

MA ANANDAMAYEE

AMRIT VARTA

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

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CONTENTS

1.	Matri Vani	1
2.	Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Prasang	3
	- Prof. A.K. Dutta Gupt	
3.	Mother as Revealed to Me	5
	- Bhaiji	
4.	Pilgrimage to Kailas	7
5.	Svakriya Svarasamrita	10
6.	'Tis Midnight	12
	- Mohua	
7.	List of Festivals	14
8.	Body Type	15
	- Dr. Kavita Vyas	
9.	Children's Pages	21
10.	Ya Devi Sarvabhuteshu	24
	- Dr. Premlata Srivastava	
11.	Ashram Varta	30

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MATRI VANI

Question : What should we do for realizing God?

Ma - To have yearning; one who is *vyakul* (full of yearning) - one who is lying on the river bank (*kul*) will attain (God-realization).

Question - Why do desires create (worldly objects)?

Ma - The ego (*ahankara*) is creating (worldly objects). God is the only Truth (other objects are products of *Maya*). If the pot is kept upside down, it (God's grace) flows away. (If the mind is turned away from God, His grace is not received). What is karma - it is the ego (the idea - "I am doing"). The nature of a creature is to say "I, I". Those who believe in karma say that karma produces suffering (but) God has not produced karma (He is not responsible for our suffering). Children of Amrita (Immortality) - that is what all creatures are. If you talk of srishti, there is srishti; if you talk of yearning, there is yearning - the pull (towards God) is eternal. (The pull is) of oneself towards one's Self. If you believe in karma, there is karma, there are vasana-karmana (cravings and desires). That is svabhava (nature)- the svabhava of a creature (to have cravings, to act as one desires and undergo the consequences). Where there are birth and death - the pot is upside down; where there is birth, there is death (The nectar of immortality flows away, hence the cycle of birth-death - rebirth is sustained) - that is - the pot is reversed. Who pulls you (towards the world)? Drive away what is pulling you (away from God). Drive that away and meditate on God again and again. Do japa and meditation with all your might; wherever you are, whatever you may be doing, while eating and drinking, while moving here and there, keep remembering (God). Days are passing, apply force now - do a lot of japa-dhyana.

* * *

Baba-re-habr (oh, oh), this is called the world - tan-man-pran (the body, the mind, the soul). Sometimes it is the body that gets attention. Nowadays, money has become



important. Dharma is getting diminished. Dharma is low, money is high - this is the nature of the world. Have forbearance, apart from that there is no way out.

* * *

That which is within is also without. The fight takes place, the fight is going on, and the fight is over - everything takes place within. That which is at the root (mula) is also in the gross (Sthula) world. If something is not there at the root, how can it be manifested in the gross? The free is hidden in the seed, that is why it (the tree) manifests.

* * *

Keep doing japa in your mind and keep doing meditation; do not tell it to anyone.

* * *

He who has created (the world), will he go out in search of it? No such question arises at all ! And (to talk about) vasana-kamana (cravings and desires), it is the cause of bhoga (experiencing pleasures and pains). If you set out in search of the cause - what is (the cause)? This question, this karma (of attributing your suffering to God's will) - that is (the cause of) sorrow. Who has created (pleasures and pains)? If you ponder (the question) you'll find there is no creator of karma. There is no one other than God - no question of "true" and "false". Go on seeking - (you'll find) there is no maker of karma - He within Himself - nothing else !

* * *

Where there are birth and death, there is (the manifestation of) your karma. Only here (within the sphere of birth and death) are pleasure and pain, darkness; (but) there (in God) is no question of pleasure, pain or karma - He within Himself. The Lord and His servant. It is His nature - (to be attentive) towards His offspring - towards His servant, progeny. In the realm of the senses, people go in search (of God) taking along with them all these (the karma and namaskaras of life and death). No one is searching - no question of that, no question of birth and death - one who understands this (realizes that) for the end of your suffering, God has devised this path (of knowledge). Look, there is no question of happiness and sorrow.

* * *

SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG

-Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

Vol – V

(Continued)

Is there any memory of ignorance after the attainment of knowledge?

It was dusk. The chill had increased. We were feeling cold, so we went to the hall and sat down there. Shankarananda Swamiji of our Ashram asked me to raise the question of this morning. I told Swamiji that the discussion would not go on well in the midst of such a crowd of people. Swamiji told Ma what I was thinking. Ma said, "Well, if the topic is raised, discussion may take place".

I said, "Ma, this topic cannot be successfully discussed at this moment. I shall put my question to you at some other time".

Ma replied, "Alright. But it can be discussed now as much as possible".

I found that all the people gathered there were eager to hear a discussion on my topic. Hence I said to Ma, "Then please reply to my question put to you this morning".

Ma - On the rise of knowledge, whether there is the memory of the state of ignorance- this was your question, isn't it so?

Me - Yes.

Ma - (To Shankarananda Swamiji) Well, Baba, does the memory of ignorance remain?

Shankarananda Swamiji - It cannot remain, for memory is a vritti (repetitive function) of the chitta (mind including conscious and subconscious levels); how can there be knowledge while the chittavrittis are still there?

Me - Well, is it not possible? The moon is there but it is not always visible. Suppose, the clouds had it covered; as the clouds dispersed, the moon was revealed. In the same way, the knowledge is always there. It is not felt due to ignorance; as soon as ignorance is gone, knowledge is revealed.

Swamiji presented a number of arguments. I could not understand all of them. But on the whole it was understood that when there is the dawn of knowledge, the person

is question does not have the cognizance of space or time nor the memory of the past. In the opinion of Swamiji, *videha mukti* (liberation after death) is the only true liberation; there is nothing like *jivan mukti* (liberation during life). At that moment Paramananda Swamiji came. Shree Shree Ma put the same question to him also. He too expressed a view similar to that of Shankarananda Swamiji. A long debate followed. I also took part in it but that is not worth mentioning. The discussion continued for some time; then the *pâth* began. Shankarananda Swamiji left before the beginning of the *pâth*. Ma asked me, "Will you also go now"? I said, "Yes, Ma, I am also leaving".

"It is difficult to comprehend the *bhâva* of this body".

Recitation of the *Shânti Parva* of the *Mahâbhârata* took place. It seemed the *pâth* did not take more than half an hour. Immediately as the *pâth* ended, the lights of the hall were switched off. I do not stay here during the night session of the *pâth*, so I was a bit surprised as the were turned off. Afterwards I could understand that the time for *mauna* (silence) had started. We were about fifteen to twenty persons in the hall; all of us began to meditate in silence with eyes shut. It was my first experience of doing meditation in this manner in Ma's presence. I could not meditate with concentration; the philosophical debate which had taken place just before that kept haunting my mind and creating agitation. Even then I enjoyed the moment to some extent due to the novelty of the situation.

Suddenly, breaking the silence, Bhupen began to sing in a soft voice:

"He Bhagavân, He Bhagavân, He Bhagavân! Ineya Bhagavân, Dhyeya Bhagavân, Shreya Bhagavân, Preya Bhagavân!"

(O God, whom we seek to know, on whom we meditate, God the Good, God the Beloved!)

