

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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MATRI VANI

One who serves God can never be helpless. The more ardently one seeks communion by engaging in japa, His service and contemplation, the fuller will be His revelation.

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The talents and the work God has entrusted to you are meant for His service and for nothing else, bear this in mind.

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

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The activity of the mind that distracts man and takes him away from the remembrance of God is called wrong thinking.

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The stream of godly thoughts is the path that leads to the exhaustion of *karma*. So long as the goal has not been reached one is bound to reap the consequences of right action, wrong action, and inaction.

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Look, in order to pluck a rose one has to put one's hand into the midst of thorns. But if the rose is a person's aim and he has a keen desire to pluck it, he will not refrain from doing so for fear of being pricked. Moreover, the Great Mother arranges whatever is necessary for each one : She certainly knows the real need of every individual, if one has at least this much faith, there is no reason at all to feel distressed.

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AMṚTVĀRTĀ

To aspire to the realization of Truth is alone worthy of man.

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In all forms, in all diversity and disparity is He alone. The infinite variety of appearances and manifestations, of modes of becoming and states of being, of species and types, all the numberless distinctions as well as all identity are but He Himself.

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Never relax your efforts until there is enlightenment. Let no gaps interrupt your attempt, for a gap will produce an eddy, whereas your striving must be continuous like the flowing of oil, it must be sustained, constant, an unbroken stream.

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Within the twenty-four hours of the day, some time must be definitely dedicated to God. Resolve, if possible, to engage regularly in japa of a particular name or mantra while sitting in a special posture, and gradually add to the time or the number of repetitions.

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FAITH AND DOUBT

—SRI VIJAIANANDA (Dr. A. Weintrob)

Shraddha, faith— faith in the Guru, faith in the scriptures, faith in the efficacy of spiritual practices is a qualification which every aspirant on the spiritual path must have. For the great majority of sadhakas this faith is centred in the *Jnana murti*, the physical aspect of the Guru.

But this confidence must not be mistaken for what is called "blind faith", that is, a belief based on the convictions of other people, parents, teachers, friends, etc. with the resolve not to abandon it even if it does not tally with actual facts or is against sound reasoning. Nor can faith be founded only on reasoning, on the processes of the intellect. *Buddhi*, intelligence is the creator of our whole mental world and its creations are based on delusion and are liable to break down like a house built without a strong foundation. The faith which comes through direct perception is no doubt the real one, but of course far beyond the reach of the sadhaka.

The faith we have in the Guru, in Mataji, has for most of us begun with some intuitional experience revealing to us the supernatural in Her. This experience is usually the starting point, the seed of the 'tree of faith'. In some cases this first experience is so overwhelming that it immediately gives a firm intuitive conviction, against which the doubting processes of the mind are quite powerless. For others, this experience, although having given a strong impulse to the mind, has not silenced the doubting processes nor the critical attitude. For a third category of aspirants, the first contact with Mataji has nothing spectacular, but simply awakens the interest in further inquiry. For such persons it takes a very long time, sometimes years, until their faith matures; nevertheless it penetrates and permeates the mind slowly but steadily.

In fact, whatever the approach, there are three elements that must combine so that the average *sadhaka* may be established in *shraddha*. The first and most important one is the intuitional experience. No matter what be its nature and intensity, it is based on the recognition of our real nature, reflected through Mataji's physical aspect. Generally, it is '*kshanik*' (momentary) "as a twinkling of an eye" and cannot be expressed on the discursive level of the mind. Sometimes it may even be forgotten. But as its source lies in the Eternal, it can never be wiped out and

remains very powerful in the subconscious depths. The second element is supplied by our emotional nature which tries to translate the inexpressible and unique experience into terms of our experiences of the past. This is why the intuition of the Real gives rise to the attachment we have for Mataji, as a mother, a Guru etc. Thirdly, the discursive mind furnishes the cementing element in this building up of our faith, for we can finally accept only what is reasonable, has been thoroughly thought out and is not contrary to what we have heard and learnt from elders and by personal experience.

Everything in the manifested universe moves under the sway of the *dwandwas*, the pairs of opposites and the three *gunas* (the three qualities of nature). In other words the growth of faith is subject to fluctuation, depending on one of the three *gunas* predominant at a particular time. That is why doubt—the opposite of faith—will arise automatically and test whether our faith is built on unshakable foundations. If it is not, it must break down; but if it is genuine, it will stand storms and trials and emerge ever stronger.

When our mind delights in *sattwa* (harmony) doubt has no access, for everything is then clear and self-evident; doubt comes only while we are under the influence of some emotional (*rajasik*) impulse or our understanding is clouded by the stupor of *tamas*.

An old diary written in 1951-52 (*I had my first darshan of Mataji in February 1951*) gave me the idea to write this article. That diary was written with the spontaneity with which one converses with one's own self, when one can be certain that nobody else will read one's effusions. I have now translated some quotations from it from French, trying to remain as true as possible to the original. I feel it may serve as an illustration among thousands of how our faith in Mataji awakens, has to pass through several storms and cross-fires of doubt and finally emerges victorious.

Pondicherry, 22nd Jan. 1951.

"I have decided to start from the Ashram on Thursday morning and travel via Calcutta, Banaras, Almora, Rishikesh, Agra, Delhi, Bombay, Kanhangad, Madras to Colombo."

(There was no preconceived idea as regards Sri Anandamayi Ma).

Patna, 10th Feb. 1951.

"This diary has been interrupted for over a fortnight. I take it up again at Patna. What happened to me on February 2nd is far more interesting than anything I may have written about before.

"I was coming from Calcutta intending to pass through Banaras hurriedly, to stay for a few days at Sarnath and then if I had time to visit Rishikesh or else leave straight via Bombay, Kanhangad for Colombo, from where I had to sail back to Europe on February 21st..... My guide took me to Sri Anandamayi Ashram. It is a wonderful site right on the bank of the Ganges..... Ten minutes later Sri Anandamayi Ma appeared at the door of Her room. She speaks only Bengali and Hindi. I could understand Her only with the help of an interpreter.....She was standing at the entrance of Her room. I can still see Her focussing Her eyes on me with that gaze I have come to know so well now. That gaze seemed to embrace my whole destiny..... At about 9.30 p.m. the Kirtan was over. Mataji said that She could give me private interview immediately.

"B.S. acted as an interpreter. I was supposed to ask some questions, but as a matter of fact I had nothing to ask, I only wished to make a spiritual contact. It appeared as if Mataji had divined my thoughts. She Herself asked the questions. They were clear-cut and precise and it seemed as if She had guessed what I wanted to know. The interview took about 20 minutes. I went back to Clark's Hotel in a strange state. I began to understand what this wonderful being had infused into me : it was divine love, a love which from now on would bind me by indestructible ties—the love one has for the *Guru*..... But I was afraid that this feeling would not last.....Mataji had to leave for Vindhyachal, then Patna. I asked Her permission to accompany Her."

(In this case the intuitional experience was very powerful and the intellectual doubting process was therefore silenced. But doubt is bound to raise its head sooner or later.)

"Banaras, July 25th, 1951.

".....Sometimes a terrible doubt gets the better of me.....

"This immense love, is it really so different from the love one feels for a woman ? Of course there is no room for any unclear ideas. It is an absolutely pure love and yet it is still personal and limited. Nevertheless, sometimes as a perfume emanating from its phial, it seems to pervade on all beings and merges into the quest for the Absolute..... How far have I deviated from the firm resolutions of my earlier life, which had until now been the main principles of my behaviour : absolute freedom in oneself, to be one's own refuge, one's own law.....*

*. When I came to India I was following the Buddhist *Theravadin* path, which lays much stress on self-reliance and does not admit the necessity of a Guru.

"This freedom I have lost. I have become the disciple of the most wonderful of all *Gurus*, but a disciple all the same.....

"Sometimes, a longing for the mountains gets hold of me again and I feel like going to a solitary place in the Himalayas and concentrate my mind on the pure Absolute to the exclusion of everything else.....

"But at other moments the certainty of being on the right path is so conclusive that no question can arise. All the same there are all states of mind and I have decided to write them down so as to become clear about myself."

(Here is a good example of faith and doubt alternating according to the fluctuations of the gunas. When sattwa prevails there is evidence of being on the right path and questioning seems an absurdity. When rajas gets the upper hand, the ego raises its hood and laments at its lost freedom. When tamas dominates one doubts the degree of purity of one's love for the Guru.)

"Bhagalpur, July 29th, 1951.

".....My love and veneration for Mataji are so great that I should like Her to be like a perfect diamond, that may be examined through a magnifying glass from every angle, without one being able to detect the minutest flaw. But who am I that I dare to judge this giant of spirituality ? Only a *jivan mukta* is able to judge a *jivan mukta*; and alas ! I am very far from that.....

".....One day when I was under a spell of doubt, Mataji said in reply to someone else's question (*I myself had not expressed my doubt nor asked any question*) that it was impossible for the *shishya* to judge his Guru, just as a student is not able to judge the learning of his professor. I feel sure that She is right."

"Hazaribagh, Aug, 1st, 1951.

(Sometimes the Guru to test how far we have progressed brings about circumstances that shake the mind violently right down to its foundations. These lines had been written at the end of one storm.)

"I am beginning to think that the whole of this inner tempest has been willed and created by Her, like the great magician that She certainly is. The ego has such subtle devices for winning back the command that has been snatched from it. Only the *Guru* can release one from the clutches of the ferocious tiger which the sense of I-ness is.

"Banaras, 13th Aug. 1951.

(Again the clouds of tamas have darkened the horizon).

"I have written to S. My resolve to go away becomes more and more firm.....

"In fact I am like a pilgrim in the mountains suddenly enveloped by heavy mist. I do not know anymore whether I am on the right path and whether I may not be pushed down into a precipice. This path is indeed as perilous as a razor's edge."

"Banaras, 14th Aug. 1951.

"Doubt is a terrible thing. It has raged in me for about three weeks—a very long time. If I cannot regain confidence, it will be better for me to go away....."

"Banaras, 17th Aug. 1951.

