

# MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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## MATRIVANI

“Do you know what this body says?- It does not go to anyone’s house, it does not eat anyone’s food, it does not talk with anyone, it does not look anywhere, Of whom and who? no such questions arise. Do you know what it means? It (this body) is always with its father, mother and friends. It is free; it neither comes nor goes. Do you understand?”

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“Hundreds of *Karmas* stored in life after life remain unknown, beyond the reach of one’s comprehension. If one is born in a human body, it is a matter of his good fortune if his human birth is successful (if he is able to avail the opportunity of performing good deeds and avoiding evil deeds). The human birth is the result of his *Kripa*; it is the fruit of past good deeds. Since the birth in a human body is rare, therefore a human being should adopt the path of the manifestation of humanity. ”

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“It is futile to hope for peace in *samsara* (worldly life). Try to stay with Him alone. Render service (to the people of the world, to family members, etc.), in the spirit of duty. Verily, *samsara* is not a place for happiness. If you hope for peace, take refuge in God alone.”

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“Love for God is the only desirable thing. He from whom you are born is your mother, father, friend, companion, Lord—everything. The Supreme Mother who has manifested you through her and has nourished you with the nectar of Her breast, the word by which you call this Being (namely, ‘Ma’), keep that word, each and every moment, attached to your mind and heart.”



ভাবাবস্থায় শ্রীশ্রীমা

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“Take refuge in the being who is free from all fears; the entire world is full of fears. If you live surrounded by fears, won't you be fear-stricken? Here it is useless to hope for being rid of fears. It is one's duty to try to take refuge in God alone in order to be rid of all fears.”

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“The act of tying a knot and the act of untying a knot-you may concentrate your mind in both. By contemplating the objects of worldly enjoyment, the mind forms only new knots. By concentrating itself on the contemplation of God, it tries to untie the knots.

\* \* \*

“Do not consider calamity as calamity. It is a sin to think of calamity. What calamity? Whatever he does is for one's good. Under no circumstances should a person break down. Do remember at all moment – Gurudeva, you are doing only whatever is good for one; verily, all this keeps taking place in this world.”

\* \* \*

“Who is a friend? One who turns a person's mind towards God. He is truly a great friend. One who diverts the mind from the Ishta and directs it towards death is a foe, not a friend; one who does not try to reform oneself is an *atmaghati* (Killer of oneself, one who commits suicide).”

\* \* \*

“Pray at an appointed moment (chosen for praying each and everyday)—O God, manifest yourself in me. Make me your own. Show me the path.”

\* \*

# SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG

Vol V

- Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

2<sup>nd</sup> Paush, Friday (17/12/1918)

Today it is scheduled to vacate the residence of Ramapura and move to the residence of Shivalay. The whole day was spent in the activities of shifting. After dusk, I went to the Ashram taking all my family members with me. Shree Shree Ma enquired about the conveniences and inconveniences at our new residence.

Swami Shankarananda was sitting near Ma. During conversation on various topics, he said, "Last night I could not sleep at all. Once it would so happen that as soon as I lay on bed, I was fast asleep."

Ma- "Was it only sleeping in bed? Was it not sleeping while sitting? Do you remember what happened in Vrindavan? (laughter among the listeners).

A Sadhu - "What happened in Vrindavan, Ma?"

Ma- "Once in Vrindavan we were sitting together and talking. During our conversation, I suddenly noticed that Baba (Swami Shankarananda) was fast asleep with his mouth open though he was sitting. And what a sleep! There was no response to calls. *Rasgullas* were kept near. I asked a person to put a *rasgulla* into Baba's open mouth. It was done. Even then Baba was not roused. When the syrup of that *rasgulla* trickled down his throat, only then he woke up!" (everyone laughs).

Ma- "In fact, before *rasa* (the nectar of God's love, divine bliss) gets inside a person, there is no awakening (to spiritual life) for him. Whether you call it sleep or *tamoguna* (darkness of ignorance, inertia), until its *moha* (attraction of worldly enjoyment) is removed, the taste of that *rasa* is not felt. Verily, He is *rasa-svarupa* (*rasa* itself) - call it *rasa*, *ananda* or *jyoti* (Divine Essenu, Bliss or Divine Effulgence) - that is his *svarupa* (true identity). Viewed from the worldly perspective, where there is *ananda* (joy), there is also *nirananda* (sorrow). Just as without the concept

of darkness, the concept of light is not grasped, without the concept of unhappiness, happiness cannot be understood, in the same way, if you talk of *ananda* The trace of *nirananda* remains in your mind; but when He is called *anandasvarupa* or *sukha svarupa* in the *adhyatmika bhava* (in the spiritual context), there is no trace of *nirananda* or *duhkha*; there it is only *ananda* and *ananda* alone, or it is not possible to say what it is – *ananda* or *nirananda*.”

Ma talked in this manner for some time and then all sat there in silence.

Ma said, “It is better to chant God’s name rather than sit with a vacant mind in this way. A vacant mind here does not mean a mind emptied of all thoughts. A vacant mind means a mind full of useless thoughts. Instead of filling the mind with useless thoughts it is better to engage it in the chanting of (God’s) name. For the mind refuses to remain vacant. Like a child, the mind wants to stay in the lap of one thing or another in a state of unrest. If you want to pacify it, give it good food. Kirtan, japa etc. are varieties of good food; the mind will stay quiet if you give them to it. The quietness of the mind means getting it immersed and lost.”

Saying these words Ma began to laugh. When no one came forward to discuss any topic with Ma, Kirtan was started. After listening to the Kirtan for some time we did pranam to Ma and left.

(to be continued)

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The search after truth is the one thing by which the shape of human life should be determined. Genuine desire itself opens the road to fulfilment.

Matri Vani (Volume II)

# SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE

- Gurupriya Devi

Vol VII

Baba Bholanath's Salil Samadhi

(continued)

12 May 1938 Thursday

Nothing particularly noteworthy today.

