left slightly behind. Ma said, "You and Jyotish look after Swamiji," She then returned and fetched him, saying, "I think there is no need to worry about anyone. Bholanath said 'Jai Ma Tarini I am free of all anxiety. I have all the confidence in the world. 'In fact when we had descended he patted me on the back joyfully and I could see tears in his eyes as he said, "I understand that Tara Ma is looking after us all!" That joy had brought tears to his eyes.

By the grace of Ma and Bholanath we were travelling on this pernicious path with such joy. After walking for about a mile, we rode our horses again, while Ma got into the *dandi*. We proceeded after eating some food. We crossed the mountainous path in different ways. Finally we had to cross flat ground. We saw the milk-hued mountains with all kinds of plants and trees and viewed the scenic beauty around us as we trudged along. The sights were marvellous. By evening we reached Taklakot. Our guide went ahead and pitched our tents. As we reached Taklakot, some of the residents came and stood with such looks on their faces that we felt afraid. Later we came to know that they often loot people and that we would have to be very careful from now on. On the way we had caught sight of many caves. From quite a distance we had been able to spot the residence of the ruler of this province and the temples of the Lamas. There were also some houses and shops. Atop every house small pieces of cloth strung up with rope fluttered. Similar pieces of cloth decorated the top of the ruler's residence and the temples. We saw many fields irrigated by canals; rainfall here is irregular.

The dacoit menace starts here. Our guide had brought a gun with him. Two sannyasis from Peshawar came to meet Ma. They were disciples of the Lamas here. Before reaching Garbiyan we had met three South India sadhus. I cannot recollect their names. We slept after taking the necessary precautions. The guide said, "Tomorrow we must finish eating early and set out for we have to go another ten miles before we camp." No one here knows how to gauge a mile- the camp sites are located by rough estimation of the distance between them. At each site these people go and pitch tents.

Sitting now, at night, and reflecting over the day's journey, it all seems like a dream; it is not possible to describe it in words. Viewing the variety of hues in the mountains, Ma exclaimed, "Look, look - the mountains seem to be clothed in tiger skins. How beautiful the sheep and goats are- their hair stretches from their backs to their feet. Their large curved horns look so graceful." The hair of these animals is used to make clothes, socks, blankets and such other items. The local people brought these items and we purchased some of them. As soon as we reached the camp site the horses were let loose.

Sunday, 7 July

By eleven a.m., we finished eating and set out for Rangung which is nearly ten miles away. From the time we reached Taklakot to the time we left, I was witnessing an interesting spectacle. The people of Taklakot were staring at Ma from all around- She was constantly surrounded by them. They could not understand a word of what

she spoke, yet they gathered around her in greater and greater numbers. At the time of our departure, a big crowd of men and woman stood surrounding Ma's *dandi*. Some started touching Ma's feet. Ma caught hold of their fingers- they smiled happily. These people deal in animal hair in Tibet - they brought many kinds of articles for us to see.

We reached Rangung by six p.m. We saw many temples on the way. The stones that were used in the construction had inscription carved on them which the horse grooms described as Omkar.

The pinnacles of temples were decorated with sheep and goat horns which were also carved. Today's path was not going to be too bad but the fear of dacoits was great, so we walked close together. The path was completely deserted. Here and there we could discern herds of yaks, sheep and goats. How many mountains we have crossed! Neither does this path seem to end, nor do the mountains. We had no idea of where and how we were being taken. There were no trees or shrubs on the path but we could see fields now and again. The mountain dwellers, however, knew this path. We eventually found ourselves walking through an enormous valley with no signs of any pathway. There were hardly any trees or plants on the mountain sides. Yet it appeared as if someone had decorated the mountains with a variety of colours. The snow capped peaks enhanced the beauty of the mountains further. While treading this path one felt as if one was going on a limitless, endless journey perhaps one that would never come to a finish. The guide guessed the distance we had covered and pitched the tents before dark. We then made arrangements to look after our belongings and settle down for a while. Then again we would break our homes (tents) and set off - we had become just like nomads. As father was experiencing some breathing trouble today, Ma decided that he should ride the *dandi* tomorrow, while she would ride a horse. We finished eating as quickly as we could and lay down to rest.

(to be continued) .

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NEW VISION OF RELIGIOUS UNITY IN AN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN HERMITAGE

— Francesco Zanelli

“In order that both he who gives the spiritual exercises and he who receives them may have the greatest benefit and help, one must presume that every good Christian must be ready to save the word of his neighbor rather than condemn it; and if he cannot save it, one must inquire in what sense he interprets it, and if this is not sufficient, one must seek an appropriate means so that, interpreting it as good, it is saved.”

—Saint Ignacio de Loyola

Many years ago, in the forest of Casentino, a Hindu monk came from a far off land to the village of Papiano, near Stia dressed in a flowing white tunic, with dark wavy hair that touched over his shoulders and an impressive thick black beard. On that day, I was in that area as a journalist to make a documentary on him for a local television programme, but I lingered there longer than I should have, in spite of the fact that the Hindu monk did not speak as he was observing a vow of silence for one year long at that time. I was rather fascinated by his personality and to my surprise, even without uttering a single word, he spoke through intensive gazing, directly to the onlookers. After that day in 1976, I met him many times and shortly after I became a fervent disciple of the Integral Yoga he taught, I had heard of him a long time before meeting him, but, I had never imagined him to be so fascinating! The Sadhana Ashram, the name of the centre where one can learn this ancient discipline, was only a few minutes walk from a small glade in the beautiful forest of Casentino, and there was a mountain stream nearby, flowing down with clear water endlessly murmuring over rocks and stones. The cool shade with the different nuances of green was in contrast with the white stones sparkling with transparent and limpid waters. On one of these rocks, Satyananda, this is the name of the Master (meaning Bliss in Truth), would love to sit very often and enter into deep meditation, lulled by the rustle of the tree-leaves and the rhythmic flowing sound of the waters.

One day in that place, some disciples were gathered around Satyanandaji, who was meditating in silence, sitting on the huge rock. Simone, an early Italian devotee, was also meditating very near to him. The Master was in deep meditation, and we all were trying to follow him, but one of us, an amateur photographer, was incessantly taking pictures of the place, with its splendid nature and the scenic beauties all around.

Some days later, the photographer came to the Ashram visibly flustered and he asked to speak urgently with the Master, saying that there was something extraordinary appeared in the pictures, between the Master and Simone, inexplicable, there was a subtle human figure, a bit blurred, appearing as if meditating in Padmasana (lotus position) with us. Later on, the Master explained to us that it was the astral body of an ancient Sage who had joined with our meditation and who, possibly on that very occasion, had allowed the camera to portray him on celluloid film, probably by transforming his subtle body into a form, normally invisible to our open eyes.

Sometime later, the Ashram was moved from Casentino to the beautiful XVI century Camaldolese monastery on the top of Monte Corona, in Umbertide, near Perugia, and was formally inaugurated on 10 April 1977. This XVI century ancient monastery was permeated by an authentic spirituality, everywhere it seemed one could still feel in the air and hear the echo of the litanies and rites of the monks who had dwelt in that monastery for centuries. The jambstones of the doors were worn-out by the constant rubbing, like the stone at the entrance of the church, located in the middle of the monastic complex, that was quite large and decorated in a baroque style, and where one could still smell the fragrance of the incense. The walls, in some parts, were blackened with the smoke of the candles and oil-lamps and the kneeling-bench had been worn out as a result of those who had continually prayed on and used them,

The cells, single and well ordered, had a wooden plank with a straw mattress, a small table and a kneeling-bench for prayers, but, above all, an atmosphere of mystery oscillating in the air, still gives me the shivers!