"The crisis is not completely over. In fact what exactly is the matter ? Some incidents frequently repeated make me doubt whether Mataji really is what I believed Her to be—namely my *Guru*, someone nearer than one's own heart.

"Alas ! where have fled the complete surrender, the absolute faith which possessed me only just one month ago ?"

"Banaras, 25th Aug. 1951.

"The crisis of doubt has entirely disappeared as if by magic, without any special event happening.

"For, in reality there is something, which when it occurs—and it occurs quite frequently—does not leave any room for doubt or argument. It has the unquestionable evidence of things experienced by direct perception. What I speak about here is difficult to describe, in fact, undefinable."

(The guna has changed : Sattwa has chased away Tamas and with it all its mists and obscurations).

"Vindhyachal, 22nd Oct. 1951.

"Again doubt assails me....."

"This rope in which I had full confidence, with the help of which I was going to try to cross over the abyss, I shall test its strength; I shall pull and pull and see whether it breaks—and if it does break I shall have escaped from a great danger.

"If the tie that binds me to Mataji is the one which links *Guru & shishya*, then it is indestructible and will resist all attacks, storms and cyclones....."

"For one cannot be separated from one's own Self."

"Banaras, 30th Oct. 1951.

"When doubt appears it signifies a downfall, a descent to the plane of discursive thinking. If I ever keep my consciousness in the present, doubt will not be able to arise."

"Rajgir, 18th Dec. 1951."

(Again Tamas)

"I just read what I wrote on Oct. 22nd. I could have written it to-day, for it exactly pictures the state of mind at this moment.

"All this is very difficult to understand. I am moving like a blind man stumbling in the dark, ever in danger to fall down."

"Rajgir, Dec. 25th, 1951."

"Whenever it seems to me that the tension is so great that I shall have to leave Mataji, it somehow is put right again, as if by magic.

(The change of the guna which rules the mind for a certain period of time modifies the mind completely : quite different aspects of the personality come to the surface at every change.)

"Rajgir, Dec, 27th, 1951."

"Mataji's love, is it not pure Divine Grace and nothing but that ? This Grace is a rare thing to obtain, one cannot gather it like a fruit from a tree, one has to become worthy of it. Once it has been received one has to learn how to hold it, to sustain it and watch over it like a precious jewel : for it can be easily lost and may be stolen by the demon of doubt in an unguarded moment. A mere glance back towards worldliness makes it fly away like a frightened bird."

"Puri, 26th Jan. 1952."

"When I read my diary I realise that it gives the impression that I am doubting Mataji most of the time and am even on the point of leaving Her. But actually doubt comes fairly rarely, as an exception, so to say, the rule being periods of intense faith and love. But during those spells of deep happiness I do not feel the need of writing; usually I write only when I am depressed, doubting or despondent."

"Anandakashi, April 20th, 1952."

"When I read these notes I ask myself : how was it possible that I should have been so greatly deluded by blindness and stupidity ?

"Her influence cannot be explained in any other way : She is Divine Grace, the Lord Himself.....

"But when one sees the sun shine constantly, one is apt to forget that it is he who gives us light and warmth; that it is he who makes the plants grow and grants us life; that every creature on earth depends on him. Sometimes one even gets annoyed with the sun for sending its burning rays and making us feel hot and perspire, or worse than that, through one's own carelessness one may even get a sun-stroke.

But when the ice-cold nights of winter come, then one understands how stupid it has been to blame even for a short while the giver of life and well-being.

"What I owe to Mataji cannot possibly be expressed in words. She gives everything out of pure generosity, without ever a motive. To give boundlessly without ever expecting anything in return—this is Her nature.

"If blindness and foolishness should ever again succeed in veiling my understanding, may I read these lines and remember. Then I shall wait calmly until the black clouds blow over and the sun shines again."



Merely to assume the robes of a sadhu while the spirit of renunciation is lacking will not do. Taking sannyasa and becoming a sannyasi spontaneously are certainly not one and the same thing.

—Ma Anandamayee

HOMAGE TO MOTHER ANANDAMAYEE

—DR. B. N. CHAKRAVARTY

God comes to this world in the form of human being either in the person of a man or woman to save humanity from crisis. That divine manifestation is revealed through the medium of human being from time to time to give succour to the distressed humanity. Mother is such a manifestation of divine being born in this earth to the rescue of afflicted humanity.

Mother Anandamayee was born in a tiny village of East Bengal as was the case of Mother Sarada Devi who was also born in a tiny hamlet of the Dist. Hooghly. Since her early life Mother Anandamayee was blessed with extraordinary divine spiritual power. Even her husband was impressed by her such spiritual power. Her omnipotent and omniscient spiritual power expressed in her exalted divine motherhood attracted people all over the world irrespective of caste and creed to receive her blessings which she gave abundantly when asked for.

Mother has had innumerable devotees starting from our illustrious ex-Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi and her mother to common ordinary people who had the opportunity of receiving her kind blessings.

Mother's unbelievable and rare spiritual power, replete with various stories, are too many to be mentioned in this short article. One patient of mine suffering from Dissecting Aneurysm of Aorta, an incurable disease, was cured by her blessing and kindness, which is only possible through divine power.

Even to-day when we go to her Kankhal Ashram and sit near her Samadhi ground we still feel her unseen divine presence and enthralled by her numerous divine plays enacted. Her unseen presence has an enchantment to all visitors there.

I pay my humble and respectful homage, along with her million and million devotees in this country and abroad, to her divine self and pray let her blessings be bestowed on all her devotees at a time when our country is passing through unprecedented calamities and tribulations.

FOR ANANDAMAYI MA

—ELIZABETH DAYTON

The life of Anandamayi Ma has always fascinated me, ever since I read of Her in "Autobiography of a Yogi" by Yogananda, whom I had known personally.

When I discovered Ma She was living still and that there was a journal about Her. I felt very blessed, always by Her words and actions, and "soaked up" all descriptions of Her, found myself in Her words of wisdom, which often, often smoothed the Way for me.

Yesterday, when the October issue arrived with the marvellous colored picture of MA (what a blessing), I started reading the pages as usual, and then all the expressions of grief for Her passing, of eternal thanksgiving for Her living eternal presence.

As I turned back again to the beautiful color picture of MA, She Herself gave me *darsan*, I felt Her radiance about me.

Oh you,
Friend God;

I abandon all else;
So that I may be near you
And touch your feet.

When night is still and cool,
You are there
With blanket of caring
Encompassing the void
And singing, unheard,
Primeval song of peace, awareness, Oneness.

Morning comes
Supporting your gentleness,
Stirs impulse of creation and
I feel your heart unfold within—
It is strong tenderest desire of my unbounded being:
Creator becomes Creating and Created, all in One.

Slow dawn comes on apace
With sounds of you, my dove,
My morning glory,
Chanting to your love unending,
Which is my joy.

O blow,
All winds of elegance;
You cannot save manna of perfection for some;
Your soma is in sharing,
And with all west winds.
Breathing in most delicate
Of sound and life,
So that all pranic pulses,
Golden breath of breath,
May carry God Almighty
To farthest ends of earth
And touch that star
Which centers in my being,

Caresses cheek
With silver-edged reach of Maya's toys,
Which is to say,
"All Timelessness"
Within strong touch of joy.
Oh then at noon
You shall become the molten sun,

Which beams
To leak all light
And knowledge,
Shine on each alike;
For you are everywhere, My God,
My joy,
In all beings sentient
And in all unawakened forms.

Blue, blue are small lakes
Held within great oceans of love's power
To lift with waves of laughter—
They are so sweet to taste.

With roses pink and gold
And lavender,
You tease the breeze
Who has not held
Her share of fragrance yet—
It's love so light and right and pure,
These minerals
And haying joys
Of earth awake:

As wisdom grows with day
I look about
And seek to see you in all radiance everywhere
Because it's you,
My God,
Neighbour God,
Friend God,
Child God,
Mother God.

INCIDENTS TO REMEMBER

January, 1939, Gujarat

Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, the very name evokes a deep attraction combined with veneration. Shree Ma's Divine presence always held an unbelievable magnetism.

Ma was staying on the sacred Narmada bank. The devotees of Sri Narain Swami had sung kirtan in Ma's presence. Before their departure they had come for Ma's blessings.

Ma was alone in the cottage. Didi Gurpriya was close by. Suddenly a voice called "Ma". Ma turned around. A dark complexioned lady, appearing to be from South India, was running towards Ma. There was a distinct loveliness in her face. The night before she had played the instrument during the Kirtan in Ma's presence. She fell at Ma's feet and in broken Hindi implored Ma's Grace. Then taking Ma's hands in her own she placed them reverentially on her head and heart. She had seen Ma for the first time only the previous night, but was now in great anguish for leaving Ma. Her husband had also accompanied her.

"Ma", she added, "I feel heart broken at the thought of leaving you, like the Gopis felt at Sri Krishna's departure. My body will certainly be far away but my innermost self will remain here with you." Ma— "Your music gave so much joy. During the 24 hours of the day whenever you will sing bhajan I will know that my mother is singing". The separation from Ma was so difficult and she could hardly tear herself away. Their party was leaving and she returned again crying at the thought of leaving Ma. Such is the attraction for Ma !

* * * * *

A Kirtan party had come to Ma. The leader asked Ma in which direction they should proceed for their financial benefit.

Ma : This body does not give guidance in these matters. You have taken to the road with His name. Whatever direction you wish to take, proceed. There is nothing to worry about.

Ma: Pitaji, sing a bhajan without an accompaniment.

The leader of the group told a young boy of the party to sing as the boy sat close to Ma.

Ma asked : What is your name ?

The child : Haridas

Ma : Is this the name bestowed on you or is it your childhood name ?

The child : This is a name given to me.

Ma : What is your father's name ?

The child : Kiramati Ali.

On hearing this Ma was very pleased and caressed the boy.

Ma : Though born in a Muslim family, due to the *samskaras* of his former birth he is singing the name of Krishna in the midst of Hindus. In all religions there is no differentiation.

The child sang melodiously.

Ma : Renounce the world and become engrossed in the name of Krishna. The *samskaras* of previous births are reflected in the song.

Ma : Where are your relations and with whom do you live ?