While listening to this song, I felt as if we were all sitting in front of God and singing this song to Him. The profundity and sweetness of the song held our minds fixed on God for some time. When the song was completed, we bowed down to Ma and immediately the lights were turned on again. Perhaps today's programme was completed in this manner. We got up from our seats. Shree Shree Ma also got up and proceeded towards the upper storey.

(to be continued)

* * *

MOTHER AS REVEALED TO ME

- Bhajji

I took up Her suggestion and came to the conclusion that a song in Bengali would have a better appeal to a Bengali congregation than a Sanskrit one. Inspired by Her, the following song took shape one night at about 3 A.M.

The translation of the song is given below :-

Glory to Thee, Sri Anandamayi Ma, eternal holy dweller of the heart!

Thy luster, Mother Nirmala, illumines the universe, heavenly virtues radiate from Thee, O Mother.

Queen of divine glory, Gouri, *svâhâ*, *Om* art Thou O Mother.

Divinely graceful, Thou art absolute Reality, supremely beautiful and perfect, O Mother.

Sun and moon adorn Thy countenance, the boundless sky crowns Thy head, the whole universe is Thy glorious form, O Mother.

The luster of worldly riches art Thou, sweetness incarnate, radiant with splendor, O Mother.

Thou art charming as Lakshmi is to Vishnu, Thou art peace, tranquillity and mercy; all gods and goddesses emanate from Thee, O Mother.

Grantjour of happiness and benediction, bestower of love, wisdom and liberation art Thou, O Mother.

Bringing forth the world, Thou it is who nurses and preserves and finally draws it back into Thyself.

The very life of Thy devotees art Thou, Grace incarnate, Saviour of the three worlds, O Mother.

The soul of all mantras art Thou, the revealer of the Vedas, pervading the whole universe, O Mother.

Thou art with forms and qualities, yet also formless and beyond all description; aglow with love and bliss, O Mother.

Thrilled by Thy touch, the entire universe, animate and inanimate, ever sings Thy praises, sweet Mother.

Let us all unite and from our hearts offer obeisance at Thy holy feet; hail, hail and again hail to Thee, Mother.

On the way to new life

Since my first meeting with Sri Sri Ma, Her ever joyful, simple and soothing countenance cast such an ineffable charm over my life that even in the midst of various distractions and excitements through which I passed, I came to forget all my worries and temptations. There was only one consuming desire – to obtain a particle of Her Grace. Like the upward surging waves of the ocean, there was a deep outburst from my heart, roaring day and night towards Her feet and drowning all the tumults of the world. At times if I could shout 'Ma Ma' like a madman and shed tears for Her and sing Her glory, I would find great relief. But such opportunities I hardly got in my home.

As I had seen in Sri Ma's physical body various unprecedented *bhāvas*, I was struck with joy and wonder in Her presence. Before Her I came to feel that I was but an infant or an almost helpless, poor beggar, absolutely unfit to sit at Her feet. In fact in my whole life I never sat down in Her presence. I always used to stand at a distance. Every morning I was fortunate enough to have the first *darśana* of Her feet, because very few people could go to the Ashram so early. On some mornings I found Ma sitting idly on one side of Her bed with all the languor of sleep still over Her eyelids. Sometimes Her bright eyes and sweet face seemed to radiate motherly affection and grace profusely on all men; on other occasions Her looks at dawn wore all the serenity and grace of a lovely autumn sky in the morning, infinitely bright, yet quite isolated from the things of the world.

(to be continued)

* * *

PILGRIMAGE TO KAILAS

- Gurupriya Devi

(Continued)

Thursday, August 8

As we expected rain by evening, we planned to set out early, but as it was getting so late every night by the time we finished eating we decided to eat before we started. It began raining as we set out at eleven a.m. By three p.m. it was raining heavily. We were heading towards Beninag ten miles away. Thal had a shop and a post office but Beninag has a dispensary with a doctor in attendance; there are also a couple of shops where we hope to purchase some essential items.

We reached Beninag at three p.m. and halted at a school. As soon as Ma reached, a holiday was declared and the school premises were vacated for Ma's stay. The headmaster told Ma, "Ma, you can stay here for as long as you like - I can run the school elsewhere". The doctor was sent for. He examined the patient and arranged for medicines and a suitable diet. The fever was less but Jyotish Dada was suffering because of the strain of the journey. It was still raining. We tried to make a pillow. We heard that pillows here are not made of cottonwool - they pack rags into a pillow case - a similar one was made. We spent the night here.

Friday, August 9

As it was raining in the morning we could not set out. We were supposed to travel miles to a place called Ganai but as the patient was very weak our departure was postponed. We were progressing very slowly so that we were uncertain about the day our journey was going to terminate. Meanwhile it was difficult to make the coolies to halt indefinitely so Dasu Dada, Tunu and some others took some of the luggage and started on their way to Almora; the rest of us stayed on in the school at Beninag. One of Ma's devotees from Dehradun had come here to inspect his land. He found out Ma's whereabouts and came for her darshan. He also arranged for today's lunch. There is not much space to cook; firewood is also scarce, yet he managed to organize the cooking despite these odds. I cooked rice on a stove and everyone ate. Many people came for Ma's darshan.

Saturday, August 10

We set out in the morning. As the *dandies* had been sent with Tunu and Dasu, Bholanath and I rode horses. It rained heavily on the way so that all of us, including Ma and Swamiji who were seated inside *dandies*, were drenched to the skin. Only the patient's *dandi* was carried with great care so that he would not be further harmed by the inclement weather. Around two thirty p.m. we reached the dak bungalow at Ganai.

No one had a chance to even sip water on the way - each one of us was thoroughly bathed. Not only was Swamiji bare - chested, even his remaining clothes were wet. As the coolies would arrive with our luggage much late, we had no dry clothes to change into. Swamiji's health was also indifferent, but what else could be done? A shop nearby sold bedsheets; two were purchased and brought for Ma and Swamiji. Swamiji wrapped himself in one sheet but Ma refused to use it and let the wet clothes dry on her body. The rain continued incessantly and grew worse in the night. We completed our meal only at night. The patient continued to remain in the same condition.

Sunday, August 11

In the morning the patient was given some food after which we set out, travelling twelve miles to reach a place called Kenera where we halted in another forest bungalow. Today there were intermittent drizzles which alternated with very strong sunshine. After we had covered quite some distance we sat in the shade of a tree to await the arrival of the *dandi* which had been left far behind.

The Kali Ganga flowed past; I sat on the bank, writing. Ma now eats only once a day and then she does not take anything except water. From the second day of our arrival at Dharchula Ma has maintained this schedule - for the last ten days or so. From the last four or five days she has even stopped changing her clothes and is attired in the same *dhoti* and *kurti* that she had worn so many days ago. On the day we reached Beninag. We got drenched and though we requested her to change out of her wet clothes she refused. All of us possessed only two *dhotis* each so we purchased a new *dhoti* for Ma but she refused to relinquish her old one. She also continued to wear the same *kurti* - she would not change that even after being requested to do so. Today after we departed from Ganai, Ma made all arrangements for Jyotish Dada and set him off on the journey before getting into her *dandi*, after which she stopped

speaking. At that moment I did not take notice of that. After travelling some distance the coolies halted for rest. Ma went to Jyotish Dada's *dandi* and arranged his bedding; Swamiji then noticed that she had stopped speaking. As soon as we came back to our horses Swamiji informed about this. When Ma stops speaking she does not make signs either. Ma's speech had stopped after a very long time and I found it very difficult. The patient's diet and treatment were being carried out according to Ma's instructions and his care was supervised by her. She sat on her small blanket by the head of the patient, day in and day out. In between she would lie down at the same spot.