13 May 1938 Friday

A letter from Yogeshdada arrived and in it he wrote, "Two to three hours before Bholanath's death Ma asked him, 'Do you remember the *sannyasa mantra*?' Baba replied, 'Yes'." Yogeshdada further wrote that Ma said Bholanath's passing should not cause anyone to waiver from their particular tasks and that all should carry on with determination the repetition of "*Nama*", performance of *Yajna* and other such related activities concerning *sadhana*." Ma's instructions are as irrevocable as God's - I keep noticing this all the time and it is gaining momentum day by day. She says, "Get on with whatever you have to do and do not get distracted." This is why She has sent Her orders to us today itself. Birth and death are the same for Her; so for Her no scheduled work should be hampered by these. Death is a daily event in the world. I am in awe of Her: She is more fierce than thunder and at the same time softer than a flower. Also, without this softness She would be incomplete.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, how could we survive otherwise? Repeatedly She says, "All that is happening through this body is for you all, otherwise there is no reason for it to be here." The truth of these sweet words of Hers brings everyone to Her Lotus Feet.

14 May 1938 Saturday

Today we set out for Dhaka. Ma says we must get to Dhaka while the celebrations<sup>14</sup> are going on. On the night of third *Jyeshtha*<sup>15</sup> the *Tithi Puja* will be performed.

15 May 1938 Sunday

We arrived in Dhaka today. Jatu and Kanu met us at the station. Since they are not able to be in the company of Ma very often, they compensate for it and feel





Shri Gouri-Kedareshwar



Shri Shava-Shiva Kali Mandir



Idol of Shri Shava-Shiva Kali



Adhibas of Shri Narayan on the eve of Holi.

happy by having us around them. In this happiness, their respect and love for Ma is expressed.

They were very sad over Bholanath's demise and kept reminiscing and repeating stories about his last visit when he shared so much happiness with all here. The celebrations are being carried out as per orthodox rules and according to schedule. The ladies gather in the afternoon and sing *kirtan* for a long time. Continuous repetition of the "Name" is in progress and at least one person must keep it going so there is never a pause. The ladies sing *kirtan* very well until after dusk. The *kirtan* room gets filled with people. The ladies look beautiful as they move around in a circle in the evening clapping and playing the cymbals in accompaniment to the *kirtan*. Some of them sit in the centre of the circle and keep repeating the "Name". Sandal paste *tika* is on their foreheads. The gentlemen are outside during this period while the ladies carry on with their *kirtan*, chanting the "Name" in absolute abandon and gaiety. The sound of the sweet female voices singing the name of "Ma" brings delight to the heart; such nice and regular *kirtan* done by the ladies of Dhaka cannot be witnessed elsewhere. This is a matter of pride for the ladies of this place. Twice a week (Sundays and Thursdays) they surmount all kinds of obstacles of family life and come to join the *kirtan*. During this time an *asan* (seat) is also prepared for Ma in the *Nama Ghar*. A nice and pure feeling prevails. For these two days there is no worldly gossip amongst them and everyone comes with the sole aim of singing *kirtan*. Women of all ages, old, young and little girls, join in singing *kirtan* together. Today as I watched the ladies I was quite moved and so I have written about it. At 11 p.m. the gents and ladies gradually retired to their home. The Ashram has made arrangements for repetition of the "Name" by at least one person so "*Nama kirtan*" continues without interruption. I remained sitting on the verandah of the temple for a long time.

16 May 1938 Monday

In keeping with the traditional ways of worship, *Yajna* and *kirtan* amongst other activities were carried out. There is nothing important worth mentioning. Today also the ladies did *kirtan* for 2 to 3 hours. Then there was *arati* and later Kanu chanted "*Nama kirtan*" with everyone and did it very well. I liked it very much. Around 11 p.m. everyone gradually returned to their homes.

17 May 1938 Tuesday

Today is Ma's *Tithi Puja*<sup>16</sup>. It will be performed late in the night during the lunar date of *Krishna Chaturthi*. After the regular worship the door to the cave (underground

chamber) of the Kali Mata Shrine was opened. As per Ma's, order, Shree Yogesh Chandra Bandyopadhyay came and opened the door. We were not at the temple then.<sup>17</sup> After opening the door he sent for us. When we got to the temple Kuladadada said, "Terrible news! Look at Mother Kali!" Right then and there with the help of a light, I saw the *murti* (statue/idol) of Kali. Her lower left hand had completely fallen off. "What is to be done now?" was the thought in everyone's mind. We decided that a telegram should be sent to Ma and in the meantime we would call someone to get the hand repaired. Once the hand of Ma Kali was repaired the door could be opened to the public. Ma had once said that in case some appendages or parts of the statue get disfigured then it should be repaired (like once before when thieves had broken one of the hands and it was then repaired). But in the case of a vital part, such as a human organ upon whose loss a human being would not survive, being disfigured or destroyed, then immediately the door to the cave should be permanently closed with a brick wall.

There was a lot of discussion on what should be done in the light of the circumstances. Finally it was decided to get the repair done as had been the case before. It was not certain exactly when the hand had fallen off. The hand could not be fixed in its original shape as it had fallen off from the shoulder joint so there was some question about it being repaired at all. All the same at midday, one Acharya was called and the hand was repaired and fixed. I heard from some devotees that once before when the wrist of the hand was fixed something special had happened with respect to the repair. After that Bholanath did the worship himself. That is why even after the hand was repaired, Kuladadada did not dare to do the worship. He decided to worship the *yantra*<sup>18</sup> instead. Ma had been informed by telegram about all this. At 5 p.m. in the evening the door was opened to the public.

By sunset the public was stopped from entering the cave. Mother Kali's *puja* was done to the *yantra*. Many stayed in the Ashram to see the worship. People have a chance to see Mother Kali after a year and so they kept waiting. At 3:30 a.m., the moment of Ma's advent, the worship of Mother Kali began. The gents began singing *Jai Ma, Jai Ma, Jai Ma, Jai*, after *arati* was performed. While sitting on the verandah many ladies viewed the worship of Mother Kali. It has been one year since the door was opened allowing everyone to see the Mother's idol to his or her heart's content. At dawn the worship and *arati* were finished.

18 May 1938 Wednesday

It is now the sixteenth day of continuous singing of the "Name" and it is supposed to end today. All arrived to join in the ritual and began singing away moving in a circle. They circumambulated the temple and Ma's hut while singing the "Name". Then incense was lit and they did the ritual of *loot*<sup>19</sup>. So many days of singing the "Name" had brought about a passion in the devotees' hearts. Gradually everyone left after having *Prasad*.