The leader : He has no one of his own, he sings in our group.

Ma to the child : Since you have no one of your own, you stay with me and I will listen to your songs. Isn't that alright ?

The deep motherly love and affection which Ma showered on the child cannot be expressed in human language.

The child kept silent and later said : Please grant me your blessings.

Ma : He replied in this manner as he was not willing to stay with me.

The child left; but he must have carried for ever in his heart the eternal love of the Divine Universal Mother.

* * * * *

Once Ma was in Tarapeeth (West Bengal) in mid-winter. Also with Ma were Baba Bholanath, Swami Akhandanandaji, Bhaiji (Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy), Didi Gurupriya and Narain Swami.

Late one night Ma suddenly walked out in the extreme cold all alone into the open space, halting briefly beside a tiny cottage here, a back door there and at another's kitchen yard. Then Ma entered the courtyard of a small cottage and sat down on the bare floor in the cold winter darkness, and Ma started singing softly in Her celestial voice, "Hari Bol, Hari Bol." The others who had followed Ma at a distance hearing Ma's song were transported to realms of sublime devotion. Quietly a figure emerged from inside with a lantern. Without uttering a single word he went inside and returned shortly with two burly men carrying a disabled man and placed him in front of Ma. The patient humbly called out, Ma, Ma & then started singing

Hari Bol. After a short while Ma directed the patient to be taken indoors. Then the miracle happened. The lame man walked away with a slight support, just shortly before having been carried by two men. On enquiring it was learnt that he had been disabled and unable to walk for many years and was also unable to speak. Now with Ma's blessings he was able to sing God's name and walk on his own feet.

Verily : Mukam karoti Vachalam Pangum Langhayate Girim. Yat Kripa Tam aham
Vande Parmananda Madhavam

The dumb can deliver sermons, the lame can ascend the high mountains
with the Blessings of the Lord.

* * * * *

Mussoorie, 1934

Ma was strolling along the Mussoorie Road with Bhaiji (Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy). Ma sat down near Landour Bazaar. Ma was seeing the small school children who were playing with great abandon running, jumping around. Just then the school bell rang and they ran helter skelter to their classrooms. Like a dream the noisy atmosphere dissolved into a silent play-ground.

Ma : How nice it would be if hearing the bell the boys thought it is now time for prayers, and leaving aside their play, assemble in their rooms for their spiritual practices.

On hearing Ma's words, a very pure desire arose in Bhaiji's mind to build an ashram.

When Ma learnt of this, She said to Bhaiji, "There are so many ashrams, what will be the use of another ashram."

Bhaiji : Ma, this ashram will not be like the other ashrams. This will not be to train future sadhus. This ashram will be a temple of service. If we get some boys 8-12 years old, we will help them to tread on the path of God realisation. As they grow up if they wish to become sadhus and renounce the world, that is well and good. However, if they wish to enter the *grihastha ashram* (wordly life) what is the harm ? For, if in their early years they get the firm foundation of divinity and goodness, they will be much better house-holders than the ordinary ones. We will not take the responsibility of their future decisions. We will help and guide them and inculcate the spiritual ideals."

This incident was infact at the very root of the founding of the famous Ashram in Ma's name, known as "Viswa Mandir" at Kishenpur, Dehradun, where first of all Baba Bholanath left his body in the year 1938 and Ma herself attained *maha samadhi* on 27th August, 1982.



MY KR̥SNA— MA ANANDAMAYI

An Offering To My Guru

—'SHOBHA'

Just after three days of our vacation in India my husband died in a jeep accident after a few minutes. I was injured and was in the emergency for three days and later stayed in the hospital for another fifteen days.

No sooner I recovered from my injuries I wanted to get back to United States, and resume my responsibilities. In spite of the requests of my family members for staying back in India, as I was very weak physically and emotionally, I decided to go as soon as possible. My father who was in his early seventies insisted that he accompanies me to take care of me; I gently requested him to let me go by myself. For I knew that he will not be able to endure my suffering of loss. I assured him that Shree Ma was with me and he had nothing to fear. It would make me happy if both my parents stayed together at this time.

The attending staff of the flight gave me very special treatment and the passengers close by passed me comforting smiles. I could feel the presence of Shree Ma strongly. Every breath of mine and every movement of my injured ribs murmured the awakened name of Ma. Even though I was far far away from Kalyan-Van and Kishenpur Ashram, mentally I was very close to it.

It is needless to describe the pain and sorrow that I had to go through when I stepped back to the United States after having lost my world of happiness. The house, the yard, the trees, the flowers, the grass, the lilac bushes, the blue sky, the blowing breeze and many miscellaneous personal belongings of my husband brought intense pain beyond my expression in words.

After a couple of days rest (if one may call it rest), I went back to my job. I was lost completely in the midst of office duties and taking care of documents that needed to be sorted out after a spouse's death. My physical strength was unable to cope up with my mental activities. In this confusion my only support was my Japa *Mala*. I was holding to it as my life breath, very close to my broken heart. I held the Name and the *BEEJ MANTRA* very carefully and more precious than any other treasure of this world. My only solace was Ma's Name. Remembering Ma gave me strength and sailed me through the rough tides of the day. My life was dry as the

bark of a branch that had been cut off from a full green oak tree. The beauty that I formerly enjoyed so much was going farther and farther from me.

One autumn afternoon taking a walk during my lunch break by the Mississippi river I stopped to gaze at the beauty of a floating autumn cloud. Lo behold ! I saw Ma descending down adorned as Lord Kṛṣṇa playing Her Flute. I smiled and became Her Radha instantly. My world, if looked through my eyes was gloomy, fearful, painful. But, if looked from the eyes of Ma Kṛṣṇa's Radha it was beautiful, green, sublime and splendid. I found my beauty, my joy in the form of Mother Kṛṣṇa.

My days were spent playing with Ma Kṛṣṇa in the woods and in the garden of Vrindaban. Sometimes I became one of Her Gopis, at other time Her Flute; sometimes Her Cow, sometimes Her child playmate Sudama and many a times Her Radha. My garden, flowers, trees, lilac bush, blades of green grass, the birds, squirrels, the breeze, the storm and the winds had a new enchantment to it. They painted my world full of sublime and divine colours of Shree Ma's Compassion and Love. The festival of Holi sprayed me with the colors of orange and yellow, red and green. The bleak and colorless world merged with the red and violet colored flowers of Kṛṣṇa and Radha. Lord Kṛṣṇa's charm pervaded in my entire world. Tears adorned a new beauty. They trickled from the eyes yearning to be reunited with Ma Anandamayi, if She hid Herself a little more longer than usual behind the Ashoka and the Banyan tree of the Panchavati. I found my happiness, my joy, not only within me but it spread all around me, where ever the breeze, the time and the tide took me. Shree Ma made me relive in this beauty of sublime Joy when life had lost all its charm and splendour for me. I was enticed with the notes of Her Flute, my solitude filled with Her musical whispering and my spirits were elevated to spiritual heights. I dwelled in Her fragrance, Her Splendour and Beauty. Her TOUCH was very intensely felt by me.

The strength to revisit India only came from the intense yearning of attending Shree Ma's Centenary celebration in Dhaka-Kheora. I left adorned as one of MA Kṛṣṇa's Radha, Ma's Sudama, one of Her Gopi. But when I got ready to return Ma came to me in Her original form of Ma Bhagawati, Kali, Saraswati, Durga. The form that She had manifested to me when I had my first darshan in Kishenpur Ashram looking at me with a steady gaze not leaving me for quite a while.

Today when I look back, tears flood my eyes with fond memories of the by-gone days when I was Ma's Radha, Her Gopi, Her Sudama, Her Flute, Her Cow and Her Mira. My Mother Kṛṣṇa Anandamayi has merged into my Immortal Bhagawati, Durga, Kali Anandamayi Ma.



ON MA

—DR. KOSHALYA WALLI

[Continued from before]

According to Ma Anandamayi, when an action takes place for the sake of an action, and not even because of the inspiration born out of the knowledge of one's duty, then God takes the form of an action and is present before the doer. Consequently, while doing the action of such nature, one becomes automatically devoid of an action.¹ The doer is, as if out of coercion, interested in action. Under the given circumstances even the welfare of the humanity does not happen to be the aim of such a doer. When the mind is concentrated, knowledge necessarily arises. As a result of concentration, the scattered energy becomes condensed as a result of which the inner self is suddenly and spontaneously enlightened with the light of the knowledge born from within. At that time, the knot of the heart is opened, all the doubts are turn asunder and the path of the destruction of all the actions becomes clear. The Cosmic Energy is existent equally everywhere. We are not able to concentrate, hence cannot attain the Energy. That Cosmic Energy alone is One. When That appears in the form of Karma-action, action at that time disappears. When the Energy appears in the form of an object, that object disappears. On the appearance of the Energy, That alone remains every thing else disappears. At that time it is experienced that He is I. He and I are eternally one.²

According to Ma, *Saguna* means *svaguna*, *Sākāra* means³ *svākāra*. *Sakriyā* means *svakriyā*. In other words, That Cosmic Energy is in the form of *Guṇa*, Form and Action. Where He is Himself Enlightened, there He alone is eternally proved. He is non-doer while doing everything. This is the characteristics of the Divine Light Manifestation. He is Non-Doer, since He alone is. To whom He should be Doer ?