Here, after many Sadhanas (spiritual exercises), I received from Satyanandaji the word that, like a seed in good earth, gave good fruits in time. What happened that night, during the meditation (Dhyana), cannot be easily described in words: we were sitting in Dhyana Mandir (sanctum sanctorum); the Master was sitting at my left, some woods were still burning in a beautiful old fireplace behind us, the rest of the room was illuminated by a few candles.

Satyanandaji had just entered into deep meditation, and many were absorbed in doing the same, I was in a state of complete relaxation and I was watching him attentively, when all of a sudden a dazzling blue spark springing out of his body with the movement of a lightning stroke hit me directly. Instantly, I was pervaded by an indescribable bliss, startling and fleeting, which I will remember all through my life. The consequences of the impact with that special light was an increase of sensitiveness of Ajna Chakra (Centre of Spiritual Perceptivity) that continued manifesting itself even after some days.

In due time this subtle centre opened more and became more sensitive, passing from a mere feeling of pressure to a feeling of heat that turned into a sort of electric shock, coagulating into canals, one on the right and one on the left of the

bridge of the nose, and rising to Sahasrara Chakra (Center of Cosmic Supreme Knowledge), giving birth to an indescribable feeling of infinite blessedness. Since then the experience of that state had never left me and keep returning whenever I concentrate on that Ajna Chakra. From time to time it spontaneously manifested during the day, with no need for any further concentration, but for a few seconds and then disappeared!

I wish to recount another important episode about Satyanandaji that I witnessed personally. Many similar episodes have been observed by others, but this one is particularly significant. One day, I was sitting outside the room where a meditation and concentration session had just taken place, waiting with many others to greet him. He came out of the room, but did not come towards us joyfully as he usually did on other occasions. This time he was rather happy and he just nodded to us before heading for his own cell, that was only a few meters from the meditation room, at the end of the grassy path going slightly uphill. Together with a friend, I decided to follow him, just to ask him some clarifications about a few issues raised during the discussion we just had. After a few paces, I suddenly stopped, my eyes were staring at the feet of the Master, who was wearing wooden sandals that would have trodden the grass below them. But this was an extraordinary event. Satyanandaji was walking on the path without even touching the grass, simply levitating from the ground. I pointed out this to my friend who became simply spellbound with astonishment on seeing this marvelous happening!

We got closer and bent down to see it better, but there was no doubt at all about what we had witnessed. The Master noticed us, stopped, calling us near to him, and pointed out to a flower on the side of the path and said: "Look at that flower carefully. Don't you feel God's presence?"

And recited a few lines of a poem of Rabindranath Tagore, a poet of his own motherland:

"Blessed am I, says the flower on the earth, O God, thy service is in my room. On the dust am I born, kindly allow me to forget, no dust is there in my heart. Bend thy eyes, the petals tremble.

Give, give that touch of thy feet make the wealth of dust divine

I, the salute of the earth, am at thy service."

We must try to be worthy disciples and to study and practice Yoga seriously and very often, many questions would cross our minds and when we met together with Satyanandaji, we usually had a long list of questions. But, invariably, the Master would answer our questions before we could even ask, and due to this reason, sometimes, the Satsang would turn into a one-sided monologue. In a moment of silence he

could read our minds, and then he kept on answering almost all of the untold questions intended to be asked!

Similarly on another day, Satyanandaji told us that on the previous night someone had paid an unexpected visit to his cell. We were worried because we thought that some intruders might have broken into the monastery, but it was not so. Satyanandaji said that the visitors had come from another higher world! Later he explained to us, during midnight the Master had met some elderly monks on the astral plane, who had died many years ago and had dwelt in the same monastery till the end of their mortal lives. They spoke happily with him and in a way expressed their congratulations for the selfless spiritual mission that Satyananda was fostering in the very place where they also had dedicated themselves to the same cause, many years before, and added that their mission was not yet over and thanked him for continuing their unfinished task. This event clearly shows that holy men can keep helping us for the evolution of the spirit of the human race even in another higher plane, maybe as celestial angels who evidently support and guide and help suffering mankind. These are only a few among the many untold mysteries that happened when in close proximity to our Master from whom one can also feel the presence of the beloved Sri Ma, the Joy permeated Mother!

From 1979, the Sadhana Ashram has a new and beautiful location in San Presto near Assisi, on a quiet hill on the Monte Subasio, in the green Umbrian land of Saint Francis. This beautiful Ashram, pervaded by inner peace, is the right place for the true seekers after truth, worn out of a restless life, to recover mental peace and tranquillity in this atmosphere of silence and solitude. In this place there are no religious discriminations, dogmas or theologies and all are free to pursue their inner search to feel God's presence in their everyday life. In an ashram time goes smoothly, passing with prayers, meditation and simple manual works. No rush, no fast pace and no time limit. Immersed in nature one can find within the Spirit of Truth that enriches us, more and more, eschewing the spirit of falsehood. And one must remember what Christ said:

“Blessed be the poor in Spirit, because they will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven”

Sri Satyananda also confirms in his own words:

“The world deludes itself into thinking that a better life can be created
Simply by means of secular laws which may always be improved,
But this is not possible as long as man does not find his *animi tranquillitas*.
History confirms that even one single illuminated Soul
Could change the destiny of mankind once he can realize
His interior perfection, the blissful state.”

Daily regular meditation and deep concentration purify the mind from anguishing thoughts and expand our consciousness into a higher consciousness. The Divine Spirit, latent in man, becomes more and more perceptible, like a fire hidden in a stone: the stone is worn-out and disintegrated by constant meditation with the practice of Integral Yoga, it may emanate more and more heat and life acquires then a new aspect and brings ever-lasting peace within us. Satyanandaji is just with us, like a shadow, who is always present even when we are not aware of it. It is he who guides us beyond our mental consciousness and transmits these marvelous secrets, that he inherited being a faithful disciple of one of the most revered Saints of contemporary India: the Blissful Mother. She never tried to establish a philosophy of Her own, but always tried to sustain the faiths and beliefs of all religious creeds, but insisting on the importance of a perfect self discipline over one's mind, speech and action in order to go beyond and to live in the Ultimate Truth!

Satyanandaji became one of the favourite disciples of Shree Anandamayee Ma, also known affectionately as Mataji, and above all with Her Divine Grace, he trod the most difficult path, the one leading to the realization of the Supreme Goal of Life. The impulse that prompted him to express through painting the joy of filling his soul turned into purely inner quest for higher existence. He went on to the high practising the Samyam Mahavrata, the annual spiritual retreat held every year, observing asceticism, prayer, fasting, meditation and many encounters with representatives and scholars of other religions like Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism during the long week-time. It was this mystic workshop of sincere faith and devotion which urged me to help everybody understanding the Integral Yoga, learned from my Master, that I have been inspired to call: The Sacred Movement. This definition grew and finally became a book. I sincerely wish that Satyanandaji and Mataji may always walk side by side helping all seekers after Truth! The Sacred Movement is, I believe, the best definition of what Integral Yoga really means. Many have talked and written at length on definition from Sanskrit, Greek or even Latin saying Yoga means yoke or union, not taking into consideration that those who created this sacred discipline did so only to bring man closer to God, and the Ancient Sages revealing the mystery how to eliminate the obscurity from the mind and finally attain to the highest purity in the heart itself.

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THE MOTHER SPEAKS TO HUMANITY

"No work is secular. All work is adoration and worship

—Swami Vivekananda

The Path of Self - Realization

—Shuddha Satta Chakravarty

Mother often says, "Be anchored in fearlessness. What is worldly life but fear? When you live in the grip of fear must you not be afraid? It is futile to expect fearlessness there. That you may be delivered from all sorrow you should endeavour to let God be your one and only support.