Until today everyone had a routine: they would come to the Ashram, and upon arriving they would be adorned with garlands and sandal paste. The seat for *Nama Kirtan* was prepared in Ma's hut and one by one they would occupy the seat and sing the Name "Ma, Ma." This used to be a day and night ritual. Sometimes some devotees would come and sing the *Padavalis*<sup>20</sup> in the room. The ladies come every day in the evening and sing kirtan. Hirandidi and her daughter Belun, and many others sing very nicely and most of the ladies have learned to play the small and large cymbals. Maroni, the daughters of Kuladadada and Amulyadada, Mukta and many others play the cymbals quite nicely. The ladies garland themselves and apply sandal paste and sing the *Nama*. The ladies meet at the ashram on Sundays for *kirtan*. The last time I was here I told them that Shree Shree Ma was born on a Thursday and if they could get together on Thursdays as well and sing *kirtan*, it would be nice. The enjoyment of *kirtan* is so great that the very mention of this idea was readily agreed upon by all. This has prompted them to meet on Thursdays specifically for this purpose. Coming twice a week for *kirtan* was creating some discord in the families for many ladies, but they could not be bothered. They tolerated the taunts and ridicule of people and simply would not stop coming. Day by day more and more came. Ma had said that if one does *kirtan* moving round and clapping in absolute abandon, the *granthis*<sup>21</sup> get dissolved and the mind opens up new vistas; this is being realized by most of them day by day. Some get so immersed and enjoy it in such gay abandon that the bliss radiating from their being is clearly perceptible. Many a time I stand aside and feel enthralled by the sight of them. Seeing the effects of Ma's Grace, a thrill-like current runs through my whole body. Bhudevbabu (lawyer) says quite often, "That ladies can get together and sing *kirtan* with such passion was beyond my imagination; it is possible only due to Ma's wish." I hear many sisters saying that even in the midst of all the work and family responsibilities they feel an intense yearning for coming to the Ashram. No obstacles are great enough to stop them

from coming. They also say that if their husband or children fall sick, the first thing that comes to their mind is that it will stop them from going to the Ashram. Yesterday Bhudevbabu's wife was saying, "From early morning on we are eager to be finished with family duties and come to the Ashram on time, otherwise the mind gets very agitated." Actually I keep noticing that in scorching sun or continuous rain, these people come here every day to see us. It is needless to say not because of us, but because of their great respect and love for Ma that they come running with such earnestness.

Shree Barada Charan Sen's wife is quite elderly and cannot see properly but she comes daily to the Ashram to sing. Seeing this great yearning in everyone I am reminded of Shree Krishna and the Gopis. Some of the ladies have mentioned that their in-laws are afraid of seeing any other lady entering their house because they fear that the lady would take their daughter-in-law to the Ashram. In actuality, however, the ladies do not go to another's house for worldly gossip, they go to bring the other lady to the Ashram. Even when at the Ashram they do not indulge in gossip or useless conversation as is sometimes prevalent among women. They decorate Ma's photograph beautifully and get together for *kirtan*. Today I am overwhelmed with joy and so have written this about the ladies of Dhaka. I firmly believe that all this is happening due to the special blessings of Ma.

19 May 1938 Thursday

Yesterday we received the reply to the telegram and Ma has written, "The *murti* of Kali in its present form may be given its permanent *Samadhi*; it is no longer necessary to continue the worship of the *murti*." Today as per Ma's orders, the door was permanently sealed with a brick wall. The worship to this Kali has stopped in the thirteenth year. It started in 1926 and now in 1938, following the very last *puja*, the door has been sealed. Everyone was visibly saddened by this.

20 May 1938 Friday

Ladies are coming everyday for *kirtan* as if the celebrations were still going on. We received Bhupatidada's letter in which he wrote, "Before receiving your telegram, Ma was telling us about the incidents surrounding the Kali *murti* many times. After receiving the telegram She laughed, saying, 'I have told you about all this already. Anyway now the Kali idol can be given its eternal *Samadhi*. I had also told Khukuni about this earlier."

21 May 1938 Saturday

In offering homage to Bholanath's soul, the *Sadhu Bhandara* was arranged and *kirtan* was performed from dawn to dusk. At dusk while the ladies were singing *kirtan*, Bhupatidada's letter came. He wrote that Ma again has had fever since yesterday. For the last few days Ma had been talking a lot and appeared quite normal; now She has this fever and is nauseous. The fever goes up to 101/102 degrees. She has had fever since 15 May. This news caused us extreme worry. With a weak body, getting unwell so frequently only She knows what She would do. Everyone was quite saddened.

22 May 1938 Sunday

There are many ladies here for today's *kirtan* which is being sung with a lot of enthusiasm. Day by day the ladies are enjoying singing *kirtan* more and more and some fortunate ones even feel the presence of Ma. This enthusiasm does not seem to ebb and many are coming on a daily basis. Bhupatibabu has written another special message to Kuladadada saying that in place of Pitaji (Bholanathji) Swami Akhandanandaji would be giving *diksha*<sup>22</sup> as per Ma's instructions. Swamiji always thought he was not qualified to give *diksha*, so was not keen on doing it, but because it is now Ma's command, he has agreed. There were only a few applicants for *diksha*.

23 May 1938 Monday

There is no news about Ma and we are all worried about Her. Bhupatibabu has written, "On Saturday there will be a *bhandara* in Haridwar and on Sunday at Dehradun. After that what Ma does we do not know." Hence everyone was keen to know what Ma would do after that, but there is no news as of now.

24 May 1938 Tuesday

In a letter from Ramtaranbabu sent from Calcutta we found out that last Wednesday Shachibabu went to meet Ma in Dehradun. He is supposed to come back on Monday. He took leave for five days. He added that last Saturday a *bhandara* was organized in Birla Temple in the memory of Bholanathji. Even today there is no news about Ma.

25 May 1938 Wednesday

We received a letter written by Shachidada. After reaching Calcutta from Dehradun on Monday, he wrote, "I went to meet Ma for two days and during these two days I had a lot of joy which I still carry within me. Ma had fever but She is all right now." Today Swamiji gave *diksha* to one or two people.

26 May 1938 Thursday

In one letter Bhupatidada said, "A memorial is to be built for Bholanathji in the Dhaka Ashram. After many pleas, Ma has finally indicated the exact place where it is to be. Today in Yogeshdada's letter we came to know that Ma is fine other than a slight ache in the hands. The *bhandara* was completed properly on Saturday. Very soon Ma might go for a change of place. No more news today."