Ma's countenance had undergone a sudden change, her speech and smile had almost completely vanished. She had been speaking only what was required to be spoken in connection with the patient's care. Now that she stopped speaking I had to think of what to do, what to feed him, all on my own. I felt forlorn as she had stopped speaking. The real matter was that Ma had assumed the natural role of the mother with a sick child. Ma performs every *lila* to perfection. Why should she leave this *lila* incomplete? No job performed by Ma has any shortcoming. As Ma started observing *mauna*, I had to make all arrangement for Jyotish Dada. Only three miles to go for the day. At four p.m. we reached the bungalow; it was again late night by the time we finished eating.

Monday, August 12

We shall go five miles and halt at a dak bungalow in Dhaulchina. We set out. Almora is only thirteen miles away. As there was no other suitable place to halt in any further, we stayed here for the night.

(to be continued)

* * *



Shree Shree Durga Devi, Durga Kund



Main Entrance of the Durga Temple, Durga Kund



Durga Temple, Durga Kund, Varanasi

SVAKRIYA SVARASAMRITA

(continued)

‘HOW IS IT THAT ONE CAN WORRY?’ - MA

Shortly after Ma had joined the family of Bholanath, both he and his next elder brother, Suren Babu, lost their jobs. Ma was, then, at Sripur with her eldest sister-in-law. Suren Babu was, of course, later re-employed. In Bholanath's service, a dangerous situation developed – a lawsuit was filed and even the fear of imprisonment was there. Bholanath's father was alive at that time. Many of the family members remained anxious and were almost on the point of giving up food and sleep, as none knew what news would be received. Bholanath's father and Revati Babu – all were shuttling back and forth to Dacca. As for Ashu's mother, she sometimes reprimanded Ma, shouting, “What an irony of fate is this, what ill-luck has befallen the poor fellow! And see here, is there the least worry or anxiety (in Her)?” Continuing, she asked Ma, “What sort of a person are you? Could you realize the situation? Look, this is what has happened!” Ma was called, so she came and had to wait a little standing. After standing and listening to what was told to Her, She said, “Now, may I go back to work?” What She was, the same She remained. The moment She was told, “Go”, She left the place.

In this context, once much later, Ma was saying, “To worry, how is it that one can worry! Here, there is only this *bhava*”.

UNVARYING TRANQUILLITY TRIUMPHS OVER SARCASM

Later on, although the issue in Bholanath's case was settled, he lost his job. Revati Babu and his wife often discussed Ma - is *Sejabau* an idiot or nitwit? It does not appear that She understands anything, even a little, and is devoid of any sense. Just see, She does not have any worry and is always contented with Her own work. Sometimes, when Ashu's father was in the room, Ma would have her veil on. At that time, supposing Ashu's mother told Ma, “There is that particular thing, just look for it”. Ma would, then, look only (downwards) through the available opening with the veil on and not see through the cloth of the veil, because, in the latter case, her eyes would fall on the faces of all men and women, and that would be wrong behavior.

For this reason, if anyone noticed the way Ma then moved about, he would think of Her as an idiot. But looking at Her aspect of obedience, all loved Her and could not help having respect and affection for Ma.

Ashu's father lived like a prince; he even developed diabetes. In the rural way of thinking, when a bride joins a family, she is blamed if any misfortune that befalls the household. For instance, such was the saying that went round, "As the bride comes in the house, sand falls in the pot of Chhattu (fried gram or barley powder)". As a result, one can easily imagine how the feelings of brides were hurt. Whoever stayed near, that person alone had to put up with all such words (flung out at her). Ma was the only one who stayed a little longer with them. Sometimes, supposing she (Ashu's mother) continued accusing (Ma) in that vein for some time, it would be seen that eventually a feeling of affection had arisen in her, as if nothing at all was left in her mind - as though she had never spoken anything blaming Ma in the least - a beautiful good feeling. Bholanath felt that as his wife had to be left for her maintenance with his elder brother, he being himself out of employment, it would be not right, in those circumstances, for him to remain himself too as another dependant on his brother. With this consideration, he stayed in Dacca and moving about to different places, kept looking for a job. Sometimes he went to the houses of his other relations too.

Aggravation of Revati Babu's illness continued. He went to Dacca for treatment, taking all of them with him.

The treatment in Dacca did not help him much and as such he went to Kolkata. Later, he came back to Dacca and then went to Atpara (his own village), taking all others with him. He became a little better with the *Ayurvedic* (Indian system of medicine) treatment there.

(to be continued)

* * *

'TIS MIDNIGHT

-Mohua

'Tis midnight, the time of your arrival.

The cool breeze whispering softly, ears strain to hear the sweet melody

The trees waiting still, yet eager to dance merrily

In the soft white radiance of moon letting itself fall on them timidly.

'Tis midnight, the time of your arrival.

A tiny ant crawling silently, feeling its way in the dim surrounding.

A bat flying past, the wings ruffling up the breeze for a moment,

Fade into the branches rising above, veiling itself after the act.

'Tis midnight, the time of your arrival.

The clouds floating far above, stay close and loose

Forming shapes and silhouettes against the blank canvas beyond.

Some dark, some a shade lighter, blending together to feel the warmth.

'Tis midnight, the time of your arrival.

Life seems to hold its breath, restless to reach the awaited moment

The souls in a dream severe settle in silence,

Speak volumes of prayers in supplication of your alighting.

'Tis midnight, the time of your arrival.

Time seems to stop still, yet ticking away abidingly,

Each moment seems to hold its ecstasy to welcome its younger kin.

The trees swaying meekly, seeking hard to confine their merriment

Hold themselves in their branches, feigning to be calm
'Tis midnight, the time of your arrival.

Clouds gathering on their path, yet floating in exuberance,
The dampness gripping them high above
The mist whispering with the sky, its yearning to shower in exhilaration
'Tis midnight, the time of your arrival.

The moon creeping tenderly behind the scattered shades, baffled in its own gait
Ambling boldly, peeking stealthily a moment later
A calmness unfurled, enwrapping every moment in its luster
'Tis midnight, the time of your arrival.

The tiny speck seems deeper than the dawning tone, crawling and clinging on its
untold path
Grapple to hold on to the obstacle in its way
To move over and ahead toward the pull from its shade
'Tis midnight, the time of your arrival.

Time grows restless, to usher in the moment.
'Tis the time now, You have arrived.
To bless the souls, to the merriment of the majestic foliage
To be joyous in the joy of the floating fleecy patches
To lead the fumbling ant with your hand, to make your utterances and the prayers
into one
'Tis midnight, the time of your arrival,
'Tis the moment, you have arrived.