According to Ma, every play of Shri Bhagawan is *Chinmaya* (full of Consciousness) and *Divya* (Divine). Having no Divine symptom, no one is entitled to

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1. Amar Vāṇī MM. Pt. G N. Kaviraja's Commentary P.157
 2. Ibid. Page 158
 3. Amar Vāṇī P. 158.

witness this Divine Play. These *Lilās* are played for the sake of the worthy disciples, who are in tune with the Master/Mother. To witness these Plays, some people find worldly ideas arisen in their minds. Such people are not entitled to witness these plays. 'This is the Play of Real God'—with such invincible faith, the mind remains pure and one can have the right to witness the Play. The childlike play of God is very sweet. If the Play of God is not taken for a Divine Play, the same cannot be understood.¹

True Bliss is attained by resting in the Self. The significance of *Jivan mukti* is found in Vedanta as well as in Tantrik concept. *Sadhanā* is important for *Jivanmukti*, Imagination has no place in Perfect Truth. Complete Truth is given the name of 'चरम-परम' *Charama-Parama*. Name, form and qualities all belong to That One. Everything is He alone. This One is Self-Effulgence. Likewise, This is unmanifest or *Aprakasa*, as besides This, nothing exists. So, where This should exist & before whom it should manifest ? Hence That One is Ever Unmanifest, always 'निहितं गुहायाम्' hidden in the Inner Cave.²

God is ever playing with His Own Self. He is Eternal. Hence His play is always Eternal. To understand this Eternal Play, one has to be aware of Non-duality. Such a person feels that The One assumes various forms and always plays with One's own forms in various ways. He is the Enjoyer, an object of enjoyment and no room for any other one. Even then in multifold ways, He plays the role of a Second One. This artificial one says—"I am one without another. (एकमेवाद्वितीयम्)" । God is full of limitless powers. Hence His variety of tasting the *Rasa* - रसास्वादन is unending. Hence He is Consciousness-natural and Bliss. Play is just an acting. According to Ma He alone is - He Who plays with His Ownself." This is Eternal Play. This Light emerges from Conscious Kingdom. The division of That Play is full of consciousness because that is Natural.

Lord is another name of Absolute Freedom. He Himself creates this Universe. This is His Play or Nature. He alone is Time, Space and Action. Yet He is above all this and is the Spectator of His Own Play.³

According to Ma Anandamayi—"When the mind is automatically prone to meditation, that should be so." It indicates that there is a stage of natural meditation.

1. Ibid. P. 159.

2. Amar Vāṇī - P. 168.

3. "तस्य पुनर्विश्वोत्तीर्णविपूवात्मकपरमानन्दमय प्रकाशैकधनस्य एवं विधमेवाखिलम् अभेदेनैव स्फुरति न तु वस्तुतः अन्यत् किञ्चिद् ग्राह्यं ग्राहकं वा, अपितु स एव इत्थं नाना वैचित्र्य-सहस्रैः स्फुरति—Amar Vani-P.170

One is not to try for that "*Sahaja Dhyāna*. Mind itself becomes absorbed in Dhyāna. Mother calls that as "to attain dhyāna." A sleepy person is not to try for sleep, it automatically comes to him. If sleep does not come, by effort sleep comes, likewise those of us who do not get dhyāna, try for it and ultimately are successful to have dhyāna.

Patanjali has prescribed *Kriyayoga* for an extrovert, but *Samadhi yoga* is meant for an introvert. Patanjali has suggested *tapa, svadhyaya* or japa and study of good books and surrender to God. All these in equal manner or less one and more other help in the attainment of Kriya Yoga. One may like more of Japa, another may desire to do *svādhyāya*. By resorting to *Kriyayoga*, by and by, the Sādhaka becomes introvert and is able to practise *Samādhi Yoga*. *Kriyayoga* is a must to do away with the *klesas* of the mind.

The aim of sādhanā is to attain *prajnā*- pure knowledge. A mind devoid of *saṁskāras* and one-pointed alone can have pure knowledge. *Sila* and *Samyama* help the mind to be one pointed and peaceful. *Pañca śilas* and *Daśa śilas* have been arranged for peaceful mind. Also *Yamas* and *Niyamas* are meant for it. *Trāṭaka* helps one to attainment of the manifestation of the Unique Light. This Light weakens the weakness of mind.

This manifestation of Light leads to a higher stage of *dhyāna*. But this is not a perfect *dhyāna*. Perfect *dhyāna* leads to concentration, such concentration if owned by sadhaka even for a moment, transforms his mind. The empirical mind is changed into Divine mind. A fully concentrated mind takes happiness or sorrow equally with a balanced mind. A fully concentrated mind has no difference between knowledge and an object of knowledge. That is *Arpanā* or *Samādhi*. Pure knowledge manifests itself after that stage.¹

Mind has tendencies (*vṛttis*) and impression (*saṁskāras*). Intense meditation leads to rise of knowledge. Ignorance vanishes with the rise of knowledge. With the disappearance of ignorance, knowledge also ultimately is not there. Consequently mind does not find place any more and the sadhaka is established in his Self. Hence, meditation leads to knowledge and knowledge leads to the establishment in Self. This is the procedure in accordance with *shastras*—says Mm. Pt. G.N. Kaviraj.²

Mother would be very often asked this question by Her devotees—"How long one is to do sadhana ?" Mother would reply—"Till the light would not manifest.

1. Amar Vāṇī-- P. 190-192.

2. Amar Vāṇī -- P. 197

Go on doing it incessantly. There should not be a break. A knot takes place by having breaks in the course of Sadhana. Sadhana should be like an incessant flow of oil. Put an effort to do sadhana incessantly."

Faith is the key to Self-realization. 'श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानम्'—the faithful attains knowledge. According to Mother—"Whatever the worldly impediments, the spotlight of your mind should be that Perfect One. By this process, one day that Supreme will touch the mind." According to Pt. G.N.Kaviraj, by the touch of the Supreme, perfection is attained within a moment."¹ Till the attainment of this Perfection, sadhana is to be performed without break.

An unconditional *Kripā* (grace) does not depend upon ability, future or past. It is another name of *Svātantrya* of That Supreme. He of His Sweet Will makes anyone object of His Grace. When the donor's desire to give and recipient's will to receive takes place there is the Unconditional Grace.²

1. Amar Vāṅī -- P. 198

2. Amar Vāṅī -- P. 266

OMNIPRESENT

—SHIVANANDA.

Behold the amassed cloud, dark and strong,
That rebels against the boundless blue,
I was so conceited — a flash in its breast
For in its lusture, O Mother ! it is you.

Behold the exquisite Magnolia in bloom
Emiting its aroma, a heavenly view,
And the Lily keeping beneath its tree
So joyous, O Mother ! since it is you.

Behold the labourer toiling hard
Human service unending to do.
No body to turn round, none to care
Except one, O Mother ! and it is you.

Behold the Leo in its forest bower
Majestically strolling so proud and true.
That could never be otherwise, for
In its life, O Mother ! it is you.

Behold the Sun, the Moon and the rest
Of the planetary world, so loyal and true.
Verily, Verily, we know O Mother !
In its life it is none but you.



MA ANANDAMAYI AND OUR YOUNGER GENERATION

—RANA DAS

(ONE)

*O say, can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly hailed at the twilight's last gleaming
Over the land of the free and the home of the brave ? **

At the twilight of the twentieth century, India is in the process of economic take off. Indications of becoming economic giant and enterprise abound. It is the facelift of India's past shining glory that descends since the advent of Vivekananda in the twilight of the nineteenth century.

To understand how this current incident can reflect a conspicuous shift with the grace of Ma, may not be easy to measure through the influence of Ma Anandamayi on younger generation today. In fact, the term younger generation itself is not too broad to give an indication to our study of what we wish to know about Ma Anandamayi's presence in every aspect of younger people. We also cannot include in our range the multitudes of younger boys and girls in the rural areas who do not have the faintest knowledge of Ma's teachings and to whom we are not able to reach those teachings. Nor are all the young men and women hailing from urban areas been acquainted with Ma's teachings in the normal process of their social life. Even still is the introduction of mass education which can be used for dissemination of Ma's ideas amongst the teenagers of the country as a whole. So when we proceed to investigate into the nature and extent of the influence of Ma on our younger generation, we are necessarily bound to restrict ourselves for the present, to those in professional studies, and such other disciplines in colleges and universities—that is our student community.

How is the attitude of these students to the message of Ma Anandamayi ? Quite a few of them may turn up for writings and as audience to prove their interest in Ma's ideal, although their presence is negligible on the subject of Ma Anandamayi. But when there is an address on some aspect of her life and work in a particular

*. Francis Scott Key, Star-Spangled Banner, 1814.

place of establishment the congregation takes place and is held till the end. I cannot say how many of them read her words from book like, 'Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma, with a foreword by Jean Herbert or 'Mother as seen by Devotees'. A sample survey of it may be made in few of our establishments in India. Moreover, we have not drawn the statistics of our younger communities browsing among books outside their studies. I think the average student is not found inclined to go through books relating to religion, philosophy and ethics. Their discussion on religion or moral question is found seldom, when at all times the conversation dwells on only politics and games.

I have been in Oxford for years and during this period been lucky to come across Christopher Isherwood, the internationally renowned scholar on Vedanta, who even showed his eagerness to learn more of Ma Anandamayi, but didn't notice any serious endeavour on the part of teachers to arouse the interest among the coming generations. I am hesitant, however, to say that this is limited to the institutions managed by the devotees of Ma Anandamayi where a great deal is done to acquaint the desirous students with the teachings of Ma. It has not disseminated even to few colleges like the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda where a good deal of attention is given to religious and moral instructions. But on the whole our younger generation are not so keen to witness if Ma has any message for them. Possibly, they have no option of the importance of a great mind's message in guiding their lives.

It was not so in the last decade following the passing away of Ma Anandamayi. In her new abode at Raipur (Dehradun), after bidding farewell to Dhaka, Ma answered the query sixty two years ago in a language peculiarly of her own :

"A man's belief is greatly influenced by his environment; therefore, you should choose the company of the holy and the wise. Belief means to believe in one's self: disbelief means to mistake the non-self for one's self." *

I think thereafter what the younger generation especially had during her tenure at Dhaka had gradually begun to decline.

But why should the younger generation today not have the same old enthusiasm on Ma Anandamayi, like Subhas Chandra, Sri Aurobindo and Jawaharlal who had on Swami Vivekananda ? I think we find a clue to this in one of the remarks of Subhas Chandra during the national movement., 'With him religion was the

*. Bithika Mukherjee, From the life of Sri Anandamayi Ma, Vol. I

inspirer of nationalism'¹, he said. Let us not realize that Sri Aurobindo or Subhas Chandra representing younger generation then meant any form of doctrine under the garb of religion for the regeneration of India with egotism and pride. Actually no section of our present younger generation, not even the most radical amongst them, would call Ma Anandamayi a sort of universal cult. So when I speak that our younger generation is not particularly interested in Ma Anandamayi I do not mean that they have an ideological difference with her. It is Ma Anandamayi's idea of the primacy of religion in building up our mind which does not seem to appeal to current younger generation. Ma Anandamayi's conception was that a spiritual and moral awakening must carry the form of human consciousness. Of course, this is unintelligible to our younger generation, who are seduced to a political culture which is independent of what Ma Anandamayi would have thought a spiritual and moral disposition.