"To forgo the shelter that the life of the householder (*grihastha ashrama*) affords in order to devote one's life wholly to the Supreme Quest is difficult. If you are capable of this - very well. But examine carefully the prompting that comes from within. 'His' will be done.

"How can one be a human being without fortitude? To attain to Truth one has to endure all hardships, ever abiding in patience. It is the obstacles that give birth to patience.

"Those who prompted by a deep yearning for the vision of the Supreme Being tread along this long and difficult path can do so only by His grace. To take refuge in patience is the only acceptable attitude of mind. One must never lose hope. Where ever you may be placed and under whatever circumstances, let your thinking be centered in Him and in Him alone."

Mother often speaks of herself as a little child and calls children and unmarried people her "FRIENDS".

Once she was dictating a letter. She started, "Tell him that he must become a traveller on the path upon which peace is found. He will certainly have to undertake the pilgrimage to where no death exists & no decay, but where everything is ever present. Who is it that dies & who that appears in the guise of death? Unless those things are known by direct perception there can not be release from this ocean of misery. Let my friend strive without ceasing to abide in the presence of Him, the remembrance of Whom for ever puts an end to sorrow." A pilgrim on the path of Immortality never contemplates death. By meditation on the Immortal, the fear of death recedes far away ; remember this! In the measure that your contemplation of the One becomes uninterrupted, you will advance towards full, unbroken Realization.

"Iswara, the Lord of the world is not a things to be perceived by the sense or grasped by the mind. By contemplating the Divine, peace is won. God Himself draws you towards Him."

Now, I would like to focus your attention to one general advice of Ma to the world :

"If you do not allow your thoughts to stray from His Lotus-Feet there is hope of your being saved from all maner of temptations. Man's duty is to awaken to true humanity & to cast aside his animal propensities; to allow to choose what is excellent & to relinquish the merely pleasurable, Let your mind be like a beautiful flower that may be offered to the Lord in worship. In very truth, man's sole duty is the search after Self-realization. With but the One Supreme Friend, you my friend must try to avoid the ties of worldly friendship."

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LIST OF FESTIVALS

1. Guru Purnima	12th July, 2014
2. Sri 108 Swami Muktanand Giriji Nirvan Tithi	3rd August, 2014
3. Jhoolan Mahotsav	6th August, 2014
4. Nirvan Tithi of Bhaiji (Swami Maunananda Parvatji)	8th August, 2014
5. Raksha Bandhan	10th August, 2014
6. Sri Krishna Janmashtami	17th August, 2014
7. Shrimad Bhagwat Saptah Mahaparayana	1-8 September, 2014
8. Respected Gurupriya Didi's Nirvan Tithi Lalita saptami	1 September, 2014
9. Sri Sri Sharadiya Durga Puja	30 September-3 October.,2014
10. Sri Sri Lakshmi puja	7 October, 2014
11. Deepawali, Kali puja	23 October, 2014
12. Annakut	24 October, 2014

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GREAT SADHUS AND BHAKTAS - ASHRAMS GROW UP IN VARIOUS PLACES

(From *Ma Anandameyee Lila*)

(continued)

—Late Sri Hari Ram Joshi

On the occasion of Mataji's birthday celebrations. Pt. Parasuram gave me an undertaking which he fulfilled, that he would pay the estimated cost of building of the Pataldevi Ashram, amounting to Rs. 40,000/- the story of this unassuming devotee is very interesting. It is an example of an ideally selfless person who was born in a very religious family but not highly educated. He started his career as a motor driver in the Dehradun and Saharanpur districts and later owned a fleet of about a dozen motor buses, trucks and station wagons. He became an ardent devotee of Mataji when meeting her in 1936, on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Kishenpur Ashram to which I had invited him. Parasuram Bhai was a very simple and modest person. He never talked to Mataji and always used to sit quietly in front of Her during his visits to the Ashram. He was a great philanthropist. Over and above the Rs. 40,000/- he had donated for the Pataldevi Ashram, he got a Shiva Temple constructed in the Anandamayi Ashram at Vrindaban to fulfil the special desire of his daughter Mohini, who is living mostly in Mataji's company, having decided not to get married. Mohini later also had a suite of rooms for the exclusive use of Mataji built on top of her father's house near the railway station, Dehradun. Parasuram Bhai also spent more than Rs. 15,000/- on constructing a cottage for Mataji in Raipur, at a short distance from the dharamsala attached to the Shiva Mandir where Mataji had stayed in 1932-33 when first coming from Dacca. This building is now being used by genuine sadhakas. Mataji declared that this cottage should be regarded as memorial for the eldest son of Pt. Parasuram who had died in Dehradun after a very short illness. Sri Hari Babaji had repeatedly prayed to Mataji to save the life of this boy whose sacred thread ceremony had been performed a few months before in the presence of Mataji at the Kishenpur Ashram. However, Mataji told Haribabaji that the young brahmachari had developed complete desirelessness (*purna vairagya*) and did not want to continue to stay anymore in this world. This was the end of a highly developed soul at a very young age.

In spite of the death of his eldest son, Parasuram Bhai's devotion for Mataji never wavered. He had of course several other children. His spirit of renunciation was very great. He would not spend any money on his personal comforts and lived on a very simple diet taking only one ordinary meal in the evening. Parasuram Bhai took Gayatri Mantra once again under the direction of Mataji who with her own hands gave him a new sacred thread and got him initiated at Hardwar just a couple of years before his death. On one occasion he told me that he only prayed to Mataji in silence that he should be granted to die of heart failure in complete consciousness and in remembrance of Her. It is really noteworthy that while nursing one of his sons who suffered from typhoid, Parasuram Bhai breathed his last due to heart failure within a couple of minutes in the year 1960. His son soon recovered. By his spirit of complete self surrender, he died in peace in full remembrance of Mataji.

In 1943, a three storied building in Almora, situated on the main motor road above the Girls Intermediate College and below the Ramsay High School, had been purchased by members of our family from Dharma Devi, a school teacher, for start-up and the proceeds were utilized partly for repairs of the buildings of the Pataldevi Ashram and partly for the construction of an Ashram at Dhaulchina on the 10 acres plot of land given on lease for 30 years by the Forest Department, U.P. It was the desire of my younger brother Leeladhar before he died that a public library should be established at Almora in memory of late Pt. Durga Datt Joshi. I have told Mataji and Swami Paramanandaji about this and I hope that a good library will be opened at Pataldevi at an opportune time to commemorate my uncle.

The Durga Puja of 1944 was also performed at the Almora Ashram in Mataji's presence. I was then on leave and stayed with Mataji at Pataldevi. Mataji asked me to write to my father in Lucknow to come to Almora for the festival as he was a great worshipper of Shakti. However, in spite of my repeated requests, my father could not come. After the puja the idol was taken for immersion to the river Kosi. The puja was a unique success, due largely to the full co-operation of the people of Almora. They had never before witnessed a puja of this type. Mataji once told Swami Paramananda and Gurupriya Didi that it might be a good idea to install an ashtadhatu image of Ma Durga at the Pataldevi Ashram so that Durga Puja could be performed there every year. It is more than 25 years now that this suggestion was made by Mataji but we have not yet been able to install a permanent image of Goddess Durga at Pataldevi. We are, however, confident that it may become possible sooner or later, whenever Mataji will have the *kheyala*.