* * *

List of Festivals

1. Shree Shree Samyam Saptah Mahavrata - 28th October – 5th November, 2017.
2. Shree Shree Jagaddhatripuja - 29th October, 2017.
3. Raspoornima - 3rd November, 2017
4. Geeta Jayanti - 26th November – 29th November, 17.
5. Makar Sankranti - 14th January, 2018.
6. Shree Shree Saraswati Puja - 22nd January, 2018.
7. Maghi Poomima - 31st January, 2018.
8. Mahashivaratri - 28th February, 2018.
9. Holika Dahan - 28th February, 2018.
10. Holi Mahotsav - 1st March, 2018.

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NOTICE

At a meeting of the Governing Body of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, it was decided to raise the rate of the annual subscription for Amrit Varta from Rs. 100/- to Rs. 300/- w.e.f. January 2018 in order to ensure that the subscribers duly receive the issues of Amrit Varta. The corporation of the honorable subscribers is solicited.

☆☆

Body Type (Prakriti)

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The basic constitution of each individual is determined at conception. At the time of fertilization, the single male unit, the spermatozoa unites with the single female element, the ovum. At the moment of this union, the constitution of the individual is determined by the combinations of bodily air (vata), fire (pitta) and water (Kapha) that manifest in the parents' bodies. Whichever doshas are dominant in the parent's bodies at that time that becomes the body type of a child in the mother's womb.

In general there are seven types of constitutions;

1. Vata, 2. Pitta, 3. Kapha, 4. Pitta-Vata, 5. Pitta-Kapha, 6. Vata-Kapha and 7. Vata-Pitta-Kapha.

Among these seven general types of constitutions, there are innumerable subtle variations that depend upon the percentage of vata-pitta-kapha elements in the constitutions. The constitution is called *prakriti* in Sanskrit, a term meaning 'nature', or creativity. In the body the first expression of the basic five elements is the constitution. The basic constitution of the individual remains unaltered during the life time. Among these seven general types of constitutions, there are innumerable subtle variations that depend upon the percentage of vata-pitta-kapha elements in the constitutions.

One Dosha Body Type

Vata-Constitution (Vata Body type)

People of vata-constitution are generally **physically** underdeveloped. Their chests are flat and their veins and muscle tendons are visible. The complexion is brown; the skin is cold, rough, dry and cracked. Vata people are generally too tall or too short, with thin frame which reveal prominent joints and bone ends because of poor muscle development.

Physiologically the appetite and digestion are variable. Vata people crave for sweet, sour and salty tastes, and like hot drinks. The production of urine is scanty and the faeces are dry, hard, small in quantity. They have a tendency to perspire less than other constitution types. Their hands and feet are often cold. Vata people are creative, active, alert and restless. They talk fast and walk fast but they are easily fatigued.

Psychologically, they are characterized by short memory but quick mental understanding. They will understand something immediately, but will soon forget it.

They have little will power, tend toward mental instability and possess little tolerance, confidence or boldness. Their reasoning power is weak and these people easily get nervous, fearful and afflicted by much anxiety. Each constitutional type also exhibits certain patterns in interaction with the external environment. Vata people tend to earn money quickly and also to spend it quickly. Thus they tend to remain poor.

Vata people are highly susceptible to external influences and react quickly to changes in their circumstances. Change in all things at all times is typical; one minute they desire company and a moment later need solitude. They seem unwilling to adopt any pattern in their daily existence, to the extent that they seldom finish what they start. Many of their decisions and emotions arise from feelings of uncertainty.

Pitta-Constitution (Pitta Body Type)

Physically these people are of medium height, are slender and their body frame may be delicate. Their chests are not as flat as those of vata people and they show a medium prominence of veins and muscle tendons. They may have many moles or freckles which are bluish or brownish red. The bones are not as prominent as in the vata individual. Muscle development is moderate.

The pitta complexion is fair. The skin is soft, warm and less wrinkled than vata skin. Their eyes may be gray, green or copper brown and with sharp eye sight; the eye balls will be of medium prominence. The conjunctiva is moist and copper colored. The nails are soft. The shape of the nose is sharp and the tip tends to be reddish.

Physiologically, these people have a strong metabolism, good digestion and strong appetites. The person of pitta constitution usually takes large quantities of food and liquid. Pitta types have a natural craving for sweet, bitter and astringent tastes and enjoy cold drinks. Their sleep is of medium duration but uninterrupted. They produce

a large volume of urine and the faeces are yellowish, soft and plentiful. There is a tendency toward excessive perspiring. The body temperature may run slightly high and hands and feet will tend to be warm. Pitta people do not tolerate sunlight, heat or hard work.

Psychologically, pitta people have a good power of comprehension; they are very intelligent and sharp and tend to be good orators. They have emotional tendencies toward hate, anger and jealousy. They are ambitious people who generally like to be leaders. Pitta people appreciate material prosperity and they tend to be moderately well off financially. They enjoy exhibiting their wealth and luxurious possessions. Pragmatic, clear and powerful in their actions and emotions. Pitta characters can become domineering. Their passionate nature leads to reliable enthusiasm and commitment. Their everything has a purpose, including their friendships. Passion may run so high that they are intolerant of any one, who gets in their way, not hesitating to burn them if it suits their purpose.

Kapha-Constitution (Kapha Body Type)

Physically - People of kapha constitution have well developed bodies. There is however, a strong tendency for these individuals to carry excess weight. Their chest is expanded and broad. The veins and tendons of kapha people are not obvious because of their thick skin and their muscle development is good. The bones are not prominent.

The complexions are fair and bright. The skin is soft, lustrous and oily; it is also cold and pale. The hair is thick, dark, soft and wavy. The eyes are dense and black or blue; the white of the eye is generally very white, large and attractive. The conjunctiva does not tend to redness.

Physiologically kapha people have regular appetites, the digestion functions relatively slowly and there is less intake of food. They tend to move slowly. They crave for pungent, astringent and bitter tastes. Stools are soft and may be pale in color; evacuation is slow. Their perspiration is moderate. Sleep is sound and prolonged.

There is a strong vital capacity evidenced by good stamina and kapha people are generally healthy, happy and peaceful.

Psychologically they tend to be tolerant, calm, forgiving and loving; however they also exhibit traits of greed, attachment, envy and possessiveness. Their comprehension is slow but definite. Once they understand something, that knowledge is retained.

Kapha people tend to be wealthy; they earn money and are good at holding on to it. Kapha individuals are on the whole calm, peaceful and reliable. People who are most at ease in the cozy environment of home. However these people usually have personalities that are rock solid, so stable that they may appear to be inactive in both mind and body.

Two Dosha Body Type

Pitta-Vata Type

People with this body type tend to have a medium build. They are stronger and muscular. Pitta-Vatas are quick in their movements, have good stamina and are often assertive. Pitta intensity is obvious in them, vata's lightness is present but less so, they have stronger digestion and more regular elimination than vatas. They used to welcome challenge and tackle problems enthusiastically and often aggressively. Pitta-vata type may experience a tendency toward fear and anger, the negative emotions of the two doshas. If they are out of balance and under stress, this combination makes them tense, hard driven and insecure.