Although in her own way Ma Anandamayi sometimes said, "This body is like a musical instrument; what you hear depends on how you play²". The wonder is that it responds even to silent playing ! So in our country, religious life forms the key note of the whole music of national life; and 'if any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality...that nation does if it succeeds in the attempt³'. It seems that our younger generation may not turn out so. They will certainly not engage to anything to cause injury to religion. But their access to national problems is of a political nature and they are unable to think any approach. After achieving independence our Westminster model of parliamentary democracy has imbibed in our younger generation's idea of the primacy of politics in the public affairs of the society. Before flooding India with socialistic or political beliefs, the deluge of 'spiritual illumination' seems unhealthy to them. They will argue that one just does not know how to augment the flowing of spiritual ideas in this land. I admit I have not read anything involving the programme of such spiritual activity and clarifying the method of doing it.

What really matters is the realization of Ma Anandamayi in uprooting conflict and divergence of opinion in our national life is that the world of our younger generation is very different from it was during her apostolate. As it stands today our

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1. R.K. Dasgupta, Swami Vivekananda, A Hundred Years Since Chicago. Commemorative Volume.
 2. Anandamayee Sangha, Words of Sri Anandamoyi. Ma.
 3. The Complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. VIII, Sept. 1992, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama.

young brotherhood are obliged to concentrate on their studies, their examinations, and all the problems of choosing and moving into the profession at a time when there is so much chaos to diviate their attention. Politics itself is now a baneful game in which parties have to fight each other through programmes of strikes, congregations and *dharnas*. Secondly, there is the world of mystery in games and entertainments. The T.V. has brought the sports and the films of the whole world to our doors. The silver screen is about to supplant the printed age as a tool of our intellectual refinement. Eighteenth century Europe which reposed on Rousseau and Voltaire, was called the Age of Enlightenment. I cannot say who are the Rousseaus and Voltaires of this latter part of the current century. But it may not be too far to say that we have now an age of Entertainment. Film actors, footballers and cricketing buffs are in the limelight, and their strong appeal is now entitling them for responsible positions in our social milieu. If any of us decide to place our youths on the ideals of Ma Anandamayee through periodic confabulations they may not have a chance to meet them for the purpose.

When we conceive a plan for the spreading of the ideas of Ma Anandamayi amongst our young men and women we must focus on this situation and find an avenue of going ahead with our plan.

Let us bear this in mind that our student community has no interest in Vedantic conception which is so much related to Ma's message. Very seldom if at all, will you find a student who is interested with the issues concerning Vedanta. And how Ma Anandamayi has imparted her message in the light of Vedanta is not of any interest to our students. Even their teachers are not so strongly concerned with these issues, as they bear on the religious life of those who embody the philosophical character in prayer and worship. I thought one of our universities would organise a seminar on Ma Anandamayi's views on the Vedantic approach and bring out its proceedings as a notable contribution to our understanding.

Let us note that the Philosophy departments of our universities are not today particularly working on Vedanta philosophy although there are scholars engaging in the subject. But their work has yet to cast any influence on our society as a whole. An American observer on the state of philosophical studies in India today mentions in the "Indian Philosophy since Independence" (1979) that 'contemporary Indian metaphysics and dialectics is moving significantly in the direction of newer European models...Indian philosophers are happiest imitating the style and content

of recent British thought⁴. None of us would like our philosophers to limit their attention to our traditional philosophy alone: on the contrary they are needed to have a global outlook and show their capacity to respond thoughtfully to the significant trends in world philosophy. But we also think of them to help us with their interpretation of the Vedānta philosophy, which is so deeply embedded in our life and which can now be given a new twist and a new thought as a kind of spiritual rejuvenation of our people. I doubt that in the West philosophy is no longer linked to the deeper insight of our individual and social life. There appears a contrast between life and philosophy which may not be worthwhile for human civilisation. Analytic philosophy has gained importance in the progress of knowledge, but in our traditional philosophy there is a great deal that comes very close to the philosophical issues of the modern West. However, philosophy must keep up those beliefs and ideas which relate to our spiritual and moral life. We are known to be philosophically biased and even our uneducated rural people have a philosophy, their intellect often showing the sign of our traditional wisdom. I think we are now fast losing that philosophical bent of mind.

Perhaps our first work is to revive that philosophical nature, to create an intellectual environment that would naturally raise in the minds of our people questions about the importance of meditation in life and how to proceed towards self-realization. The ideas of Ma Anandamayi can be effective to be continued only in such an atmosphere.

(to be continued)

4. Dale Riepe, *Indian Philosophy Since Independence*, Calcutta: Research India Publications, 1979 pp. 250-51.

MY DAYS WITH SRI MA ANANDAMAYI

—BITHIKA MUKERJI

(EIGHT)

Sri Gurupriya Didi has written about Kawnadi's last days in her Diary. It is given in the VIII volume of her published works. All of us at Allahabad heard the details from Renudi and my mother on their return from Dehradun, at the end of the month (September, 1942).

Renudi recalled that when they arrived at the Raipur Ashram, they immediately saw Sri Ma who was standing at the edge of the open terrace looking down at them while they got out of their tonga. Kawna without a backward glance walked forward and up the stairs (very steep) leading up to the terrace in three tiers. She seemed not to be ill at all. Sri Ma received all of them kindly and two rooms on the other side of the courtyard from the terrace were given to them for their use.

Sri Ma herself saw to every detail of Kawna's comfort! How the bed should be made, the room arranged, what food should be given her etc. Sri Ma's devotee Bharat Bhai of Jullundhar, who was a doctor, examined her and prescribed medicines for her. Within a short while, the entire Ashram became involved with Kawna's welfare. Since the fever persisted, Sri Ma asked Kawna to keep to her bed. She would visit Kawna's room every day and sit near the bed on a steel box over which Renudi had put a folded blanket. Every evening when Sri Ma strolled on the terrace she would walk in one corner of it. After a few days people realized that she was walking along the spot which was visible to Kawna while she lay in her bed, so the few visitors who came, took care not to stand in between.

Everyone became very fond of the young girl (she was not yet twenty) who suffered her illness so bravely and uncomplainingly. Sevaji came everyday to see Kawna, quite enamoured of her lotus-petal shaped big brilliant eyes and the lovely smile which remained endearingly so, till the last day.

As written previously, these were difficult times. The Quit India Movement announced by Gandhiji had affected most of the country. The British Government suppressed it ruthlessly. For sometime a reign of terror was superimposed on the euphoria of a sudden surge of spirit for a bid for independence. Mail Service came to a standstill. Train services were desultory and used primarily for troop

movements. But the devotees of Dehradun trekked to Raipur regularly. They volunteered to do the little shopping that was required. Kawna seemed to become weaker every day. My mother and sister were in constant attendance, especially my mother who hardly ever left Kawnadi's bedside. Renudi became friends with two other young girls staying in the Ashram, Maranidi and Savitri Mamima. Apart from Didima, Didi and Ruma Devi, the Ashram was inhabited by sadhus and brahmacharis only. Swami Akhandananda, Swami Dharmeshananda, Swami Paramananda, Mukti Maharaj were in ochre robes. There were brahmacharis also such as Abhayda, Shobhan, Kanu (Maranidi's brother-in-law) Nepalda and perhaps one or two more.

During this time my young brother Babu aged 7 years came into some limelight. He had nothing to do but play around the sprawling premises. He was made to sit with his books for a while by my sister but there were too many distractions. He spent most of his time with the sadhus, mainly Mukti Maharaj. All those who remember Mukti Maharaj will understand readily the rest of the anecdote. Babu attached himself to Mukti Maharaj, saying he wanted to become a sadhu like him. Mukti Maharaj used to tell him stories about *guru* and *sisya*. Others also endeared him as he was the only child in their midst. Mukti Maharaj told Babu that he would have to behave like a disciple before becoming a sadhu. People were amused to see the boy fetch and carry for Mukti Maharaj who with his mischievous sense of humour, would set him harder tasks everyday. Babu persevered so well that Mukti Maharaj to stop the game told him he had to get his mother's permission before he could become a sadhu. Babu approached my mother while she was busy and formally asked for her permission as taught by Mukti Maharaj. My mother not attending to what he was saying, said, "Yes, yes, go and play somewhere else. I am busy now."

Now Mukti Maharaj was in difficulties. He said, "One last test. You have to carry my *Kharaum* (wooden sandals) on your head the whole day. If you can do this, then I shall initiate you." Mukti Maharaj had reckoned without the strong will power which characterised Babu even as a child. All residents were amused to see Babu walking behind Mukti Maharaj with the sandals held over his head.

In time, Sri Ma came to hear about this game. She called Babu to her in the hall. She spoke a few words in mild reproof to the sadhus, "Why do you tease the child like this!" Sri Ma asked Didi to fetch one of her new *dhotis* which was dyed in the yellow colour worn by brahmacharis. She then tore up the dhoti in strips making a *bahirvasan* (*lungi* or a wrap around) and a *uttariya* (cloth for the shoulders) and

also loin cloths. While everyone looked on with varying degrees of amazement, praise for Babu's luck and fortune, Sri Ma herself took off his shirt and shorts and dressed him completely in the yellow cloths like a brahmachari. She patted him on the head and said, "Now you are a sadhu, isn't it ?"

Babu was delighted; the audience marvelled at Sri Ma's *lila* of granting the wishes of a child so beautifully. She remarked, "He has a well-shaped head. He will excel in whichever line he chooses to adopt. If he becomes a sadhu in later life, in that also he will succeed."