After the Durga Puja in 1944, Mataji and all of us visited Uttara Vrindaban, sixteen miles from Almora on the way to Jageshwar. Mataji was taken in a *dandi* to

both places. She stayed for a night at Uttara Vrindaban, the Ashram of Sri Krishna Prem (formerly Prof. Nixon of Lucknow University) and Haridas (formerly Dr. Alexander) who lived there with their Guru Sri Yashoda Ma, the widow of the late Rai Bahadur G. N. Chakravarti, I.E.S., Ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Lucknow University, and her daughter, Moti Rani. A very fine temple of Lord Krishna had been built at Uttara Vrindaban.

The *ārati* performed by Sri Krishna Prem was quite unique, lasting not less than an hour. The hymns recited by Sri Krishna Prem and Haridas, in both Sanskrit and Bengali, were very elevating. A couple of years or so after Mataji's visit, Yashoda Ma died at her Ashram and several years later her daughter Moti Rani also passed away after a protracted illness. During her illness she was nursed by Sri Krishna Prem and Haridas. Sri Krishna Prem was a very exalted soul. His devotion to Lord Krishna was exceptional in every respect and he was a great scholar of the Gita. He was in close contact with Mataji. Sri Haridas had been Principal of the Medical College, Lucknow, and after his retirement from service he spent the rest of his life at Uttara Vrindaban, rendering all possible medical aid to the poor people of that area. Both of them were ideal devotees and had embraced *sannyasa*. They are no more: but a couple of *sannyasis* also hailing from foreign countries are still performing *sadhana* and *puja* at Uttarā Vrindaban.

After Uttara Vrindaban, Mataji visited Jageshwar where She also spent a night. Mataji very much liked the quiet atmosphere of Jageshwar Mahadev, a temple located on a river bank in a picturesque dense deodar forest. On our way back to Almora, Mataji halted for a couple of hours at the Golla temple, Chitai, where my brother-in-law persuaded Her to have Her morning meal of simple *khichri* (rice cooked with *dal*).

(to be continued)

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ADI SHANKARACHARYA

⁷⁸⁵
~~196~~ A.D. to ⁸²⁰
~~732~~ A.D.)

—Khokan Chakravarty

Adi Shankaracharya is regarded as the sage who re-established the supremacy of Advaita Siddhanta all over India. Though he lived a very short life of 32 years he traveled all over India, established four "Mathas" at four corners of India and wrote very important philosophical books.

He was born in Kerala in the 6th century A.D. His father was Shivaguru and mother Aryamba. His parents were devotee of Shiva. It is said that Bhagwan Shankar Himself appeared before his mother in her dreams to bless her with a son on her request. She was asked to choose between an idiot with long life or a brilliant one with a very short life span. The mother chose the latter alternative and Shankar was born.

Shankar was very intelligent and started learning scriptures at 8 years of age only. Before he was 16 years old, he learned four Vedas and six Darshan Shastras. He asked his mother to allow him to become a Sannyasi to spread Hindu Religion all over India confidently. His mother reluctantly gave in and Shankar started his life's quest.

Shankar became an adept in Hindu religious literature and hence was conferred the title of "Acharya". He toured all over India, defeated many learned Pandits of other religions and also "Dvaita Siddhanti", "Kapalika" etc. Very soon he had many followers and disciples. He has written commentaries on every religious book, the most important are Bhagwad - Gita, Brahma Sutra, and Four Vedas, He has written many poetical books called "Stotras". He established "Mathas" at four corners of India, so that the head of each of them can easily spread and protect Hindu religion in that area.

He was a staunch supporter of Jñāna- Marga, but was equally insistent in following Bhakti Marga, because mere knowledge without faith in God and religion is useless. His work of stabilization of Hindu faith was so long lasting that after many centuries of attacks on Hindu faith, still the tradition of Shankaracharya and Mathas are intact and there are lakhs of devotees following in his path.

Truly he was Shankar Incarnate.!

"All sorrows are destroyed upon attainment of tranquillity. The intellect of such a tranquil person soon reaches complete steadiness."- Bhagwad Gita

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HONESTY AND JUSTICE MAINTAIN ORDER

—R.K. Das

Once the Persian king Noshirwan (6th century AD) stopped close to a village with his army. They had no salt for making meals. So he asked a servant to fetch it from the nearby market. The king particularly told him to pay the grocer without fail. He also told him, 'If you don't do so, my kingdom might be in danger.'

The statement of the king astounded the simpleminded soldier, whose work was nothing but following the orders of his superiors without giving personal interpretation to it. He asked, 'Your Lordship, why do you think our kingdom will be in danger if I don't pay for a little bit of salt?'

Noshirwan replied, 'Mind it, if the ruler does not pay a grocer for a little salt, the soldiers will invariably seize countless food items without thinking of payment. Moreover, this will be a set practice of hundreds of my soldiers. The same high-handedness will create unhappiness in the heart of my subjects. All my subjects will be forced to lead a miserable life henceforth. Finally, it might become the root cause of people's unrest throughout the nation to ensure a revolution.'

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IN BANGLADESH : PILGRIMAGE TO MA'S LEELA KSHETRA

—Dr. Geeta Banerjee

One day while reading Ma's book I felt a devout urge to set out for the *darshan* of Ma's *leela-kshetra* in Bangladesh. Swami Debeshananda (Secretary of Kashi Ashram and Hospital) has applied for passport for *Udaytirtha darshan* (Ma's birthplace). I have accompanied Panuda to Bangladesh three times with relation to ashram celebrations. Sunanda has also been there twice. So we both had our passports. Soon, three of us got visa to Bangladesh.

On 4th May 2014, we boarded Bibhuti express, reached Howrah and were received by Swapanda at the station. We stayed at Swapanda's house as the bus to Dhaka departs from Karunamoyee bus stand which is near his house. On 6th of May, around 7:30 a.m. we started on our journey and reached Dhaka around 10 o'clock at night. Pinakida's elder son Palash was waiting for us at the Dhaka bus-stand. We received a warm welcome. Our stay was arranged at the beautiful ashram of Shri Loknath Brahmachari. Next day, we went to Siddheshwari Kalibari. From there, we went to Siddheshwari Ashram. This place had been the *sāadhanā-sthal* of Bholanath in his past life. Bhaji christened Ma as "Ma Anandamayee" here when he perceived Ma in her blissful manifestation. Here, Pramatha babu, a devotee, witnessed Ma as *Chhinnamastā avatār* and his coachman saw Ma as *Dashamahāvidyā avatār*. Coming back to the Loknath ashram, we had *bhog-prasād*. In the evening, we went to Shahbag. Bholanath had been the supervisor of Shahbag garden. It belonged to the Dhaka Nawabs. This place is steeped in Ma's myriad divine reminiscences. In 1926, Kalipuja was performed here and in that puja everyone was euphoric to have a *darshan* of Ma as Goddess Kali. The *yajna-agni* of this puja is still preserved in many ashrams, viz, Varanasi, Kankhal, and Naimishraranya according to Ma's order. In Janaury, the same year, Gurupriya didi had her first *Mātri-darshan*. This place also witnessed Ma breaking out of her domestic shell to emerge as the Universal Mother.

From Shahbag we proceeded towards Ramna. The famous Ramna Kalibari was completely demolished during Bangladesh Muktiyuddha. The efforts of the present residents have acquired a piece of land on which Kali mandir, Durga mandir, Loknath Brahmachari mandir and Ma Anandamayee ashram are being constructed. The vast ground in front of the Kalibari is where Ma used to take a stroll with Bhaji. Then we went to the national temple of Dhaka, i.e., Dhakeshwari Mandir. It is rumoured that

the actual Dhakeshwari idol is at Kolkata. The mandir is bedecked with numerous idols of gods and goddesses. A wonderful *Durga-Pratimā* adorns the *Durga-mandap*. Later, we came back to Baba Loknath's ashram after darshan.