Pitta-Kapha Type

Kapha is such a strong structural element that it tends its thick, heavier physique to two dosha types, even when it does not come first. Pitta-Kapha is generally recognizable because they have pitta intensity their manner and a solid kapha body. They are more muscular than pitta-vatas and may even be quite bulky. Their personalities may demonstrate kapha stability, but pitta force, complete with a tendency toward anger and criticism is usually far more evident than anything like kapha serenity.

This is a particularly good body type for athletes since it gives pitta's energy and drive to kapha's endurance. This type finds it hard to miss a meal. The combination of strong pitta digestion and kapha resistance generally gives excellent physical health.

Vata-Kapha Type

Unlike vatas, who are always in motion, vata-kaphas project a sense of inner stability; they tend to be even tempered but can show vata's alarmed reactions under stress. This type tends to be even tempered but can show vata's alarmed reactions under stress. This type tends to be quick and efficient when action is called for, but they are aware of their kapha tendency to procrastinate. The desire to store and save

may also be present. Since both doshas are cold, they tend to strongly dislike cold weather. Their cold doshas can also give them irregular or slow digestion.

Three Dosha Type

Three dosha type is sometimes said to start off with the best chance for remaining a balance, because the ratio of vata, pitta and kapha is nearly even. A true *sandosh* prakriti (Balanced dosha body type) will tend to have lifelong good health, ideal immunity and longevity. On the other hand it is also held that once imbalances start to occur, three dosha types have to pay attention to getting all three back into line.

Mental Constitutions

On the mental and astral planes, three attributes or *gunas* correspond to the three humors (*doshas*) that make up the physical constitution. In the ayurvedic system of medicine, these three *gunas* provide the basis for distinction in human temperament and individual difference in psychological and moral dispositions. The three basic *gunas* are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

Seven different mental types can be ascertained for each humour (like the seven physical humoral types) these are pure *sattva*, pure *rajas*, pure *tamas*, *sattva-rajas*, *sattva-tamas*, *rajas-tamas* and all three in equal proportion. Totally pure *sattva* (*Shuddha sattva*) gives enlightenment.

Sattva-

Sattva expresses essence, understanding, purity, clarity, compassion and love. People of *sattvic* temperament have healthy bodies and their behavior and consciousness are very pure. They believe in the existence of God and are religious and often very holy people.

Rajas-

Rajas implies movement, aggressiveness and extroversion. The *rajas* mind operates on a sensual level. Individuals of a *rajas* temperament are interested in business, prosperity, power, prestige and position. They enjoy wealth and are generally extroverted. They may believe in God but they also may have sudden changes of belief. They are very political.

Tamas-

Tamas manifests in ignorance, inertia, heaviness and dullness. *Tamasic* people are lazy, selfish and capable of destroying others. They generally have little respect for others and are not religious. All their activities are egotistical.

The person of *sattvic* temperament attains self realization without much effort while *rajasic* and *tamasic* types must make more effort to attain this state.

Dietetics and Regimen for Autumn Season (Sharada Ritu)

As persons become habitual to the cold wheather of rainy season, when in autumn the rays of the sun becomes more clear and hot the pitta accumulated in raily season aggravates in autumn.

- One should take sweet and less spicy food, which is light to digest.
- The food should be cool in effect which can subside the pitta.
- All people should eat barley rice and wheat. Milk is also good to take in this season.
- In this season one can have *Haritaki churnam* (*Terminalia Chebula*) 5 gm. with long pepper powder, it has rejuvenation effect.
- One can take Ghritam medicated with bitter herbs and can undergo Virechana process (detail of this process given in the Panchakarm chapter) so the accumulated pitta can be eliminated from the body.
- One should avoid sitting in sunshine.
- One should avoid taking oil, fats, curds and spicy food
- One should also avoid day sleeping and the eastern wind. The water heated by sun light and in the night cooled by the moon is called as *hansodaka* (the pure water). It is best for drinking and other purposes.
- It is good to stay in moon light in this season.

* * *

CHILDREN'S PAGES

SATSANG - THE SOURCE OF ALL WISDOM

Once there lived a king. One day it occurred to his mind: People very often say it is all God's doings, but where does God live? What does He eat? When does He laugh and what does He do? From then these four questions pestered him.

After much deliberation the king decided to call an assembly of learned people (pandits) and ask them to answer his questions. He also declared a reward for the answer which would satisfy him.

Accordingly, announcements were made throughout his state and he also declared the date for the assembly.

Pandits began to arrive from far and near and tried to answer the question of the king, but nobody's reply could please him. Days passed on, the crowd also went on increasing. Everyday innumerable people passed through the lanes of the city to reach the king's court.

Now, there was a farmer who while working in the field daily marked many people coming and going to the city. Seeing them he wondered as to what was the matter going on in the city.

One day he asked some people about it. Being told that a big assembly of pandits was going on in the king's palace the farmer also expressed his desire to join the assembly. "What will you do there? The assembly is for learned people to solve very difficult questions of the king," said the people. The farmer out of curiosity asked, "May I know what the questions are?"

The people began to taunt and laugh at him saying. "Do you think yourself to be a pandit? The king has asked four questions. They are, where does God live? What does He eat? When does He laugh and what does he do? Oh, Panditji, have you even followed the questions?" saying this the people again started ridiculing him.

But the farmer paying no heed to their taunting remarks said, "So simple questions and so many Pandits to answer them. Anyone can reply to them easily."



Kumari Bhojan in the Memory of Late Dr. Premlataji
Kankhal Ashram, May 2017.



Vatuk Bhojan during Kumari Puja.



Glimpses of Kumari Puja in the Memory of Late Dr. Premiataji, Kankhal Ashram, May 2017.

The people exclaimed, "You too!" The farmer replied, "Of course".

"Then, come along with us," said the people and took him to the court where the assembly was going on.

The assembly hall was packed to its capacity. The people led the farmer straight to the king and told all about the farmer. The king immediately agreed to hear the farmer.

The king said, "Can you answer my questions?" The farmer nodded his head in assent.

Without losing any time the king said, "I hope you already know my questions. Reply to them one by one. My first question is, "Where does God live?"

The farmer unhesitatingly said, "O king, where does he not? He is all - pervading. He is everywhere."

Hearing the reply the king thought, "Oh, how beautiful the answer is and also how simple. God is everywhere. He is in everything, wonderful."

Being highly pleased the king put the second question, "What does he eat?"

The farmer replied, "He eats up man's ego. Until the ego is eaten up by God, He cannot be known by man. O King, how can God appear and manifest Himself in a mind which is already filled up with ego? Can two things remain in the same place at a time?"

"Very well", said the king, "Now tell me, when does God laugh?"

The farmer said, "Thousands of people are born and die daily in this world. Not a single one of them lives forever. It is a known fact to each one of us. Even then people behave in such a way as if they are going to live forever and they will never die. When the Omniscient God sees this mental state of human beings He laughs.

Hearing this logical explanation the king was very much delighted. "Excellent", said the king and threw up the last question, "What does God do?"

Hearing this question the farmer first of all remained quiet for a while and then calmly said, "O King, before I can answer this question, you shall have to accept some condition."

As the king was very eager to hear the reply, so he said, "Tell me what is that condition. I shall definitely fulfill it."

The farmer said, "Then, O King, please come down and stand in my place for a short while and let me sit on your throne."