Kawna, however, continued to be ill. Nothing seemed to do any good. An eminent doctor from Dehra Dun was fetched to examine her. Dr. Mitra, diagnosed the disease as tuberculosis of the intestines. It will be remembered that at that time there were no medicines for this terminal disease except fresh air and good food. My mother and sister were not told that in the Doctor's opinion Kawna had not more than three months at the most to live. Sri Ma herself supervised all meals. Once at night she went out with a torch to the surrounding patches of dense jungle. Didi and Renudi went along with her. Sri Ma pointed out certain herbs to Didi. Didi gathered them and prepared a medicinal dose under Sri Ma's direction. They came to Kawna's room. Didi put this spoon of stuff in her mouth. Kawna swallowed it with difficulty. Sri Ma sat for a long time watching for reactions (perhaps?). As soon as Sri Ma left the room Kawna brought up the whole thing. Out of politeness, she was holding herself in with great difficulty. Renudi went and reported that the medicine had been thrown up. Sri Ma remarked in a soft voice, "You see, the body is rejecting any effort at reversing the process. It will not be long now."

Next day Sri Ma brought one of her own robe-like garments (*alkhalla*) and an undergarment, saying to my mother, "You will find these clothes easier to manage while she remains bed-ridden." She herself helped my mother to change Kawna's dress. Sri Ma then invited all the sadhus to come to Kawna's room and bless her by touching her head. After all of them had done so, Didi asked Sri Ma if she also would not bless Kawna. Sri Ma said, "Shall I ?" Thereupon she passed her hands three times from Kawna's head to feet. She then asked Kawna, "You are fond of kirtan. Would you like kirtan to be sung near your room ?"

" Yes", with a big smile.

"Which Name ?" Kawna hesitated, because she thought everyone would expect her to say " *Ma-nama* ." Sri Ma said again, "Speak the name of your choice ?"

"Krishna nama"

So Abhayda and his companions sang *kirtan* in front of Kawna's sickroom every evening. Abhayda was not the man to be commanded into regular routine, but somehow every inmate of the ashram and the few visitors who came, went all out to be of service to this dedicated girl, who lay so patiently with her eyes fixed on the door to watch out for Sri Ma's coming. She never demanded Sri Ma's presence nor did she seek to prolong her visits. Whenever Sri Ma said, "Shall I go now ?" She would incline her head and smile.

After Sri Ma had changed her dress Kawna seemed to recover a little. It is my sister's impression that Sri Ma gave her some mantra also at the time because she was alone with Kawna for a few minutes while my mother waited outside the room. The persistent feeling of nausea and stomach ache left her. She developed a little appetite. Sri Ma asked her, if she would like anything special to eat. Kawna with her frank smile, said, "Yes, bread!" Now bread (from bakeries) is not used in Ashrams; it is not considered suitable food for ashramites. As Sri Ma made no objection, Bharat Bhai (from Jullundhar) trekked all the way to DehraDun to fetch a loaf of bread. For three or four days Kawna ate every kind of unsuitable food and moreover digested them also. My sister made potato-chops for her. She related that Kawna was full of reminiscences. She talked a lot about her college days and her particular friends, Savitri Sapru, Nirmala Mulla, Coral Caleb, Bhagya Gourha and other girls of Allahabad.

Then one day (September 14, 1942) again the nausea returned, she could not digest any food; a few aint drops of blood were seen in the food she threw up. My sister used to report the least change in Kawna's condition to Sri Ma. When Sri Ma heard about this, he said a few words softly, "It is time. I hope they have made all arrangements." She herself had kept aside a big garland which had been brought for her, earlier in the day. Sri Ma came to Kawna's room bringing Swami Akhandanandaji with her. She talked to her in her usual style, interestingly, making Kawna laugh a lot. She then said, "It is an honour to be initiated in the sannyasa mantra in the holy precincts of the Uttarakhand (foothills of the Himalayas). How lucky you are that such sadhus are here to attend on you !" There is the One only, is it not, *Ekamevadvitiam Brahma* ? All else is the One only!" Kawna's gaze was as usual fixed on Sri Ma's face. She inclined her head in acquiescence. Sri Ma asked everyone to leave the room. She herself remained with Swamiji, who with a full heart uttered the mantra of total renunciation to the patient, who unknown to everyone had only a few more minutes to live.

Sri Ma recalled everyone back to the bed-side and normal conversation was resumed. Didi made *charanamrita* and quietly poured a few drops in Kawna's mouth. Abhayda, Shobhanda, Kanu and another brahmacharis sat outside the room singing the *mahanama mantra*. Kawna's room was full of sadhus in ochre-robos. After a while Kawna said a little hurriedly to Swamiji, "I think I have forgotten the mantra. Will you say it again?" Everyone again prepared to leave the room, but before anyone had moved, Kawna said, "No, no, I have remembered. It is alright." She seemed to relax and looked her usual serene self. It was growing dark outside. Sri Ma got up and went near her, saying, "Shall I go now ?" Kawna inclined her head. Sri Ma passed her hands from Kawna's head to toe, thrice in a gesture of blessing and caress, which is inimitably her own. Sri Ma slowly walked to the door looking back at the girl whose wide open big eyes looking extra brilliant were fixed on her face. Sri Ma went out of the door followed by Renudi only. Everyone else, including Didi, sat near Kawna's bedside. As soon as Sri Ma went out of the room, the bright gaze became still. Didi, Swamiji and others said later that it was as if Sri Ma had taken away Kawna with her. My sister went with Sri Ma to her room, where she sat on her bed and said quietly to Renudi, "Do not cry; lamentations for departed dear ones causes them distress.' Renudi understood from these words that Kawna was no more. There had been no indications that Kawna was especially sinking or not her usual self. Sri Ma said again, "The sounds of the *mahanama-mantra*, so many ochre-robed sadhus sitting round, it seems she has brought about a *mahotsava* for her moment of departure."

After a while, my mother also realized that Kawna had gone beyond her loving care. She came on to where Sri Ma was sitting in her room and sat quietly at her feet with Babu in her lap. Renudi stood nearby. Everyone else was busy near Kawnadi's room. Swami Paramanandaji organised the funeral procession of brahmacharis and a few sadhus. In our tradition, cremation is expected to be performed as soon as may be possible. At that time, there was no question of informing my father or possibility of his arriving within a suitable time. In any case Sri Ma then and also later took for granted his complete acquiescence in whatever way or however Ma may settle his affairs.

The sky became overcast and it started to rain a little. The little group of women near Ma, watched as four brahmacharis picked up the wooden stretcher, on which Kawna's body had been laid. Didi had decorated it with new cloths and flower garlands provided by Sri Ma herself. She looked peacefully asleep. All the sadhus excepting Swami Akhandanandaji and Mukti Maharaj accompanied the cortege. The

strains of the *mahanama* mantra rose in the air. As the men wended their way across the valley, they could easily be made out from the terrace of the Ashram because of the swinging lanterns. The Raipur Ashram overlooks a vast stretch of scree interspersed by ribbons of mountain streams. Sri Ma said, "It's raining, will they be able to light a fire under these conditions. Let us see what God wills". Sri Ma continued to watch the flickering lights across the valley. For a while she would sit on her cot, then again she would come out to the hall and stand near the wide-open windows which open on the side of the valley. They all saw the blaze of fire rising high. In spite of the rains the lovely mountain side became alight with the glow of the brightly burning fire. Mukti Maharaj had been unwantingly overcome and now his eyes filled with tears. In a rather uncharacteristic emotional voice he said, "What a glorious way to depart this world ! Ma, only one ! Why only one ! Why don't you help scores of us to cross over in this fashion !"

By the time the men returned it was morning. Sri Ma had little rest during the night. She had talked intermittently of Kawna's bright, open nature, her total self-surrender, her undemanding serenity and her good *samskaras* (predilections) which had brought about the confluence of so many auspicious factors: the holy *Uttarakhanda* (Himalayas), brahmacharis only for pall-bearers and sadhus to perform the last rites. The audience added the most important factor of Sri Ma's presence. Didi said that she had never seen Sri Ma so involved in anyone's death before, not even in Bhaiji's. Paramanandaji on his return said that they had been afraid that the damp wood would not burn adequately, but all were amazed to see the bright flames which seemed to have a life and energy of their own. Sri Ma said, "The strict *brahmacharya* of many lives had created this energy (*brahmateja*); no great outside help was needed to consume the body which was sattvic (pure) and thus light and bright and ready to mingle with the elements."

Next day, the Ashram seemed strangely empty. Visitors were shocked to hear of Kawna's death. Sevaji shed tears, saying she would miss the bright smile to which she had looked forward everyday. Sri Ma continued to speak to everyone about Kawna for the next few days. One day, some of the local women after doing their *pranam* to Sri Ma went over to my mother and put some flowers on her head and feet. Everyone was surprised. Sri Ma smiled and gave an explanation, "They have just learnt that Kawna was not her own daughter, but niece. All these days they had been noticing her dedicated nursing of Kawna."

My mother, Renudi and Babu returned to Allahabad after a while. My father came from Ballia. At Allahabad also my father performed the ceremonial funeral

rites, in accordance with traditional precepts (*Srāddh*). Didi and Nirmalda had come from Varanasi already. After the ritual we again dispersed to our various destinations; my parents Renudi and Babu to Ballia, Sidudi and Nirmalda to Varanasi and I to the Hostel again. My brother remained in Jail because my father, unlike a few other parents in similar circumstances, did not care to give a letter of apology and promise of loyal behaviour in future to the Government as advised by our family lawyer Sri Ram Babu.

(To be continued)

***Jagat* (world) means ceaseless movement, and obviously there can be no rest in movement. How could there be peace in perpetual coming and going ? Peace reigns where no coming exists and no going, no melting and no burning. Reverse your course, advance towards Him - then there will be hope of Peace.**

—Ma Anandamayee

FROM THE NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

—'KIRPAJI'

5-9-56, Allahabad

Ma goes to Miss Lalita Pathak's (Proctor) block in the University Girls assemble before Ma and humbly put questions to Ma.

Q. What shall we do to attain spirituality, the higher life ?

Ma: So, you think there is a higher life. *Seva* (service). By service the inner self is purified. To serve God in all forms .

Q. What about our work ?

Ma: All work should be done in the form of *seva* (service), service of God and His creation .