On 8th May, we reached Brahmanbaria at Pinakida's residence. We journeyed towards Kheora, Ma's birthplace. A high-school named after Ma, Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Niketan, houses 500 students. Every year, Panuda used to distribute sweets to the children. Swamiji too expressed his desire to distribute sweets but the school would remain closed next day on account of Friday-holiday. We decided to continue our schedule to Bajitpur.

Bajitpur holds great significance for all devotees as Ma started her *sadhana-leela* here. Ma herself said one day at Kanyapeeth that there is no religion in the world that had not manifested itself in her body. Bajitpur stands witness to Ma's *swayam-deekshā* and revelation of Herself- "Purna Brahma Narayan." Responding to Bholanath's question, "Who am I?" She said, "Mahadev". Bholanath received *Deekshā* from Ma in Bajitpur. The dark sky of the new-moon night of Kalipuja was flooded with moonlight. From the right side of Ma's body appeared an ethereal image of a fair Brahmin. He took three times from the food offerings and then again dissolved into Ma. After that it was touched by a dog, so that food offering was disposed of near a pond by Bholanath. When the priest heard about it, he uttered, "We are not fortunate enough to get the *mahāprasād* touched by Bhairav". Pinakida's relative Tapasda took us to show us Ma's house during her stay in Bajitpur. Not much remains now except Bholanath's office, a well and a banyan tree.

Ma lived from 1918 to 1923 in Bajitpur, which has now transformed into a big city.

We returned to Kheora again on 10th May. On the way, we traversed through Sultanpur which was Ma's maternal uncle's place. We went straight to Ma's ashram. Beside Ma's mandir, there is Manik brahamachari's Samadhi. The school-students and teachers welcomed us heartily. Swamiji now fulfilled his wish of distributing sweets to the children and the teachers. Talking about her birth-ground, Ma had said, "Always keep this place pure, for your own good. Your heart-felt prayer will be heard and fulfilled." Kheora holds a special spot for Ma's devotees as a witness to Ma's birth, childhood and adolescence years and even her marriage.

On the eleventh day of May we started our journey from Brahmanbaria to Vidyakoot. Ma's paternal grandfather Shri Trilochan Bhattacharya used to live here. There is a small anecdote related to Ma in Vidyakoot. When Ma was about two and a half year old, one day Didima was doing her household chores and Ma was playing in the verandah. To see what Ma was doing, Didima came out in the verandah and

saw that a bright ethereal image of a man took Ma in his arms, bowed his head in reverence and then placed Ma back on the verandah floor. The ethereal form addressed the visibly stunned Didima, "This is Ma. *Vishva-Visvāteet*. Not a man, nor a woman. You can never confine her within the threshold." Saying thus, he disappeared.

Next day in the evening, we went to Kal Bhairav mandir and beheld the captivating view of Titas River. Shri Ramthakur's Ashram stood nearby. 23rd Annual celebration was being held there. In his introductory note, the Mahanta Maharaj said a few words on Shri Shri Ramthakur and Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee and according to his wish I also had to say something on Ma and Shri Ramthakur. Then, after visiting Hanuman mandir and Anandamayee Kali mandir we came back to Pinakida's house.

On 13th May we travelled to Ashtagram. In the year 1914 Ma stayed here. We crossed the Meghna River from Kuliachak by steamer-boat. We reached there at about 2:30 pm. It takes almost three hours. Mithubhai, an acquaintance to Pinakida, received us. His father Chanababu was delighted to see us. He had *darshan* of Ma in Mumbai, and his wife had seen Ma when she was newly married. He showed us Ma's residing place. We also saw Bholanath's office beside the road.

Ma used to live in a small room in Joyshankar Sen's house. Her heavenly beauty got her the name "Khushir Ma" (Mother of Joy). Harakumar, brother-in-law of Joyshankar, first addressed Ma Anandamayee as "Ma". He said, "Today I am calling you 'Ma'. One day the whole world will call you 'Ma', you will see." In Ashtagram, during Gagan Sadhu's *kirtan*, Ma was immersed in Mahābhāv.

We returned to Kuliachak and then to Brahmanbaria. On the way, we had seen some really big rivers, where there is arrangement of steamer boats like Gomati, Karnaphuli, Brahmaputra etc. In Goalanda ghat, our bus crossed the Padma River by ship! Pinakida told us once, "Meghna is fickle-minded". Just the day after we visited Ashtagram, a fully loaded passenger boat was submerged in Meghna, with many dead as reported. It is Ma's *kripā* that we could visit Ma's place without any obstacle.

The next day we started for Coxbazar. We reached there at night and stayed in Shri Anukul Ashram. In the morning, we reached Adinath by speedboat within half an hour. Adinath mandir is situated on a hill in Maheshkhali Island. We worshipped Adinath to our heart's desire, had *prasād* and returned to Coxbazar.

Ma's photograph in Coxbazar, the one with unbraided hair standing on sea-shore, brings forth the happy remembrance of Ma. In the 3rd and 4th part of Gurupriya Didi's "Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee" Didi has given the account of *Akhand Nāmā Kirtan* in the moonlit night on the sandy shore of the sea, Ma's *sachhidananda khela*, Ma's dwelling in a sea-side tent; the depictions bring forth in my mind that it is this place where Ma immersed his devotees in Brahmananda sagar. Leaving behind



Kheora - the gate to Shri Shri Ma's birthplace



Shri Shri Ma's Mandir at her birthplace

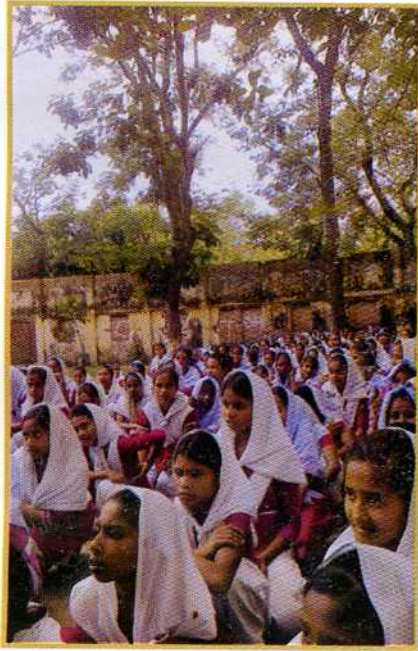


The acquired land for, Shri Shri Ma's birthplace



Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Vidyaniketan Highschool, Kheora

Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Vidyaniketan Highschool, Kheora



Students of Vidyaniketan, Kheora



Shri Shri Ma's paternal residence



Baba Bholanath's office, Ashtagram



Shri Shri Ma's residence, Ashtagram



Shri Shri Ma's residence, Ashtagram



Court, Bajitpur



Shri Shri Ma's self-deeksha place, Bajitpur



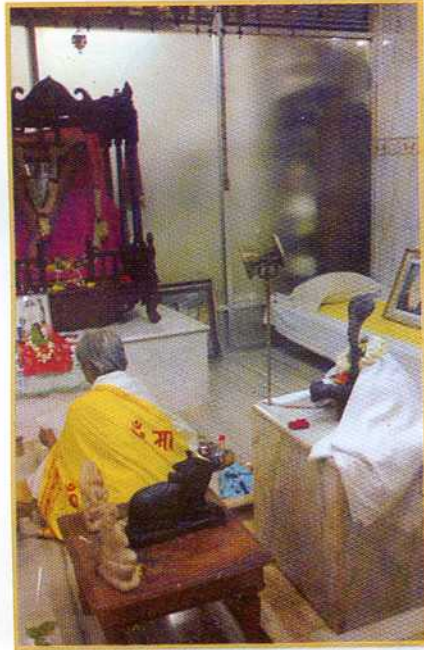
The Imli tree Shri Shri Ma saw in a vision