The king readily agreed to the request of the farmer. He came down and stood in the farmer's place. The farmer also quickly went up and sat on the throne.

After a few minutes the farmer came down and requested the king to again occupy his throne. When this was done, the farmer again remained quiet without uttering a word.

The king and all the persons present there were very eagerly waiting for the reply. Seeing this the farmer still remained silent. The king no longer could keep patience and called out, "What is the matter? Why are you keeping mum? Answer my last question."

"O King", replied the farmer, "Have I not answered your question? Have you not yet got the reply? God turns a poor man into a king and makes the king a destitute at His sweet will. Have you not seen that I was on the throne and you were in my place? This is what God does."

The king was so much delighted to hear this beautiful answer that he called the farmer near his throne and most cordially enquired how he could give such befitting and most convincing answer to the questions.

The farmer said, "O King, whenever I hear about any *satsang* I regularly go and attend. Whatever reply I have given to your queries are due to the grace of God, who is the presiding Deity of our hearts and whatever I have gathered from *satsang*."

* * *

YA DEVI SARVABHUTESHU

-Dr. Premlata Srivastava

"In Company of the Great Spiritual Leaders"

Ma has met almost all the contemporary Mahatmas of Her time. From Her Dhaka days till 1982 many seers, Mahatmas, philosophers, Sadhaks of all types had Ma's darshan.

Sometimes Ma used to invite them to Ashram functions and they spoke and deliberated on various religious topics. Ma's devotees became enlightened by these discourses. Ma Herself seemed to enjoy such occasions, as She said, "The little girl of yours has come for darshan of Pitaji (father)." These meetings were a real treat to watch.

Prominent among those who met Ma were Swami Balananda Brahmachari, Swamis Mangal Giriji, Devi Giriji, Tapovan Maharaj, Triveni Puriji, Shankar Chaitanya Bharati, Prabhu Dutt Brahmachariji, Krishnanand Avadhoot, Oriya Baba, Hari Baba, Sharnanandji, Swami Akhandanandji, Swami Vishnu Ashram, Govind Prakashji, Swami Chidanandji, Swatantranandji, Mahant Girdhar Narain Puriji, Swami Vidyanandji, Brahmanandji, Prakashanandji, Geeta Bharatiji and many more others.

Ma had deep respect for all of them. She would leave Her seat to welcome them with folded hands. If anybody was slow in giving them an Asana She Herself would offer Her own. She might even sit on the bare floor. Again at the time of their departure, She would sometimes even escort them with folded hands. She was the personification of kindness, compassion and selfless love and affection.

The lives of Mahatmas cannot be spanned or fathomed. I have attempted in all humility to recount the meetings of some Mahatmas with Sri Ma.

Balananda Brahmachari

In 1926, when Sri Ma went to Deoghar, She met Balananda Brahmachari, a well-known saint of the Indian subcontinent. When he saw Ma, Balanandaji said,

"Earlier, you had given me darshan in the subtle body, now you have come physically, I welcome your advent in this world with great reverence."

The disciple of Balananda, Dr. Nalini Kanta Brahma, who was present of this occasion, has later written, "They used to discuss spiritual aspects daily for hours together, Sri Ma went into a trance during Kirtan. Eyewitnesses say this was an unbelievable sight in which Ma sang and danced, keeping the weight of Her body on her toes. She danced all over the big platform. The dazzling dance was likened to Kali's dance all over the universe. While dancing, mantras and slokas came out spontaneously from Her mouth."

Ma's first visit to Kashi was in 1928. Her arrival became the talk of this ancient town. Accompanied by Bholanath, Shashanka Babu and Didi among others, Ma stayed at the farm house of Shashanka Babu's brother. As long as She stayed at Benares, this house looked like a festival venue. From dawn to late in the night, a stream of followers visited Ma including Govt. officials, saints, Mahatmas and ordinary people. Some only came to pay obeisance, others came to solve their problems or out of sheer curiosity. Most of the time Ma remained in a trance, whenever She regained Her usual self, Sri Ma would get involved in Kirtan or Satsang. All the time, an aura brightened Her face.

There, for the first time She became publicly involved in discussions on religious subjects with many well known preachers and teachers of Kashi.

Sri Padmanabha Vidyavinod was a famous religious authority and a sharp critic. His standard was so high that it was very difficult to get his appreciation. When Sri Vidyavinod saw Ma, he realized that Sri Ma was a Mahatma of the highest order and recommended Her darshan to Shri Gopinath Kaviraj, telling him that the sight of Ma in Samadhi was wonderful.

Pt. Gopinathji, a philosopher and pandit, was moved by Ma's darshan, He had his first darshan on September 6, 1928. He returned to see Ma again, this time accompanied by Swami Shankaranandji. At that time, Ma was in Samadhi. After she came out of Samadhi, Her face was shining with an aura and her speech was unclear. Swamiji asked Her, "Who am I, Ma?"

Ma replied in Her semi-trance state, "You? You and me are the same." Ma's reply was very emphatic and far-reaching as if the knowledge of the Vedas had itself taken Ma's form and manifested itself. Kaviraj was astounded to see Her in this state.

Mahamahopadhyaya-Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj

Gopinathji was born on September 7, 1887 in East Bengal, five months after his father's death.

He became a well-known teacher-philosopher and authority on Hindu religion. A linguist philologist, he himself became a sort of institution.

In 1914, he became the chief of the Saraswati Bhavan Library. Appreciating his talent Raj Rajeshwar Shastri has written that he had read one lakh books and manuscripts from this library and he remembered everything up until his death.

He was the Principal of the State Sanskrit College in Varanasi until 1937. After his retirement, he was requested by various universities to join them but Gopinathji preferred to continue his studies of Tantra literature and Sanskrit on his own.

Inspired by the supernatural attainments of Swami Vishuddhanandaji, Pandit Gopinath took diksha from him at the former's Ashram at Hanuman Ghat on January 21, 1918.

Research into religious studies and darshan of Mahatmas were his preoccupations. Unmindful of the caste, creed, sect and Ashrams of different saints and renowned followers of different lines of Sadhana, he remained in their company to know their ways of Sadhana in proximity. He himself felt the truth of Yoga darshan. He was witness to some unbelievable feats of his Guru through Yoga Sadhana and the use of sun science.

He once asked his Guru, "How do these outstanding people, the authorities on Yoga, relate to Sadhana? What do we get from these exercises?"

Swamiji asked him to have faith in Yoga Sadhana. Guided by his Guru, Pandit Gopinath actually experienced the manifestations and the power of mantras.

His Guru told him that the power of a mantra was greater than all the electrical power of the whole world. He found the description of Kedar Malakar about the heavenly abode just as it was mentioned in the Shastras.

Pandit Gopinathji's knowledge had no bounds. At the first darshan of Ma, Gopinathji considered himself to be Her son. Ma too, called him "Father". His respect for Ma was most profound. Gopinathji once suggested to another devotee of Ma, "Go on calling Ma-Ma, you will reach the destination."

Pandit Gopinath was always very large hearted; whoever came to him, Indian or foreigner, Tantrik or Vedic, archaeologist, writer, Yogi, saint, ascetic or atheist- they

were all treated well with the proper logical analysis applied to the topic under discussion. When Panditji would start speaking people would listen with rapt attention.