We have been in a terrible storm since yesterday although the number of ladies coming to the Ashram remains unabated. Today they have come and done *kirtan*. Khuki (Nagendada's daughter) does not seem to have any issues about coming to the Ashram and she enjoys singing immensely. Khuki, Belun (Prafullababu's daughter) and Belun's mother can sing quite well so they play the harmonium while they sing *Namu kirtan* one after another with others joining in. Ma's photograph is beautifully decorated with flowers by the ladies, then afterwards they settle down to sing. Kanu Brahmachari got the men together and has started *kirtan* on Saturdays. Every Saturday there is unceasing singing of the "Name" for twenty-four hours. Kuladadada finishes his worship, *Yajna* etc. in the temple from early in the morning and leaves for his office by 11 a.m. Now-a-days he takes only fruits and *charu*<sup>21</sup>. Kanu does the Shiva Puja and is continuing with his studies; Atul Brahmachari starts his work early in the morning, cooks the *bhog*, does the worship of *Pada Peetha*<sup>24</sup>, and then Shiva worship in Siddheshwari Temple. So the activities of the Ashram continue. Kalachanddada and his aged mother came to the Ashram six months ago. He looks after his elderly mother, cleans Ma's hut and looks after the accounts of the Ashram as brahmacharis are prohibited from touching money. Householder devotees return from the office and after a wash sit near Ma's hut or some recess of the temple and do *japu* and meditation. Most of them return home after *sandhya kirtan*<sup>25</sup> and *arati*. After everyone leaves, an atmosphere of profound stillness prevails. The place is highly charged with spiritual vibrations and then there is this vast quietude of the fields.

27 May 1938 Friday

There is incessant storm and rain. It seems there will be a deluge. In spite of this a few people have come to meet us. No news from Ma.

28 May 1938 Saturday

It is *Amavasya* (new moon) today. In keeping with the traditions of the past Kuladadada did Ma's worship in the stillness of the late night. After sundown the



storm and rain have diminished a little and a few people came to receive *Prasad*. In spite of the weather, Shree Hemchandra Nag's wife and Dhirenbabu's mother came at night for offering worship; they watched the worship and did *japa* sitting on the verandah of the temple. At about half past twelve everyone took *Prasad* and returned home. Manik wrote a letter on 10 *Jyeshtha*, Tuesday<sup>26</sup>. It was sent from Dehradun and just this evening we received it. He writes, "Most probably tomorrow, Wednesday, Ma will go to Mussourie. She is supposed to stay at the Arya Samaj Dharmashala. Birendada, Bhupatidada, Abhay, Dasu and Ruma Devi are accompanying Her and I might also go. Ma has sent Nishibabu and Mashima (Maternal Aunt) to Solan and Godavari has been sent to Sevashram in Haridwar." In another letter enclosed in Manik's letter, Shiv Shankar Kaviraj writes "Didi, Nidhu and I are leaving for Dhaka today; we might get delayed en route for 2-3 days." There is no more news.

29 May 1938 Sunday

We hoped that Shiv Shankar Kaviraj would come today but he has not yet arrived. We had planned to go to Calcutta tomorrow, but upon deciding to meet Kaviraj Mahashay and hearing about Ma's well being, we have postponed our trip.

(to be continued)

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10. The top of the head, the seat of the highest *Chakra Sahasrara*
  11. See footnote 9
  12. The reference is to the tradition in Bengal for widowed women who remove their bangles and cease marking the parting in their hair with red vermilion. According to the orthodox tradition, Bengali Hindu women begin wearing conch shell bangles and the use of vermilion from the day of their wedding and give up the same when widowed.
  13. If She were only fierce we would not be able to survive and if She were only soft there also would be no progress
  14. The celebrations for Janmotsav, Ma's "birthday" celebrations
  15. 17 May 1938
  16. *Puja* performed on the lunar date of Ma's "birth"
  17. 19<sup>th</sup> lunar date the fourth phase of the waning moon in the dark fortnight after the full moon day
  18. A Tantrik design symbolizing a deity, carved on metal or crystal or painted on paper
  19. Hari-loot, meaning indiscriminate throwing of *Prasad* in the name of Hari (God)
  20. Narrative and lyric devotional songs composed by Vaishnava poets
  21. Knots of attachment and impressions (*sanskaras*) of past karma
  22. Initiation by the Guru wherein one is given a *mantra*
  23. Rice cooked in milk and honey over the fire of the *havan kunda* (fire sacrifice pit)
  24. Sacred footstool holding Ma's footwear
  25. Evening *kirtan*
  26. 24 May

## SVAKRIYA SVARASAMRITA

VOL. V  
(Continued)

### LOVE ON PHYSICAL PLANE HAS NO PLACE IN THE REALM OF ALL-LOVE

Sriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya Mahasaya took Ma to Kheora from Sripur. It was almost after a year of marriage that Bholanath wrote a letter (to Ma). Ma was not used to reading letters; no one had ever told Her (to read a letter), nor had they taught Her (to read and write a letter). It was a small village with no post office. There was a post office in another village, and a postman from there carrying mail (of this village) would deliver it to one person of this village, and the villagers would sort it out and distribute it among themselves. Kheora was the place of Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya Mahasaya's maternal uncle; hence many people there were related to Ma as grandfather (in village relationship) . Ma had acquaintance with all in that village and everybody looked upon Ma with affection. When that letter arrived, there was an uproar to tease Ma : 'Now Nirmala has received a letter from Bholanath!' Ma remained in a serious mood and kept looking down, as if She had not heard anything. She kept moving away from them in a way as one in embarrassment.

That letter was given to Sriyukta Mokshada Sundari Devi. In order to catch Ma's attentions she kept it at a place where Ma moved about. As for Ma, She never took notice of it, neither did She pick it up. In those days, it was a matter of embarrassment for the mother to hand over such a letter to the daughter. Here the daughter was also shy; She would not do anything which would adversely affect the appearance of Her *bhava* of shyness before everyone. So what was to be done? Some members of the family assembled (to find a way out). One of them suggested that the letter be dropped in front of Her while She passed by. Sriyukta Mokshada Sundari did just that. But, as they did not say anything about it to Ma, so Ma moved about in Her own (usual) mood (without picking up the letter).