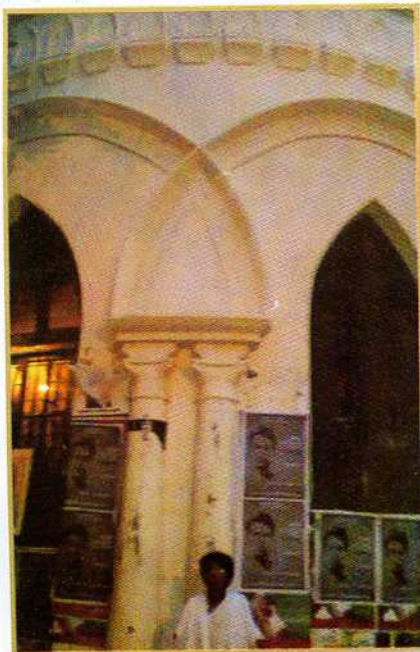
Shri Shri Siddheswari Ma Kali, Dhaka



Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee Ashram Siddheswari, Dhaka



Shri Shri Ma's Tithi-puja by Br. Geeta (17-05-14) Siddheswari, Dhaka



Golghar Shahbag, Dhaka

Coxbazar, we came to Chattagram. We stayed at Shankar Math at Sitakund.

We did not find time to visit Chandranath as we had to go back to Dhaka on the same day. We had to do Ma's *Janma-tithi puja* at Siddheswari. At Shankar math, we visited Shankaracharya's mandir and Shiv madir. Then accompanied by the Ashram secretary, we climbed a hundred flights of stairs upon a mountain to visit Swyambhu Shivlinga. From there, we could see the Chandranath Mandir clearly. The Shambhunath Mandir stood a bit far. Later, we travelled back to Dhaka and stayed at Loknath Brahmachari's ashram.

After making all the arrangements of *puja* we came to Ma's Siddeswari ashram. The *puja* started at three in the morning and ended at around 5 a.m. From Brahmanbaria, a woman came to help Sunanda in preparing *Bhog-prasad*. Jeevanda did the *kirtan* during puja. Ashram secretary Bardhanda and some devotees came the previous night before the start of puja.

Next day we took *bhog-prasad* in the ashram only. Discussions held were on building the first floor of the ashram properly. We came back to Loknath ashram again from Siddheswari. In the evening, we went to see Shahbag, Ramna and Dhakeshwari mandir. On 19th May morning, we boarded the bus to Kolkata. This whole journey to *Ma's leela-kshetra* will forever be etched in my memory.

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SHREE SHREE MA'S DIVINE CONVERSATION

Collection- Kirpal

(Translation:- Mrs. Rohini Purang)

(continued)

Ma: by moving around, by talking of outer things, no happiness is experienced - but by sitting¹ (it is experienced). Why (should one) sit? Just as Mahatmas give lectures standing², but they can also give lectures while sitting. One who has achieved the 'state' - (whether) lying down, sitting, walking, (or) roaming around (one's state remains the same) - (that is called) the attainment of the state the attainment of an unbroken state.

The question arises that (just as when) on a journey one has to sit in a train or car - (but since) there is space in a train (so) one can walk even in the train - yet there is (only) a measured amount of space there (and) one can walk about only so much (and) not more³"

In whichever manner should your spiritual state remain unbroken, in that manner must you assume your *āsana* (posture). With this remembrance - of the connecting with the Truth (*satjuga*) (by which) you (earlier) derived the joy of the Self - maintain that remembrance, sit with that remembrance. Why sit? - to go beyond sitting and getting up. Just as you go to school and college- (and) later there is no (need) for school and college (because) there a certain stage of knowledge has been achieved.

By eating which (food) the mind remains pure- the mind is affected by the kind of food that is eaten; this is also something (to take note of) - the kind of food you eat affects your progress - you may become restless or calm - that is why (there should be) discipline regarding food.

The habit of sitting is not there - (so) try and cultivate the habit for small durations - someone said they could sit comfortably for eight hours. Just as one can be comfortable while moving around, (or) while speaking, (he) was able to be at ease while sitting.

Now (one has to) go in the reverse direction - (because) one's home is one's own - the path to one's home should be taken - one's own form within one's self - the you that is in the form of this material form - rise above it - yearn for that. (When there is) non-attainment - (it) gives the desire to attain God - the desire to obtain (divine) power. Why does this happen? (Because) you have complete, unbroken (divine)

power - (but) there is a veil - (this) ignorance must be removed - (it is) you (who) are in the form of ignorance- you (who) are in the form of this world - (because of) this make your own your own and be - you who are the servant of the Eternal - you who are the Lord Who is complete - you who are a part (of the Lord)- (because) you stay in this form, (that is why there arises) the desire for discipline and control (*samyam*). He in whom the desire for *samyam* arises, on him there is the Lord's great unaccounted for⁴ grace. The fact that you all have come (shows) the mercy of the Divine Mother and Father - you are the Lord in this form- there is nothing other than Him there is nothing other than the Lord. You call it 'God' and call it 'stone' - you call it 'God' and call it 'mud' - if it is mud it is not God, if it is God, it is not mud. And if truth be told, it is form of the Lord, the Lord Himself is giving *darshan* to this body in the form of the *samyam saptaha*.

How your divine mood could be maintained - (to ascertain) that is why you asked - it is your own *ghadi ghanta*⁵ it is you who strike it and you who hear - (all) this (talk) is not just meant to console you... Here the *shāstras* have not been studied - it is true that whatever comes (spontaneously) has been said. You have to find yourself by yourself - in the form of being a servant to yourself - (and) service exists within the *grihashta āshrama* - for instance, (looking after) one's children should be looked upon as service to Balagopal or Kumari - (Who is) Devi - (i.e.) your own service. (Service to your) husband (*pati*) - (should be looked upon as) service to the Lord (*parampati*). The *grihashta āshrama* (should be lived in) with an attitude of service - (like) a servant.

Do as a manager of a temple does - that which you consider an image of the Lord, it is His/Her temple-

(if) you are the manager (there) - you have to perform service. If you have employed (someone else as) a manager, you have to give him leave (at the appropriate time). This - your progress which is taking place as (things happen) in a *dharamshala* - for as many days as each one has to stay (will it continue)

Each one should look for one's own way- at that time (of walking on one's chosen path) if asked to wait, one doesn't listen at all - one moves on according to one's individual *samskara* and *karma*. For how many births one has been in this grind! one should try and be liberated from it - (it is for) this that Rishikesh and Ganga, Who is Bhagavati Herself, seating (you all) in their laps, is making you do *samyam* - (so that) your journey is successful - your journey must not be fruitless, Everyone - men, women, old, young- should see that the beautiful time spent here does not turn fruitless - one should live like that - one should live a disciplined life. For example, in a month keep a *samyam vrata* (vow of discipline) for a day- (maintain) as much disci-

pline as appropriate to your strength - one day - (or) two days in a month, one day in a week, one day in a month, or two days in a month - (or) do for one day in seven days. (A) disciplined life is necessary - (do) service of Balagopal, (of) the husband, (of) the wife, and sometimes take up (a particular) discipline - whichever *sampradāya*⁶ you may follow - discipline (and) a disciplined life should be there - whichever line you may follow - the methods (to follow) may be different - so find (them). (Decide that for) two days you will speak the truth - and keep the mind pure, view whatever comes as a form of the Lord - do not even scold your servant. Do not think "Let me leave it for today, tomorrow...". Keep this notion (of discipline) for one day of the month - one day of the week - then a full month - *Vaishākh* (First month on the Hindu calendar from mid-April to mid-May). *Kārtik* (mid-october-mid-November)- one full month - you will see yourself change - (your) *dhang*⁷ (manner, deportment, style) will change.