Q. Why is it that at the time of meditation all one's worldly thoughts crowd in.

Ma: Just as when cleaning a room, you collect all the dirt in a big heap. But you must pray to God not to let your mind concentrate on the dirt. Just as you see your own face in the mirror, so also you see yourself. Pray to God to remove your blemishes. Weep for Him. Practice the name of God.

Q. In what form will He appear ?

Ma: In whatever form you desire Him, He will appear. Just as a mother scolds a child when it is naughty and is pleased when he is good. So also God scolds and is pleased.

Lastly, look, you are my frinds, *dost*. You must devote at least five minutes a day to me, to your special preference in whatever form you like.

23-12-55, New Delhi

A gentleman came. His elder son had died in a horse accident. He had crashed against a wall. His result of passing in the first division came a few days after his death. He had got high blood pressure.

Ma: This is the way of the world.No one is one's own.Nalini Brahma's son 16-17 years old. A motor bus accident and he died immediately. There is no peace without the remembrance of God. That is definite. Turn your mind towards God. There is no guarantee of what will happen the next moment.

Ma: (to Sri Hari Ram Joshi)

Husband or wife should read the Bhagawat (Srimad Bhagwat) daily and regularly. When it is finished, then commence reading it again. Five or six times. This should be a regular practice like your daily morning and evening prayers. There are no restrictions. Some times the husband reads and sometimes the wife, but on no account should there be any omission. Before your morning meals 2-4 slokas should be read.

25-12-55, New Delhi

Sri Hari Ram Joshi brought a person, who was a Doctor of Psychology.

Hari Ram: The doctor does not believe in God.

Ma: But he believes in Psychology, that is also a form of God. God has revealed the world. He himself is in everything. In His worship is all worship. He worships God in the form of no God. That is also a form of God.

To another: That is also a form of God. Call out to God alone. If peace is to be found, that is the only path. There is nothing save God. You cannot do it of your own willing. It is when God wills that you can call out to Him.

31-12-55, New Delhi

A young Bengali lady with a baby about 2 years old and her husband came complaining of heart attack and fits. Immediately seeing him Ma assures him repeatedly, "There is nothing wrong, nothing, there is no illness." On his complaining of pains in the heart region, Ma says again and again, "There is nothing. Have faith. there is nothing of this kind. You should go for a walk twice daily, swinging your arms along and don't take anyone with you. Keep telling yourself you are well, and do recite the Gayatri twice daily." He affirms he does.

Ma: Tell him to lie down flat for half an hour (*Shav Asan*) and keep telling himself he's well and to keep repeating the Gayatri Mantra.

He: But I am on sick leave.

Ma: At least try this for 7 days and then come and see me after 7 days.

ASHRAM NEWS

UTTAR KASHI

The young Brahmacharinis of the Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth, Varanasi went on tour to Uttarkashi during the last summer vacation after they had attended Shree Shree Ma's Birth Centenary celebrations at Kankhal in the first week of May, 1996. On hearing this, Maha Mandaleshwar Swami Vidyananda Giriji of the Kailash Ashram, Rishikesh also invited the Kanyapeeth group this year to the *Ganga Dashera* festival at Uttar Kashi held on 28th May.

The majesty of the snow-capped Himalayan peaks, the gorgeous yet scenic beauty of the valleys, the unfathomable mysteries of the Himalayan range have always cast a strong spell on saints, mystics, poets, trekkers and adventures. Uttarkashi is a beautiful town in the Himalayan valley particularly suitable for the seekers of spiritual enlightenment. Fenced in by high mountain lines, the valley pulsates with the sonorous stream of the Ganga, gushing speedily. The Kali temple in Shree Ma's Ashram is built right on the bank of the Ganga here. About sixty years ago Shri Bholanathji consecrated the image of goddess Kali in this temple in Ma's presence.

On the morning of 9th May, the group of the Kanyapeeth girls set out on their journey to Uttarkashi. The journey was a memorable experience for the girls. They reached Uttarkashi at about 3 p.m., escorted by revered Shri Panu Brahmachari himself.

Next morning, the girls had darshan of Vishwanath and Kedareshwara at the local temples. Each evening they enjoyed a stroll on the bank of the Ganga and also had the site seeing programmes. On 26th May, MM Swami Vidyanandaji arrived in Uttarkashi. The Kanyapeeth party attended *satsang* in the Ashram of Swamiji each afternoon. Pujya Swamiji hailed the tiny girls of the Kanyapeeth as "*Shisu Sant*" (child saints). He said, "This bank of the Ganga adjacent to the Kailash Ashram, where all the idols of Shiva, Durga, Shankaracharya and others were consecrated by Shree Ma herself. It is an occasion of great joy that the Brahmacharinis of Shree Ma's Kanyapeeth have come here."

On 27th May, special puja was offered in the name of Shree Ma at all the principal temples, such as Vishwanath temple, Sri Kedareshwar temple, Sri Ekadasha Rudra temple of the Jaipur State.

The girls made offerings of garlands, flowers, fruits, sweets, cloths, etc. Similar puja was offered to all the deities of the Kailash Ashram also. The girls were overjoyed to visit the temple of Ekadasha Rudra, where Ma herself took Her first lodging at Uttar Kashi

On 28th May, the day of the *Ganga Dasahara*, a special puja of the Ganga was arranged. It was performed at the ghat near Shree Ma's Ashram. Flowers, fruits, sweets, cloths etc were offered to Mother Ganga. The view of the holy river rolling on with roaring frothy waves expanding to the horizon stirred everyone's soul with ineffable delight. Chhabi Banerjee, the singer, who was also at Uttar Kashi with the girls sang kirtan in her melodious voice enhancing the sweetness of the atmosphere.

Ganga puja was performed with similar gaiety and grandeur also at the ghat of the Kailash Ashram. It happened to be a joint performance. Swami Vidyanandaji himself offered puja to Sri Ganga. At the end of the puja, Swami Vidyanandaji performed *arati* of Ma Ganga. The programme ended with distribution of *prasad*.

The Kanyapeeth girls went on sight-seeing accompanied by Swamiji himself to the Nehru Institute of Mountancing. They also visited the Nehru Park. A unique temple of all religions is situated on the mountain peak, where the girls had darshan of images and symbols of all religions — Shiva, Guru Nanak, Jesus Christ and so on. The temple is open to followers of all religions and sects. On the way they also saw the school established by Swami Vidyanandaji.

On 29th May, puja was performed at the Kali temple of the Ashram on behalf of the Kanyapeeth. A very special feature of the afternoon satsang was the presence of H.H. Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, President of the Divine Life Society. On arrival Swamiji was garlanded and welcomed with arati. The head of the Shankar Math and a number of sanyasis from Ramakrishna Mission were also present. The satsang began with bhajans. There was *pravachana* by the mahatmas present. The principal speaker was Swami Sri Chidanandaji. The function was concluded with stotras and *pranama mantras*.

On 30th May, the Kanyapeeth group returned to Kankhal. Swami Samvidanandaji, President of the Uttar Kashi Ashram of Shree Ma, deserves special credit for flawless arrangements and care.

VARANASI

The eighteen-day-long *Brahmasutra-Pravachana* from 17th June to 4th July, 1996 at the Varanasi Ashram was a very special event marking the holy centenary of Shree Ma. About two years back in 1994 during the *Samyam Saptaha* at Kankhal

Swami Vidyanandaji had said, "For the last so many years I have been doing *Pravachana Parayana* of 18 days duration of the *Prasthan Trayi*, that is, the Upanisads, Srimad Bhagawad Gita and the Brahmasutra. If *Parayana* is possible of the Ramayana, Srimad Bhagavata etc., I thought, then this also is possible. It has been a novel endeavour of mine."

These words of Swamiji inspired the idea in the minds of the Brahmacharinis of the Kanyapceth to avail of the opportunity of holding eighteen days' *Parayana* of the Brahmasutra by Śwami Vidyanandaji Maharaj at the Varanasi Ashram on the bank of the Ganga as part of the celebrations of Shree Ma's Birth Centenary. When requested for his kind acceptance of the proposal, Swamiji fixed the programme in the auspicious month of *Ashada* (mid June to mid July) 1996

The scheduled hours were 7.00—9.00 a.m. and 4.00—6.00 p. m. each day. The participants were entertained to *prasad* of fruits, sweets and also mid-day meals. In view of the summer heat, arrangements were made for coolers. A beautifully decorated dais was prepared for the *pravachana* in the hall of Ananda Jyoti Mandir.

Swami Vidyanandaji arrived with a group of disciples and devotees on 16th June, and was accorded welcome in the Ashram with offerings of garland and sandal paste, recital of Veda mantras and singing of kirtan.

On 17th June the inaugural function of the Brahmasutra Pravachana took place in the morning. Swami Vidyanandaji on entering Ananda Jyoti Mandir first garlanded the statues of Shree Ma, offered flowers at her feet and the volume of Brahmasutra sanctified by her touch.

The function got started with Swamiji taking his seat on the *vyasasana*. Vedic recital, garlanding of the revered speaker and inaugural song were followed by Br. Gita Banerjee's welcome speech, in which she said, " Swamiji has so graciously responded to our request and has come here inspite of the terrific heat to shower the nectar of his *pravachana*, and the sanyasins, scholars, devotees, seekers of knowledge as well as lay persons of Varanasi will be immensely benefited by it." On behalf of the citizens of Varanasi, Dr. Shree Nath Mishra, a renowned speaker on the Ramayana, made a beautiful speech in welcome of Swamiji. Prof. Shree narayan Mishra of the Benares Hindu University welcomed Swamiji on behalf of the Varanasi elite. Sri Din Dayal Jalan accorded Swamiji a cardial welcome on behalf of Shree Ma's Ashram.