After quite a few days had passed, a second letter came from Bholanath. Now, this second letter has arrived! Sriyukta Mokshada Sundari Devi started worrying terribly, as Bholanath might be annoyed on not getting any reply. Realizing the situation, two or three persons again got together, read both the letters and made out a draft reply. A grandmother of Ma then went to Her and said, “Here is this draft, you just make a verbatim copy of whatever is written in it and then give it to me. You have not to do anything else. None had told Ma how a copy is made. Keeping (the draft) before Herself, She copied each word exactly in the style and in the place it was written and then returned the piece of paper without any comment. Later on, when Ma was at Bholanath’s place, he asked Her, “Were the contents of the letter written by you?” Ma related the whole incident. Feeling as if somewhat hurt, he said, “Had this been known before, who would have cared to write the letter? Well, our parents have united us; did you not feel even like enquiring about my well-being?” Ma rejoined, “There was no *Kheyala* at all about it.” Bholanath then said, “Supposing I pass away, I do not live!” On this, there was not the least sign of a different feeling visible on Ma’s face, as though She was the same in all circumstances. In the same complacent, simple and artless way, She replied, “Not there, well, what will happen then?” Bholanath neither became irritated nor was perceptibly hurt even. He just said, “Your intelligence is that of a mere child. With age one becomes mature and then springs forth a response to love.” Today Bholanath is no more, but he had predicted correctly (about his passing away).

#### MA’S THREE-FOLD\* EXPLANATION OF HER INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS THE QUESTION OF BHOLANATH’S SEPARATION

When questioned repeatedly on this subject, Ma said, “Look, if you bring a new earthen pot and it is broken, powdered and made one with earth, then, here you get two separate forms, but in these two forms there is One only—He alone is\*\*. Do you know why you ask like this? You distinguish between the two and thereby reap the fruit of separation. The positive outcome of enjoyment of earthly goods is that one becomes happy on getting the desired object and miserable when deprived of it. In the field of enjoyment of sense object, where one is propelled by a desire, this (the

above fact) is, indeed, the fruit of one's action and it is there where it should be. Where there is no question of enjoyment and non-enjoyment, it is only "That", whatever you may call it. Indeed, *Baba*, it is "That" alone. Again, from the worldly point of view too, consider another aspect. Moving along a street, you may notice an electric bulb dropping on the ground and getting shattered to pieces. What do you do about it? On recalling this incident, when you relate it to someone, evoking it perhaps with a sense of fun and laughter, what explanation do you then put forth in terms of mental agony? To ensure that the shreds of the broken bulb do not hurt anybody, someone may rather carefully pick up them.'

\* Firstly, there is the multiple manifestation which is false and one unmanifest that is real. This is explained in a separate note below. Secondly, from the purely worldly point of view, anything that breaks away is removed and kept away like the pieces of a broken electric bulb. And lastly, from the point of view of absolute Truth, there is no creation at all but only the One supreme Reality.

\*\* In the earthen pot as it is and in the broken condition, what is true is earth. the name 'pot' and its form are false. Similarly, there is only Brahman alone that is real and all names and forms are false.

\* \*

Human beings have to be dwellers of the inner cave, so that the Supreme Being who resides withing may be revealed.

Matri Vani (Volume II)

## MOTHER AS REVEALED TO ME

- Bhaiji

(Continued)

Whilst the disease was in full swing, I developed a very strong desire to eat boiled rice. The attending physicians would not allow me to have it. Niranjan appealed to Mother, saying : "Ma, Jyotish wants to take boiled rice; the doctors won't allow it. If he dies, we shall have one great grief that we could not satisfy this desire of his before his death." Sri Ma laughed and said : "When Jyotish has a craving for it, he should be given rice." After a few days *Pitaji* brought some boiled rice from Shahbag and made me eat it, but nobody noticed it.

In those days Sri Ma used to come to see me once daily. One morning She came very early and after She had left, Brahmachari Kamalakanta brought me some *Champak* flowers, because I would not have an opportunity that day to offer them at Ma's feet with my own hands. In the afternoon Kulada Dada brought me a lovely rose. The same painful thought recurred. The rose was kept on the table by the side of the *champak* flowers. That such lovely flowers could not be placed at Ma's feet disappointed me much. Just at that time She suddenly entered my room, went to the table and stood reclining to the left. She gazed at me for three or four minutes quite absent-mindedly and then left. I thought She had taken the flowers. Both were missing. Next day when She came I enquired about it. She said : "I don't quite know what I took, but I must have taken something from here. I went to the house of the Zamindar of Dhankora and gave something to a woman there. Then I went to the house of a Deputy Magistrate where a woman was ill and I left something there too." Afterwards, I came to learn that at the first house She had given the rose and at the second a *champak* flower. The sick lady recovered soon.

In this connection Sri Ma said : "Intense hankering after the Divine is the core of all worships, of all prayers. In our heart lie eternal springs of divine power and in every effort lie the roots of the creative, preservative and destructive urges of Being."

I am just reminded of another incident. During my illness *Pitaji* ordered that every day some rice *prasada* should be sent to me from Shahbag; but it was offered at the temple only at about 2 P.M. and the *Prasad* used to reach my house much later. Everybody in my home got annoyed to find me waiting for *prasada* so late in the day. On a particular day there was some adverse criticism of the whole arrangement at my place. It caused me so much pain that I came to feel there was no need of *prasada* being brought to me in the face of so much disgust and criticism amongst the members of my family. The day wore on; it was 2 A.M. at night. No *prasada* had arrived from Shahbag. It occurred to me that my reluctance to receive *prasada* with so much trouble was most probably the cause for the stopping of the arrangement. I wept and wept on my bed and the *prasada* arrived in half-an-hour. I learnt that Sri Ma had just risen from Her bed and ordered : "Go quickly, carry *prasada* to Jyotish at once." I was given to understand later that when during the preceding midday Sri Ma's permission was sought to send *prasada* as usual, She said, "No". So the practice of sending it was interrupted. In this connection Sri Ma said : "I don't do anything of my own will; you laugh and weep according to your impulses and your desires are fulfilled."

During my illness I went to Vindhyachal for a change. I happened to meet Mother at Calcutta on my way and requested Her to go there too. She did not agree. On reaching Vindhyachal I passed one whole night weeping for Her. Just one day later Mataji and *Pitaji* arrived there.

Sri Ma remarked in this connection : "The aim of all religious practices is to sublimate all egoistic impulses and given them a unified direction towards the Divine. As soon as the ego ceases to function, the 'Eternal Thou' will take its place."