However many varieties of discipline, in whatever measure you do - read good books - do *japa* and *dhyana* - do *satsanga* - that form of truth, that form of higher knowledge - whatever is suitable for you - you should follow that path of truth and higher knowledge - you will change on your own - (not only will) you change (but) your children will learn by watching you. To find yourself you will walk the appropriate path - (and) service to (your) children (by you) by serving yourself.

(Don't say that I have) done (*samyam*) for seven days so it will be sufficient - some remembrance- *samyam* should be continued (this thought) first arose in Yogi Bhai's mind⁸ (Service to your) children- (service to) Balgopal, to Kumari- like a manager in the role of providing service- you serve like that. Just like time waits for no one - happiness that is dependent on other things (or people) - wife, children, house - and you who are (of/from) non - dependent happiness! Till (this) 'dependet' happiness is present, your sorrow will remain - (you) should go beyond sorrow. At the time of leaving - the coming is alone - the going is alone - the family, husband, wife - experience them as the Divine - (they are) a form of the Divine - which is come in the form of what is yours - (through) this service - one *ātmā*, one *Bhagavān* - you will find.

NOTES

1. Sitting for spiritual activities such as *dhyana* and *japa*.
2. Sri Nath gave a lecture while standing.

3. The journey is the one towards God, the train represents the method chosen to travel on this journey, the 'walking on board the train' refers to our activities which, even if worldly, should necessarily remain within the confines of the train.
4. Ahaituki kripa
5. A metallic plate struck at intervals to tell the time of day.
6. Tradition, sect, or belief system.
7. Hindi word can mean one of the following manner (of doing things), attitude, way, behaviour, style, mien, demeanour.
8. ..of spending a week annually of intense sadhana in Sri Ma's presence...

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SHREE SHREE BALGOPALJI IN ANANDAJYOTIR MANDIR

(Translated from Hindi)

—Br. Guneeta

It is an account of the 1950's. Shree Shree Ma was then residing in Varanasi. Shree Shree Ma's Vrindavan ashram was in need of a Balgopal statue. By this time, the *purnahuti* of the three-year *Akand-Saritri Maha-yajna* had been done. Pandit Agnishwatta Shastri (Batu-da) was the *āchārya* of this *yajna*. The need for a Balgopal idol was intimated to him as he was a well known figure in Varanasi.

Batuda subsequently informed Shree Shree Ma about this requirement of Balgopal *Vigraha*. The Balgopalji (now residing in Anandajyotir Mandir) actually belonged to a Bengali zamindar. The expenses for the worship of Balgopal were borne by the zamindar's estate. But due to paucity of fund they were contemplating to immerse the Balgopal in Ganga, as they were not able to bear the expenditure anymore. Batuda intimated the necessity of Balgopal for Shree Shree Ma's ashram to the priest of Balgopalji. Swami Bhagawatānandaji was entrusted with the responsibility to carry Shree Shree Balgopalji to Vrindavan. Ma had already left for Vrindavan.

While Swami Bhagawatanandaji was preparing to leave for Vrindavan along with Gopalji, he got the message that the previous night Balgopalji's priest dreamt that Balgopalji was saying to him, "Panchu, Panchu, don't take me away from Kashi." ('Panchu' was the priest's nick-name). This was intimated to Batuda, and he in turn communicated it to Shree Shree Ma. Swami Bhagawatanandaji left for Vrindavan alone.

After a few days Shree Shree Ma came back to Kashi via Dehradun. The same car by which Shree Shree Ma came to Kashi ashram from the station was sent along with Batuda, Swamiji etc. by her to fetch Gopalji to the ashram. In the evening, Gopalji arrived. He came and sat on Shree Shree Ma's lap. The view was splendid. The Balgopalji's idol curved out of black-stone possesses the innocence and softness of a six-month old babe. Hail to that sculptor whose *bhakti-bhāv* infused the Gopalji idol with life! His plump hands and feet, rotund sweet figure, Love-filled eyes, breath takingly beautiful sweet smile are capable of immersing his devotee in *Bhakti-Sāgar*. His seat on Shree Shree Ma's lap presented an out-of-the world sight worth beholding!

The newly-arrived Gopalji was placed in the Smriti Mandir beside Shree Shree Annapurna Mandir. Within a few days Gopalji got himself bangles from one and necklace from another! After a few years, Shri Gopalswarp Pathakji sent a beautiful sandalwood throne for Balgopalji.

In 1968, on the auspicious occasion of Akshay- Tritiya, Anandajiyotir Mandir a temple - building by the side of the main ashram building in Varanasi, was inaugurated after the tireless effort of Gurupriyadidi. This three-tier building is an important tourist site now. On each floor, there is a singular altar in the sanctum-sanctorum built according to Shree Shree Ma's order. According to her *Kheyal*, Balgopalji was placed on the ground floor of the building. In 1988, on the auspicious Akshay-Tritiyatithi, Balgopalji found his abode on the first-floor of the building.

Every year, on Janmashtami, at exactly mid-night, Balgopalji's Maha-abhishek and special puja is devoutly done. Next day, in the morning, Nandostav is celebrated with full merriment and gaiety. During Holi, Shree Shree Balgopalji comes out and plays Holi with his devotees. Again, after Abhishek, he gets dressed in his royal attire and ornaments and sits on his throne. This fun-filled custom was started by Shree Shree Ma and in her presence the happiness and frolic knew no bounds!

Now, there is Shree Shree Ma's statue on the ground floor and Shree Shree Gopalji is on the first floor. His divine presence in Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram in Varanasi has completed 60 years. For all these years numerous devotees came to him with their wishes and prayers, and went away happily with their wishes fulfilled. Such is our Gopalji, devoted to his devotees! Shree Shree Ma used to sing-

"Gopal, Gopal, Brahma Gopal"

We bow to the lotus feet of Brahma Gopal again and again.

On the occasion of the completion of 60 years of His Divine Presence in Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Varanasi, we cordially invite you to take part with joy in blissful festivity and merriment.

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ASHRAM NEWS

Anandaswarup,

Jai Ma.

In this news letter we bring you a brief account of celebrations held in May, 2014 in Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Ashram, Kankhal, Haridwar.

THE HOLY ĀVIRBHĀV MAHOTSAV OF SHREE SHREE MA

The Kankhal Ashram observed Shree Shree Ma's Birthday celebrations with all due solemnity and gaiety from 3 May to 18 May.

The *Tithi pūjā*, marking the culmination of the function, took place during the early hours of 18 May starting at 3 a.m. and concluding around 6 a.m. with ārati and distribution of prasād.

The decorations in the Samadhi Mandir were undoubtedly beautiful the special feature being that Ma's statue placed on a golden lotus was bedecked with flowers of all colours surrounding Her, reminiscent of a garden and Jyoti emerging from the background It was beautiful indeed. Music was taken care of by the unforgettable Chhabi Banerjee's favourite students. In their melodious rendering of Bengali Bhajans of Ma they brought to life not only memories of Chhabidi but devotees could also feel the Truth of Ma. The organizers had foreseen the difficulties of devotees and arranged very thoughtfully for two T.V. screens one in the Temple Hall and the other under the stars in the open in the courtyard outside. Nobody could miss any small steps of the pooja. It was fullfilling.