At the outset Swamiji said, "By offering my obeisance at the feet of Lord. Vishwanath and Shree Ma I welcome them as my chief audience. I am

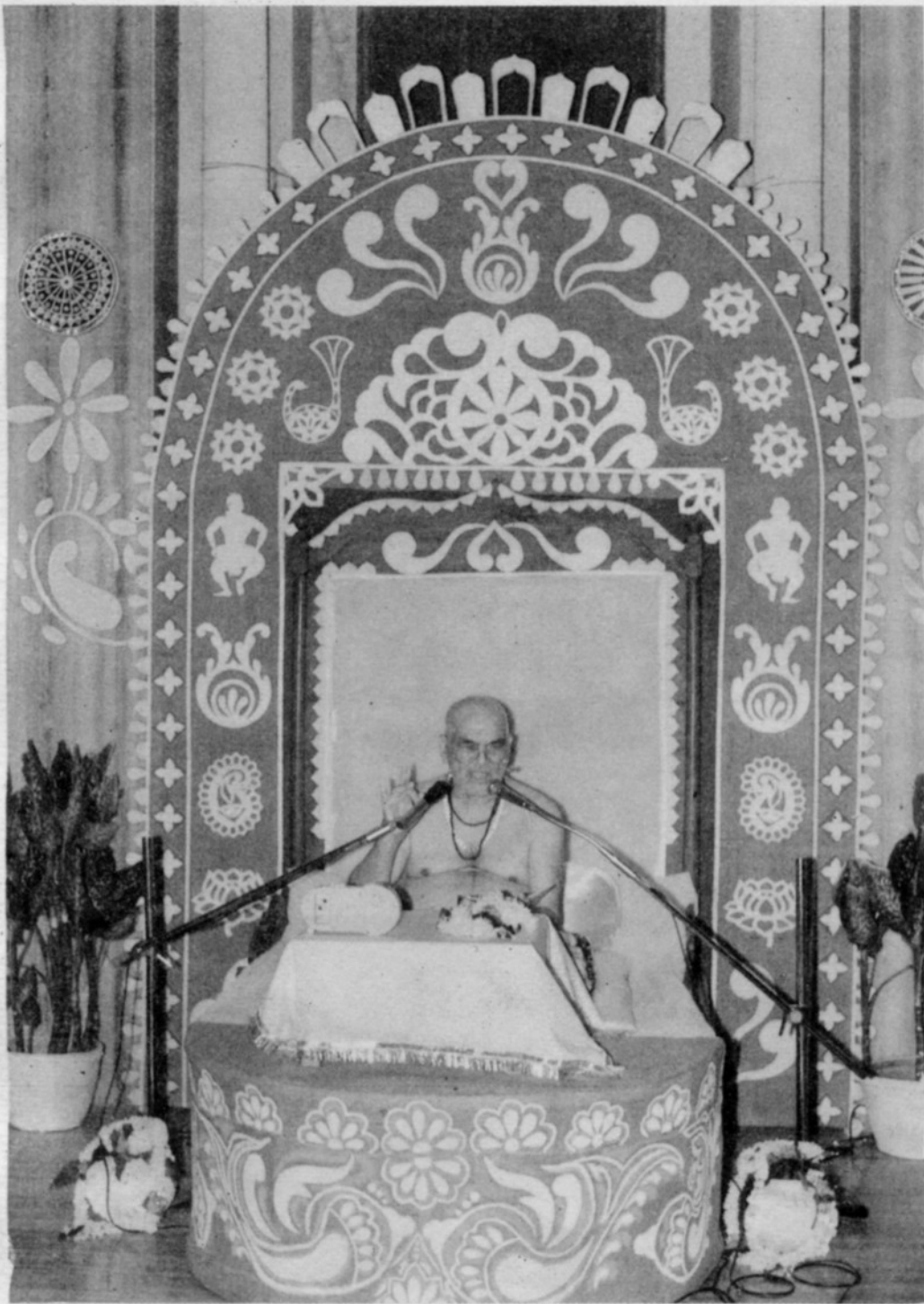


Divine image of Shree Ma installed in Kalkaji, New Delhi Ashram.



Front view of the newly-built marble temple of Ma in Kalkaji,
New Delhi Ashram.

Living image of Grace was installed in Kalkaji, New Delhi Ashram.



Mahamandaleswar Swami Vidyanandaji Maharaj of the Kailash Ashram, Rishikesh
conducting the unique 18-day long Brahmasutra
Parayana in Varanasi Ashram in June, 1996



A scene from the concluding function of the Brahmasutra Parayana programme. H.H. Maharaja Vibhuti Narain Singhji sitting on the left dais with Dr. Mandan Mishra, Vice-Chancellor, Sampurnananda Sanskrit University speaking on the microphone and Swami Vidyanandaji Maharaj on the main dais.

overwhelmed with joy to have the good fortune of reciting Brahasutra to Shree Ma and Vishwanathji on the bank of the holy Ganga. In fact this *parayana* of Brahasutra in 18 days here in Varanasi is an unprecedented event."

In his introductory comments Swamiji said, "Bhagawan Vyasa has classified the essence of the Upanisads in four chapters in this scripture for the benefit of the world. Hence this book is called *Chaturlakshani*, Brahasutra or *Shariraka Mimamsa*. *Shariraka* signifies the *Atma* who takes abode in the body - *sharira*. This holy book deals with the *Atma*. The four chapters are named as 1. *Samanvaya* (harmonization) 2. *Virodha-Parihara* (exclusion of contradictions) 3. *Sadhana* (discipline) and 4. *Phala* (result)."

Each session of *pravachana* was started and concluded with singing of hymns, prayers, recitals of Gita, Chandi, etc. performed by the Brahmacharinis of the Kanyapeeth. Two local newspapers, "Aaj" and "Dainik Jagaran" published the gist of Swamiji's *pravachana* each day. On two days the programme was shown on the T.V. City Cable. Video recording was done and photographs were also taken.

The graceful presence of Swamiji on the *Vyasasana* (dais), the girls of tender age holding copies of Brahasutra in their tiny hands, the sanyasins, scholars, devotees, all engrossed in listening to the *Pravachana*, all this reminded of the ancient Gurukala tradition of teaching and learning.

One day the well-known Mahatma of Buxar, Bihar, Shri Narayan Dasji, alias Mamaji paid a visit to the Ashram and sat for some time with the audience in the hall.

Gradually the concluding session of the *pravachana* drew near. On the last day 4th July, Swamiji said in the concluding speech : "The thread (Sutra) which runs through the utterances of the Vedanta to thread them together is called 'Brahasutra'. Those who have their ignorance totally destroyed by the knowledge of the Brahman are not subject to rebirth. They attain to *Moksha* as an uninterrupted permanent state." Recapitulating the central philosophy of Brahasutra Swamiji said, "Of each of the four chapters of Brahasutra mentioned before, there are four sections." Then Swamiji briefly dwelt upon the subject matter of each chapter (*Adhyaya*) and section (*Pada*).

Concluding his speech he said that such an exposition of all the 555 Brahasutras within just eighteen days has taken place in Varanasi for the first time by the grace of Ma. He offered his pranama to Shree Ma and Lord Vishwanath.

Many eminent persons of Varanasi assembled in the concluding session of the *parayana*. Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narayan Singhji, Dr. Mandan Mishra, Vice-

Chancellor, Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, Prof. Vishwanath Bhattacharya, Ex-Head, Department of Sanskrit, B.H.U were some of the illustrious personalities present.

In his comment on the *pravachana*, Dr. Mandan Mishra said, "We have been extremely fortunate to have Swamiji's presence here in Varanasi, the city of learning. He has indeed enhanced the reputation of the city by his adept exposition of the Brahmasutra. Swamiji is an incarnation of spiritual discipline and renunciation; besides his dedication to learning and the art of teaching, which he has demonstrated here, are like those of any excellent professor. A Guru in the line of Sri Shankaracharya, he has preserved the tradition of learning and teaching of Brahma-vidya. In eighteen days he has taught us the Brahmasutra like an ideal teacher. On behalf of the Maharaja of Benares, the citizens of Varanasi and on behalf of Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth, affiliated to Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, I express deep gratitude and extend congratulation to Swamiji.

"There is no better place like the bank of the Ganga; no better occasion than the Birth Centenary of Shree Ma and no speaker as great as Swami Vidyanandaji. There who have taken a dip in this *Triveni Sangam*, the confluence of these three holy currents, are really very fortunate."

Prof. Vishwanath Bhattacharya said, "Kashi is so called for the power of granting illumination. The exposition of Brahmasutra in Kashi is as novel an event as it is befitting."

On behalf of the Kanyapeeth, the Principal Br. Jaya Bhattacharya and two senior teachers, Br. Guneeta and Br. Gita expressed gratitude and regards to Swamiji.

At the end of the function, Swamiji was garlanded in the midst of Vedic recital and token offerings were made to Swamiji. Eighteen small girls of the Kanyapeeth performed "*arati*" of Swamiji with eighteen plates decked with burning lamps.

A sadhu bhandara was arranged to mark the conclusion of the function. The same day in the afternoon, Swami Vidyanandaji Maharaj left with his party for Rajgir.

The Varanasi Ashram has also duly observed the *Jhulanotsava* on 28th August and Shree Krishna Janmastami on 4th September, 96 in the Ananda Jyoti Mandir.

ALLAHABAD

The Satya Gopal Ashram at Allahabad, established by Sri Gopal Thakurji, has an old association with Shree Ma and is replete with her memories. Almost each and every year Ma used to visit this Ashram for three days.

On the holy occasion of the centenary of Shree Ma, a colourful function was held at the Satya Gopal Ashram and a special Durga Puja was also performed in the autumn last year. During the whole centenary year different programmes were held at various places of Allahabad by the Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee, Allahabad.

A special function took place on the day of the Guru Purnima, on 30th July 1996, at the Satya Gopal Ashram, in which a Souvenir entitled "*Ananda Samsmriti*" was released. The souvenir contains articles in Hindi, Bengali and English. The articles highlight different aspects of Shree Ma's life and lila.

Inaugurating the function, Justice Palok Basu, a staunch devotee of Shree Ma, welcomed the participants. The credit for the successful function goes to the ex-Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, Sri Amitav Banerjee. Shree Ma's Ashram was represented by Sri Panu Brahmachari, who also released the souvenir at the request of the organizers and participants.

The function was begun and concluded with devotional songs presented by Kalyanidi, daughter of Sri Gopal Thakur, who also looks after the said ashram.