From Vindhyachal I went to Chunar. Sri Ma also went there. One day She said : "Don't you ever go out for a stroll?" Next dawn She took me out with Her for a walk. On the level plains as well as on low hills we walked five to six miles and returned at 11 A.M. While coming down-hill I felt very weak and could hardly walk. Ma turned round and said : "Our house is not far off." In ten minutes' time an *ekka* turned up quite unexpectedly in a small lane; otherwise we would have had to walk one mile more to reach a carriage-stand. I was afraid that the great strain due to such a long walk might aggravate my illness. But no such thing happened.

Sri Ma said a little while later : “Both in this work-a-day world as well as in the spiritual sphere, patience is the main support.”

At a little distance from my house, *Pitaji*, *Mataji* and myself sat on a lawn. *Mataji* said She would like to bathe with the water drawn from the well near the fort. She began to press for it like a little child. I said, “Let me call my servant”. She replied : “No you must not”. I felt puzzled. For in those places people finish drawing water from the wells before sun-down. I felt sorry that I would not be able to carry out Sri Ma’s wishes. But to my surprise a man with lantern turned up at the well to draw water. He was persuaded to get water for Ma’s bath.

Sri Ma said : “Whatever you seek can be obtained, provided the thirst for the object of your desire pervades every fiber of your being.”

During my illness I spent some days at Giridih. One day, I was longing to see Ma, only to find to my surprise that She and Her whole party arrived the next morning.

After this change I returned to Calcutta. Even then there was spitting of blood when I coughed. My physicians advised me to pass the remaining days of my life at some healthy place.

Sri Ma ordered : “Go back to your desk in the office and resume your duties there.” I went to Dacca. Both *Pitaji* and *Mataji* accompanied me to the office and left, after seating me in my own chair.

At that time Mr. Finlow, the Director of the Agricultural Department, was my boss. He loved me and had a great regard for me. He told me : “Do as much office work as you can; send the rest to my desk.” He enquired : “Well, just tell me how you have recovered from that fell disease ?” I said in reply : “It is through the grace of *Mataji* who lives at the Ramna Ashram over there. She did not give me any medicine. Though I followed the doctor’s prescriptions, Her mercy was my only saving.” He said : “Amongst our people one hears of similar instances. I believe what you say.”

One evening an old neighbour of mine, aged about 80 years, Shyama Charan Mukherji by name, came to my place. When the conversation turned to Sri Ma, I said : “It is through Her grace alone that I happen to be still alive.” He blurted out : “Can one through anybody’s grace live longer than one’s predestined span?” In the

course of this discussion he suddenly became silent and went away a few seconds later. He returned next morning to say : "Do you know why I left your place so abruptly ? When we were talking about Sri Ma, I saw on the back rest of your chair a bright oval light like that of the sun. At that time there was darkness outside and no light in the room. I looked about and could not trace the source of such a light at that hour; so I decided to ponder over the phenomenon before telling you about it. After careful thought I have come to the conviction that everything is possible through the grace of a Great Being. Really, She has been protecting you all along."

A few months after his first darsana of Sri Ma, Niranjan told Her at Shahbag : "Ma, we very frequently think that after your Ashram is started, both myself and Jyotish will live there as *brahmacharis* during our next births." Ma looked at me and asked : "Why are you silent? Won't you be able to do so even in this body?"

Some three or four years later, when I resumed my duties after recovery, Sri Ma reminded me of the above talk and said : "Just think, how you have had your rebirth." Then She took a golden chain from Her neck and placed it on mine, saying : "From this day onward know it for certain that you are a *brahmachari* and that you have had your rebirth."

The little hut, eight by five and a half cubits, with verandahs on all sides, which I had erected in the *Ashram* according to my own ideas, was used by Ma. She would lie down on the two long verandahs on either side. She told me that I had been one of the *sannyasis* who used to dwell on that site, and the spot which I had unconsciously chosen for building the hut for Her, was the very place where I had passed my life during my previous birth.

I feel that it was my unique good luck to find Sri Ma's physical body resting on the very spot where I had carried on my *sadhana* during my previous existence. Probably my karma had directed such a course; for when I first saw Sri Ma, She appeared to me to embody all gods and goddesses in Her Person and I felt that She had been my presiding Goddess all through the series of my previous births.

From the latter part of 1929 for full three years, I used to go to Ramna very early in the morning with a desire to see Her first. For this purpose I rose from bed at 2 A.M. , finished my usual prayers and worship by 4-30 A.M. and then went out. On certain days it so happened that I confused the two hands of my watch, misread the



time and started much earlier. Hearing the clock strike in some adjacent house on the way, I realized that I had started far too early. In that case I would walk in the Ramna field or sit at the gate of Ramna Kalibari, waiting for the light of dawn. I entered the Ashram at 5 A.M. and walked about in the fields with Sri Ma, returning home at 10-30 or 11 A.M. On certain days I came back at midday or even 1 P.M.

I never sat in Sri Ma's presence. My whole body remained erect with a thrill of inner joy. When I was asked by anybody to sit down, I felt quite embarrassed. Sri Ma would usually remain quite silent during our morning rounds. She broke Her silence only in exceptional cases. I used to follow Her footsteps without a word.

(to be continued)

\* \*

### List of Festivals

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Sri 108 Swami Muktananda Giriji's<br>Nirvana Tithi | - 14th April 2018 |
| 2. Akshay Tritiya                                     | - 18th April 2018 |
| 3. Adi Jagad guru Sri Shankaracharya's Jayanti        | - 20th April 2018 |
| 4. Baba Bholanath's Nirvan Tithi                      | - 23rd April 2018 |
| 5. Buddha Purnima                                     | - 30th April 2018 |
| 6. Sri Sri Mataji's Janma Tithi Puja                  | - 3,4th May 2019  |
| 7. Sri Sri Ganga Dashahara                            | - 24th May 2018   |
| 8. Guru Purnima Mahotsav                              | - 27th July 2018  |
| 9. Sri 108 Swami Muktananda Giriji's<br>Nirvan Tithi  | - 17th Aug. 2018  |

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## **PADAPEETHAM SMARAMI**

- Br. Dr. Geeta Banerjee

RAMNA ASHRAM, DHAKA, BANGLADESH

(continued)

### **Installing of Panchavati**

In the year 1930, Baba Bholanath, directed by Shree Shree Ma, installed a Panchavati at the Ramna Ashram.