Like other years talks were arranged in the Shankaracharya Hall where Mandaleshwar Shyamsundar das ji of Garibdasi Ashram, well known to Ma spoke inspiringly. Brahmachari Umeshwardevji of Kailash Ashram Rishikesh held everyone spellbound. This happened during the last 3 days before the Tithi Pooja.

There was a stream of devotees eager to take Diksha nearly everyday. The Kumari Pooja which was Shree Ma's favourite was performed on a grand scale befitting the occasion on Buddha Purnima. Akhanda Kirtana of Ma's Name was done with great love for Ma. The usual Sadhu Bhandara and Brahman Bhojan plus feeding 800 devotees was a feat no doubt: All went off well by Shree Ma's Grace.

The much awaited Bhagwat Saptah for the divinely gifted singer Km Chhabi

Banerjee outstanding in her love for the lord Krishna and very close to our Mother took place following the Birthday celebrations from May 21 to May 27 As usual, the *Āvirbhāv Utsav* of Shree Shree Ma was concluded with *Akhanda Nāma yajna* (May 27-29). The entire Saptah was solely arranged and performed by Chhabidi's nephew Gopal and his wife and son. There were many special features to this Bhagwat Saptah. The Sanskrit Pandit Chandra Sagar belonged³ to the Gaudiya Math. In his own life he ha⁵ experienced miraculons happenings. He wa¹⁵s well versed in several Indian languages and shartras so was able to make interesting comments and references. His style of rendering the Bhagwat was through Indian classical music accompanied by experts on tabla etc. He brought to life the Lord's story by highlighting hitherto ordinary happenings giving a new angle and interpretation. Opposite to initial fears that there might be lack of audience the hall used to be full of listeners. In this way one could subtly observe Ma's blessings. Besides, 108 Kumari Pooja too was performed with uniformly yellow sarees, asan, pooja and feeding, Gopal and his small family single handedly took the responsibility (of course help from the Ashram was readily available). This programme was followed by Sadhu bhojan and brahmin bhojan. Additionally interesting was the fact that the Bhagwat Speaker was seen cheerfully participating in all these functions including the Nam Yajna which wound up the whole Spiritual Effort to uplift oneself further. Gopal left no stone unturned to please Lord Krishna for the sake of his aunt Chhabi Banerjee an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna and His consort Radha. He spent every iota of his energy to contribute to the success of the Bhagwat Saptah with Shree Ma's Bessings Chhabidi had helped to arouse the Love of the Lord in thousands of Ma's devotees so may the Nama Yojna and Bhagwat Parayana bear fruit for her soul- we pray.

Jai Ma
The Editorial Board

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OBITUARY

Smt. Indra Shanker :—

Smt. Indra Shanker, also known as Indu, passed away on 1st December, 2013 at Noida. She was cremated at a Ganges ghat at Allahabad on 3rd December, 2013. Her ashes were immersed, soon thereafter, into the sacred waters of Sangam.

The late Sri Baleshwari Prasad, Advocate of Allahabad was her maternal grandfather. Thus, through her family she was exposed to and attracted towards Ma since her childhood. She obtained Deeksha from Didi Ma in 1968. Lately she had been spending a lot of time doing japa. Her husband Sri Ravi Shanker translated 'Sundarkand from Ramcharitmanas' into English which has been published by Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Kankhal, Hardwar.

May Ma bestow peace upon the departed soul!

Sri Prithwish Ch. Banerjee (Ranjuda) :—

Ranjuda, the former Secretary of Ma's Varanasi Ashram, expired on 11th January, 2014 at Kolkata due to a massive heart attack. He was about 78 years old at that time. He left behind his aggrieved wife Lokhidi, a son and a daughter.

Ranjuda was the second son of Late Harishchandra Banerjee, a railway engineer and a foremost devotee of Ma. Ranjuda came for the first time to Ma at Varanasi Ashram in 1949 with his parents and two brothers Bhojuda and Somuda, when the 'Savitri Mahayajna' was going on. When father Harishda was posted at Lucknow, Ranjuda with his mother decided to have a dip in the river Ganga at Haridwar in 1958. Coincidentally, they travelled in the same train by which Ma was going to Dehradun. They met Ma during the train journey and decided to accompany Her to Dehradun Ashram. Since then, his family got the opportunity to be permanently associated with Ma. At their earnest desire, Ma visited a few times Harishda's railway bungalow at Lucknow which became the halting place for the ashramites whoever came to Lucknow for any Ashram work. After Harishda's retirement Ma also visited several times their newly constructed house at Varanasi where an accommodation was exclusively built for Ma. In the year 1969, Ma was present when the centenary

celebration of their family Durga puja was arranged at Varanasi in their new house.

Ranjuda was quite popular amongst the devotees for his friendly behavior. He loved to attend the *satsang* programmes whenever arranged at Agarpara ashram or at any devotee's place in Kolkata. All were eager to hear his talk on Ma. Due to his considerable effort, the Samyam Saptah function at Agarpara Ashram became popular and now a larger number of participants are attending this function. We pray for Ma's blessings for his soul to remain in eternal peace.

Lt. Gen, Jitendra Chandra Chatterjee :—

After attaining the prime position of the doctors in the Indian military services, Lt. Gen. Jitendra Chandra Chatterjee P.V.S.M, retired in 1980. He passed away on 12th April 2014 in his 93rd year at his son's residence after suffering from prolonged illness.

In 1969, following Shri Shri Ma's order, he along with his wife and son, received Deeksha from Shri Shri Muktananda Giriji Maharaj at Poona. At that time, Poona Ashram was being built and Ma used to frequent there. His close proximity to Ma during this time illuminated his path towards spirituality. He was also fortunate to be present in Shri Shri Ma's Janma-Mahotsav at Poona in 1970. Ma affectionately called him "Poona's doctor". He was completely devoted to Ma's lotus feet till his last breath.

It is important to mention in this context that his wife Srimati Gauri Chatterjee has contributed greatly in the re-writing of Swami Virajanandaji's "Swakriya Swarasamrita" (First Part to Sixth Part) for thirty long years and helped in the publication work. *Ma's Kripa* showered on her in her selfless *sevā*. We offer our heart-felt condolences to Ganridi. May his soul rest in peace at the lotus feet of Shri Shri Ma.

Shri Jagannath Bhattacharya (Kanai) :—

Shri Jagannath Bhattacharya, son of Shri Jadunath Bhattacharya (Shri Shri Ma's own brother), passed away on 24th June 2014 in his 61st year. His funeral rites were performed at Keoratala on June 25, 2014. The funeral ground was teeming with people on that day. Almost all of Shri Shri Ma's devotees in Kolkata attended his funeral. His body was decorated with Shri Shri Ma's and Didima's *āshirwādi* garlands which were sent from Agarpara Ashram. Incarnation of Gita and *Kirtan* were performed devoutly. His post funeral rites took place on July 4, 2014. It has been heard that Shri Shri Ma said about him, "He was born in a royal family in his previous birth." In his childhood, he and his brother Balai used to play in the Ashram premise like 'Laba'

and 'Kusha'. After their sacred-thread rituals, they were admitted in Shri Shri Anandamayee Vidyapeeth. His *Deeksha* (initiation) was performed during Basanti Puja in Kashi Ashram. He received *Deeksha* from Didima in the Chandi Mandap in the presence of Shri Shri Ma. Ma, in her *bhav*, rolled over the Chandi-mandap's floor just after his *Deeksha*.

He entered his professional life after completing 10 years in Vidyapeeth. He also used to look after Shri Shri Ma's Delhi Ashram. He was dear to all for his benevolence, generosity, noble virtues and cheerful nature. We pray that his soul attain the Divine Plane and may Shre Shri Ma grant peace to his family.

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