Kavirajji used to consider the Sadhak and the Yogi to be different. He used to say, the aim of a Sadhak is to solve his own problems and worries and gain happiness. On the other hand, the aim of a Yogi is to substitute worries and problems of others with love and happiness.”

Gopi Baba was considered an authority in Tantra Shastra. He had understood the various theories of the mysterious Tantric scriptures up to the point of practical experience. With this multifaceted personality he had knowledge of all the three aspects of Sadhana, Tantra, Mantra and Yantra. Neither were literature and philosophy foreign to him. Author of several books on Indian spiritual life and culture, Yoga and Tantra, he is known the world over for his contributions to that field.

This great son of Sri Ma had also been a guide in the Sadhana of many of Ma's devotees. He had been the foremost exponent of Sri Ma's words. He had written an analytical book 'Amarvani', based on excerpts of Sri Ma's talks on different topics. Pandit Gopinathji had written extensively on Sri Ma.

Acknowledging his talent, the Imperial Govt. of India in 1934 had honoured him with the title 'Mahamahopadhyaya'. Later, in 1964 the Govt. of India conferred on him the 'Padmavibhushan', the second highest civilian award, only after the Bharat Ratna. He was editor of 'Anandavarta' (quarterly journal) for 24 years, from 1968 till his death on June 12, 1978. Gopi Baba lived in Ma Anandmayi Ashram in Kashi under the tutelage of Sri Ma.

Swami Vishuddhanandji

A great Yogi, he had the honour of being Pandit Gopinath Kavirajji's Guru. Sometime in 1935, Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj took Ma, Didima, Hariram Bhai and Didi to his Guru at the Vishuddhananda Ashram at Varanasi. Ma said to Baba that Her companions wanted to see some of Baba's miracles.

Baba Vishuddhanand had a range of lenses. He picked up one of them and took out his handkerchief. Through this glass, he reflected the sun's rays to different corners of the kerchief and said, now smell it, "You will each get the aroma you like the most." And astonishingly, Baba's words were true.

Baba then plucked some leaves from a croton plant, made a paste of it, reflected sunlight through a glass and it turned into a glass ball.

Swamiji was a great Yogi, who lived for a considerable period in Tibet. He was capable of teaching this sun science to whoever lived with him for some time.

Soon after this meeting with Ma in 1937, he left his mortal shell.

Purnamanda Swami

When Ma used to live with Bhaiji and other disciples on the banks of Ganges at Rishikesh around 1932-1935, She often went for a walk in front of the various huts of saints and seers living there. Sometime She visited them and attended their satsangs. The Mahatmas, accorded Her a hearty reception and even discussed various religious issues with Her.

Among these Mahatmas was Purnananda Swami who used to send his disciple to find out about Ma's well-being at regular intervals. He also visited Ma and discussed various topics and asked Ma about the 'Kriyas'. Later, he used to praise Ma to Bhaiji. On occasions he used to send Ma sweets, made of milk. One day, he sent one of his disciples to Ma with question, "What do you see in your dreams?"

Ma replied, "Has Baba not asked you to ask me this? Well tell Baba that dream is where sleep occurs. When sleep does not occur the question of dreaming does not arise. This world is like a dream in the waking state." Swamiji was very happy to get this reply.

Swami Triveni Puriji

The Guru of Swami Krishnanand Avadhootji, Sri Triveni Puriji was a famous saint, based in Khanna, Punjab. Highly respected, Triveni Puriji was a seer of the highest order, who had memorized the entire Guru Granth Sahib. Ma met Triveni Puriji through Swami Avadhootji.

Once, at the initiative of Avadhootji, Ma's birth celebrations were held at several places in Punjab. Ma, accompanied by many Mahatmas, visited those venues of the celebrations which concluded at Ambala. Triveni Puriji also gave Ma company during this festivity.

On another occasion, Triveni Puriji came to Kishanpur Ashram, Dehradun where he attended the satsang at Hari Baba's Ashram daily. There he used to give darshan to a stream of visitors. Like Mahatma Ram Thakur, he also had the knack of extracting a religious meaning out of the most ordinary words.

Sri Ma said, "This bent of mind comes through endless search for truth and benevolence."

Triveni Puriji gave a cardamom as Prasad with his blessings to whoever came to pay obeisance to him. One day, his stock of cardamoms was finished; Hence, he asked one of his disciples, Sri Chetan Puri to fetch a kilo of cardamoms. Almost at this time, someone came from Sri Ma with one and a quarter kilos of cardamoms. Baba said, "I asked for cardamoms and 'Antaryāmini' (one who knows another's mind) Ma has fulfilled my wishes. Baba had great regard for Sri Ma.

In 1949, the New Delhi Ashram was the venue for an Akhand Mahayajna. It was forenoon when devotees were absorbed in Kirtan with great fervor around the stage in Ma's company. Triveni Puriji entered the hall and seeing Ma in ecstasy, paid obeisance to Her with folded hands. Streams of tears flowed from his eyes. Those present around were moved by Baba's mute gesture.

Several Mahatmas attended the Purnahuti of the Savitri Mahayajna in January 1950 at Kashi Ashram. Triveni Puri was among them. Ma would always receive the seers with great respect and care. For Triveni Puriji, Ma made matchless reception arrangements. She Herself went to receive him; there was a great fanfare with a band and Kirtan sung with great fervor. As Baba entered the Ashram, rose petals were showered from the roof tops by the Ashram girls according to Ma's instructions. The Kirtan and shower of rose petals moved Triveni Puriji.

Triveni Puriji was a highly respected saint. Once, one person who came to pay obeisance to him and asked, "Please bless me with the kind of peace which Ma personifies."

Baba replied, "If I could get an iota of Ma's peace, my mission would be fulfilled."

(to be continued)

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ASHRAM VARTA

Dear Anandaswaroop Devotees,

Jai Ma!

We apologize for the unusual delay in publishing this issue and hope it will not recur in the future.

In this issue we bring you some highlights of the major events that took place during this quarter of the year.

Guru Purnima was celebrated in the Kankhal Ashram and in all the other Ashram branches on 9th July, 2017 with due solemnity. Shodashopachār puja was offered to Shree Shree Ma and Swami Muktananda Giriji (Didima). Sadhu Bhandārā was arranged on the occasion.

On 30th July, Shrāvan Shuklā Saptami, the Nirvān Tithi of Shree 108 Swami Muktananda Giriji, Shodashopachār puja was offered to Shree Giriji and Sadhu Bhandārā was held.

On 4th August, Jhulan Dvādashi, the Nirvān Tithi of Bhaiji was observed by Shodashopachār puja of Bhaiji and Sadhu Bhandārā.

Jhulan Mahotsav was celebrated in Shree Shree Ma's Ashrams from 2nd August to 7th August, 2017. In the Varanasi Ashram, special puja with kirtan, bhoga and ārati was offered to Shree Gopalji each evening and the swing on which the beautifully decorated Vighraha of Shree Gopalji was placed was softly pulled for some time by the Ashram Brahmachārinis. The full moon day of 7th August was also Rākhi Purnima, Rākhis were tied on the wrists of the Vighrahas of Shree Shree Ma, Gopalji and other Deities.