### **Samadhi of Sadhus at Ramna**

While digging was going on for laying the foundation of Ashram at Ramna, a number of samadhis (tombs) were discovered in which sadhus had been buried. Among them, there were samadhis of earlier incarnation of Baba Bholanath, Bhajji and Swami Akhandananda (Gurupriya Didi's father), as told by Shree Shree Ma. Shree Shree Ma's Ashram was constructed there as a response to the prayers of the sadhus whose samadhis were there. Ma said, "These persons with whom in their previous birth, these sadhu mahatma had a relationship have come here again to work for the Ashram and more such persons will come for the work of the Ashram - Know it for sure. This Body has also come here to grant their prayer and will stay here as long as they wish." At Ramna, the Ashram was founded on the ground hallowed by the tapasya of the Sadhu Mahatmas. According to Ma's direction, those samadhis were preserved underground like before.

Three temples were constructed, the first one was a temple of Ma Kali, the second one was a Shiva Temple, and an impression of Shree Shree Ma's feet was installed in the third temple.

### **Holy land of the Giri Sampradaya**

Shree Shree Ma said that in ancient times, this holy land of Ramna was the place where many Sadhus of the Giri Sampradaya (one of the ten sects of Sannyasis) had lived and performed tapasya. Swami Akhandananda too received sannayasa diksha from Swami Shankarananda Giri of Kambhal. Ma made Swami Akhandanandaji perform sadhana at the Ramna Ashram as Swami Akhandanandaji in his previous

birth belonged to the Giri Sampradaya Shree Gokul Thakur was once the proprietor of this land in the past.

### **Installation of the idol of Ma Annapurna, the Presiding Deity of the Ramna Ashram.**

In 1929 on the auspicious occasion of Kali Puja, Shree Shree Ma had the Kheyal of installing the Vighraha of the Annapurna in the Ashram. Ma gave the following details of the idols of Ma Annapurna and Baba Vishwanath. The simhasana (throne) of Mata Annapurna was to be half a cubit high. Shree Shree Annapurna Ma would sit on the throne with her right placed on the left high. These would be a stool where her foot would be placed. She would hold a bowl in her left hand. In her right hand there would be a ladle extended towards Vishwanathji offering alms to him. To her right, Baba Vishwanath would be standing. He would hold a trident in his right arm, a bag for collecting alms hanging from his left shoulder and his two hands would be holding a begging bowl in a gesture of receiving alms from Ma Annapurna. Besides these two main idols, some other idols of great significance were sculpted and installed in the shrine scrupulously following Shree Shree Ma's instructions. Earlier, Ma had "seen" a small baby form of Ma Kali in space gliding down towards Her with stretched arms as if desirous of being received in her arms. In the vision, there was no image of Shiva below Her feet and the child Kali was alone. Ma had seen this vision with open eyes while she was sitting. Accordingly, a small Kali image was made and as directed by Ma, placed above Ma Annapurna on Her left side in such a way that it would seem She were flying in space. There would be no idol of Shiva below Her feet. Right above Ma Annapurna, there would be an idol of Shree Vishnu with his four arms (in a sitting posture). Below the throne of Ma Annapurna, there would be a murti of Shree Ganesh. For making all those idols, Ma gave Bhaiji a silver pitcher, a silver plate, a silver tumbler, four gold bangles and a golden chain of hers. These articles of silver and gold were given to the sculptor.

It took some time for the idols to be ready. In 1931 Shree Shree Annapurna Temple was constructed in the Ashram premises. The idols of Ma Annapurna, Baba Vishwanath, Ma Kali, Shree Vishnu and Shree Ganesh were duly installed in May 1931, during the Birth Anniversary celebration, of Shree Shree Ma. It was found that the silver idol of Ma Annapurna could not be fully viewed by devotees from distance. Hence it was decided to replace the small silver idol with a larger idol made of ashtadhatu and alloy of eight metals, such as gold, silver, copper etc. Ma

contributed more ornaments for its making. While the sculptor was working at it, Ma and Baba Bholanath used to visit the workshop regularly to inspect the work. Ma herself used to guide the sculptor with her instruction.

The sculptor's name was Janaki. It is believed that both the silver idols and the idol of ashtadhatu were made by him. It is also said that this ashtadhatu idol was his last piece of art; he passed away after that. The installation ceremony of this new idol of Ma Annapurna was performed during Ma's Janmotsava in 1932. The ritual of prana pratishtha was done by Baba Bholanath. On the last day of the Janmotsava, at midnight, the new idol of Ma Annapurna was installed. The one year old silver idol was given visarjan (immersion) in a large container filled with water by following the rules of the shastras. The new idol of Ma Annapurna installed on her throne was kept inside a shrine made of glass.

(to be continued)

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### **REQUEST**

Efforts are being made to make the journal more attractive and interesting to preach the sayings, biography etc. of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee widely. All are requested to send their suggestion that may be complied, if considered worthy, so that we can make it more lucid and appealing for the readers belonging to every age group of modern time.

Thanking you and Jai Ma.

Address : The Managing Editor, Amrit Varta  
Shree Shree Anandamayee Ashram  
Bhadaini, Varanasi - 221001

## **Children Page**

# **GOD TAKES CARE OF HIS DEVOTEE**

A sadhu lived in a forest. He used to spend the whole day doing bhajan, puja, etc. Of the scriptures prescribed for a saint's life, we would take God's name the whole day. In the evening he would come out the forest and go to the nearby village. He would accept alms of only one chhalek of rice and return to the forest where he used to live under a tree. We used to cook the rice, offer it to god and take it as Prasad. That was the only meal he used to take in 24 hours.

One person asked to watch him daily take his food in this way. He wondered at the pleasant countenance of the sadhu and his peaceful nature. He would wonder as to who the sadhu was? Where did he live? His face is so shining with so much joy, then what an ocean of joy must be filling his heart with waves of nectar. He would watch and think the same over and over again.

Days passed. At last one day that person followed the sadhu up to his hut. In reaching his hut, the person fell at the feet of the sadhu and said, I have taken refuge at your feet, please let me stay with you and serve you as your disciple.

The sadhu was puzzled and worried. What will happen now? He thought. I pass whole day in sadhan bhajan and to be just one Chhalek of rice an alms according to the rule I follow. I cook that much of rice and take my meal just once. .... accept more food as alms. If this person stays with me, what will he eat? I should not let him starve! This was the sadhu's worry.

He tried to dissuade the person, but the man was adamant. He would not change his mind.

After a lot of thinking about the pros and cons the sadhu came to the conclusion that he ought to accept whatever God would do.