A lunar eclipse was to take place in the evening that day; so the evening puja was started early at 05:00 p.m. Shodashopachār puja was done to Shree Gopalji. After ārati and the ritual of swinging, the temple doors were closed by 07:00 p.m. Khichdi prasād was hurriedly taken by all before the eclipse began, and then all got ready for the Nishi Pālan, the nocturnal ritual of Jhulan Purnimā which comprises singing of bhajans, chanting of stotras and Mahā Nishā Dhyān, the midnight meditation. This

ritual is held in commemoration of Shree Shree Ma's self-initiation. The programme took place from 10:45 p.m. to 01:00 a.m. after which all took a bath in the Ganga as the eclipse was over by then.

Shree Krishna Janmashtami was celebrated in the Varanasi Ashram on 14th August, 2017 with much fervor and gaiety. On this occasion, Shree Hiranmoy Gupta (Khokada), Justice Karunananda Bajpai and his family, Shree Somesh Chandra Banerjee (Somuda), Smt. Gayatri Banerjee (Buhdi), Shree Swapan Ganguli, Gen. Secretary, Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Swami Chetananandaji from the Vindhyachal Ashram, Br. Gopalanandaji from the Delhi Ashram and many others from other Ashrams of Shree Shree Ma came to Varanasi and augmented the dignity and felicity of the celebration.

Br. Jayadi performed the puja of Gopalji with bhava and bhakti. Gopalji had been brought down from His throne before the puja. At 12:00 midnight, Svastivachana (chanting of mantras invoking auspiciousness) began, followed by chanting of Veda mantras. Then Br. Geetadi recited from the third chapter of the tenth book of Srimad Bhagavatam, which narrates the birth of Shree Krishna. She also recited the Pavamani Sukta and the Shuddhâvati Sukta. Br. Jayadi did Mahâbhisheka (ritual bathing) of Shree Gopalji with Panchâmrita, that is, milk, curds, ghee, honey, and sugar. Gopalji was dressed up in new garments and decorated with shining ornaments. A dazzling crown was placed on His head. The beautiful idol was the focus of the eyes of the enchanted devotees.

Smt. Gayatri Banerjee delighted the congregation with her kirtan during the puja. Br. Guneetadi led the kirtan, Prem Pukâr (call of love) sung in chorus:

“Govinda meri yaha prârthanâ hai
Bhulu na mai nâma kabhi tumhâro;
Nishkâma hokar din râta gâum,
Govinda Dâmodara Mâdhaveti.”

(O Govinda, this is my prayer to you: may I never forget your name, without any selfish motive, may I sing day and night, “Govinda, Dâmodara, Mâdhava!”). The group also sang, “Kivâ ghor nishây” (He came in the darkness of midnight), “Dvâparete eshchhilo Kamsa râjer kârâgâre” (He came in the Dvâpar yuga in the prison of the king Kamsa) and last of all, “MADHRÂDHIPATE RAKHILAM MADHURAM” (Each and everything of the Lord of Madhurâ is sweet).

By the time the puja was completed, it was 02:30 a.m. After arati was done, Shree Gopalji was again placed on His throne. All partook of the prasād. Various kinds of fruits, sweets, rabri (thickened milk), malai (fresh milk cream), makhan (fresh butter), misri (sugar candy), tal kheer (thickened palm fruit juice), tal badā (palm fruit nuts) and kheer laddoo (thickened milk balls) were distributed as prasād.

A joint celebration of Nandotsav and the National Independence Day took place on the 15th of August this year. In the morning, the little Brahmacharini girls of the Kanyapeeth, in the roles of Nandarāja (the foster father of Shree Krishna) and the Gopa Bālakas (Cowherd boys), danced in the Gopal Mandir with bowls of curds held on their heads. They sang, "Shiva nāche, Brahmā nāche ā nāche Indra, Gokule Gowālā nāche pāiyā Govinda." (Shiva, Brahmā, Indra and the milkmen of Gokul are dancing in joy on the arrival of Govinda). After the dance, the earthen pots of curds were broken by throwing them on the ground and all began collecting curds from the ground. They put tikā of curds on their foreheads as an auspicious conclusion of the ceremony.

After this, in the Gopal Mandir itself, in front of Shree Gopalji, the National Tricolour Flag of India was unfurled and the girls of the Kanyapeeth sang the National Anthem.

Gītā Pāth, Chandi Pāth and Stava Pāth were done to conclude the function.

Jhulan utsav and Janmāshtami were celebrated with equal enthusiasm and solemnity in the other Ashrams in Vrindavan, Puri, Agarpara (Kolkata) etc.

On 28th August, Lalita Saptami, a special puja was offered to Shree Gurupriya Didi on her Nirvān Tithi and Sādhu Bhandārā was arranged.

From 29th August to 5th September, Bhāgavata Saptāha was held in the Varanasi Ashram. The Pāth and Pravachana were done by the saintly scholar from Ayodhya, the Āchārya of Lakshman Kila, Shree Mithileshnandinisharanji. The Organizers were Shree Raghavendra Madhav, Smt. Vineeta Madhav and Smt. Sushma Kumar Bhāgavata Saptāha was held also in the Agarpara Ashram, Kolkata from 29th August and in the Kankhal Ashram from 26th August.

On 8th September, Sanskrit Divas was held in the Varanasi Ashram on the occasion of the Birth Anniversary of Mahamahopadhyaya Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj.

News from the Delhi Ashram.

Guru Purnima was observed in the Ashram, Pujā was offered to Shree Shree Ma and Didima and bhajans and kirtans were sung. Many devotees assembled to offer garlands to Shree Shree Ma. Shodashopachār pujā of Shree Shree Ma and Didima was performed and bhoga was offered at midday. About 600 people partook of the prasād.

On 23rd, 24th and 25th July, Swami Murugananda Maharaj from Shivananda Ashram presented discourse on Shree Shree Ma and the Gitā. He talked on the importance and relevance of the message of the Gitā and the life and words of Shree Shree Ma in the current times.

On the last Sunday of the month, 29th July, dawn to dusk kirtan was held. About 150 persons took prasād. During the Sharad Navarātri, on Durgāshṭami, around two thousand people attended the pujā of Devi Durga.

News from the Raipur Ashram

Swami Satyasāadhanānanda wrote:

"Today (8th June, 2017) is the 85th anniversary of Shree Shree Ma's first visit to Raipur. When She came here in 1932, Raipur was a small village with only a few inhabitants. Dense forests were all around. In commemoration of that event, each year Bhāgavata Saptāha is held from 1st to 7th June and the concluding ceremony is observed on the next day. This year a grand celebration took place on the 8th of June. A large number of devotees performed kirtan and a sumptuous bhandārā was arranged. Sadhu Bhojan and Brahman Bhojan also took place. Every month on the last Tuesday, the Pāth of Sundarkānd from Shree Ramacharit Manas is performed here and Bhandārā is arranged. The local ladies specially show a keen interest in the programme."

Swamiji further wrote that he stays secluded on that day, doing sādhan-bhajan as per direction from the head office.

We extend Navarātri greetings and best wishes to you all.

Jai Ma!

-Editor

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