So the person stayed on. At the time of taking food, he did not say anything. He did not accept any food offered by the sadhu but only the water with which the sadhu cleaned the rice before cooking.

Just as the fragrance of flowers attracts the honey bees, similarly, the fame of the saints attracts followers within a few days. another devotee came. He prayed, O Mahatma, you the splendour your greatness irradiates from you and it cannot be concealed. Please make me blessed with a drop of your divine qualities. Please allow me to stay with you. If you force me away, I will not leave, I will keep holding your feet until you let me stay.

The sadhu once more got plunged in confusion and worry. O God, what kind of test you are putting me in? When he could not glimpse any solution, he gave up thinking and accepted God's will.

When this person saw that the first devotee drank the water of the rice, he said, "I will drink the starch of the cooked rice." He refused to take any other food.

When the sadhu saw all this, he wondered and thought, "O what fool I am? God who has created this world and all the creatures living here, he Himself would make arrangement for the maintenance of his creation

We are ignorant; why we worry unnecessarily. If we leave all our worries at his feet, we shall not face trouble, there is no need to worry. Just as we do not have to carry our luggage on our heads once we have boarded a train, similarly, we need not carry the load of worries on our heads once we have taken refuge in God.

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At all times to be vowed to the search after Truth and consequently to be completely truthful in every respect is man's duty. God's grace streams forth at all times.

Matri Vani (Volume II)

# BODH GAYA

The Place Where Buddha Attained Buddhahood

- Melita Maschmann

(Continued)

Later in the evening, the temple is exclusively occupied by the Tibetans who have settled in hundreds in their tents at the border of the holy region and the pilgrims who come and go throughout the year. About a dozen monks are sitting in the area; most of them are reading and turning the prayer mills at the same time, some of them are praying with a rosary. Two very tall pilgrims with thin moustaches and a long, thin goatee on their chins prostrate themselves groaning before the Buddha. All their possessions are stuffed in the chest of their padded overcoats. Knives are kept in the leg of their boots. The old lady next to me also has a knife in a beautiful silver-sheath stuck into her belt. The two giants bow reverently to the Buddha.

It is already night when I leave the temple. The street lights are extinguished. A procession of singing Tibetan women goes slowly round the temple. Some of them carry candles. Their songs have a fascinating melancholy. Children seek shelter in their broad coarse skirts from the icy wind blowing from Nepal. A group of young men with broad-rimmed hats and casque coats with belts of resistant flet, roam about aimlessly. Most have kerchiefs over their hats and knotted under their chin.

A dozen or more monks circumambulate the temple on a runner. They let their rosary fall at every fifth step, fold their hands over their head, touch with them their forehead and breast and then prostrate themselves on the ground with fervor, arms first like the swimmers who leap into the sea. There are old men among them. I hear them groaning gently, but I don't see any hesitation in flinging themselves onto their knees.

Three hundred oil-wicks in silver-cups burn in front of the Tree of Enlightenment. Foreheads of all worshippers bow to the gold-coated stone adorning the holy place.

Another path for the pilgrims winds round the temple area on lower slope and right at the top a third one. The three paths are full with singing, murmuring, whisperings and silent prayer. Here and there, someone carries a hurricane lamp and the holy tree blazes at the bottom of the valley in the light of the burning wicks flickering in the wind. Crimson rises the moon over the temple.

Next day I visit a Lama-monastery. It looks like an Asian fairytale. A broad house surrounded by a terrace on the groundfloor. The roof of a Chinese temple rises above the first floor. The front facing the street is covered by ornaments in a fantastic way; flowers, stars, fish, carved and painted ones, everything in shining colours, ornamental bands running horizontally and vertically, lots of red and blue. It is a jubilant expression of vital joy in the beauty of the world. At the same time, the skilful handiwork is completely rooted in tradition.

I climb one staircase. The layout of the first floor. I feel, is like a village square. There is a small temple in the middle. The "square" is uncovered. Around the periphery are the rows of houses. In fact, these are only the cells of the monks. Door after door in a low white wall.

A monk in a torn cowl and with a broad Mongolian peasant face walks beside me in the temple and talks for an hour almost without pause. I try to shake him off by sitting on a mat with eyes closed, but he waits patiently at the door, till I get up, and again runs after me.

The place is in semi-darkness. Here and there, an oil lamp burns in front of a Buddha statue. A silver-embossed bowl of the size of a baptismal font is filled with a mixture which looks like semi-liquid wax. A burning wick swims over its surface. The focal point of the temple is a massive, golden Buddha with a flaming crown covered in precious stones. Valuable old books, each tied in Chinese silk, are piled behind him. Precious silver goblets placed in front of him. The small Buddhas look like ancient dolls in their faded silken garments; they fill a large showcase—row after



row. Paintings of the Buddhist *Heilsgeschichte* and mythology hang on the walls: scenes from the life of Gautama Buddha, *Bodhisattvas* playing music, mysterious *mandalas* which have faded to dark-yellow, a demon; blazing in flames, priests giving instructions ... The inmates of the monastery must have collected whatever they could from the priceless treasures of their native country. They must have brought the showcases containing pious rarities here. May be, there is an order behind this chaos in the semi-darkness, and it can only be recognized by the initiated.

The monk turns away when I put a coin in the collection box. He comes down to the groundfloor with me to the “prayer-mill”: a room almost completely filled up by a brass-cylinder. I think, it is nearly one and half meters in diameter and two and half is eight with handles at the lower edge. A notice in English informs me that this vessel is filled up with prayers to help purify the world of its sins. The monk asks me to grasp one of the handles. I follow his example, and we walk briskly around the cylinder which turns easily. Each time we go round, a bell chimes melodiously. Several monks join us. They circle the mighty prayer-mill pushing it with earnest faces and long, quick steps.

Later I return once more to the temple near the Bodhi tree. It is quiet and cold there. I see the young monk outside performing the kneeling exercise on a plank. As I stand next to him, he looks through me as if looking through a glass-window.

My Tibetan friend moves a little aside on her mat without looking up. She knows from my step who is standing before her. The rite is in progress. The syllables of the *mantra* ascend and descend like singing waters of a fountain. Peace and cheerfulness flow strongly purifying the air we breathe. The Enlightened One bestows his blue-eyes smile upon us drawing into a unity what was separated by the deceptive mirror of *maya*.

# THE HERITAGE OF THE HINDUS

(Continued)

- Dr. Bithika Mukerji

## On Methodology:

It is well known that the Hindu tradition is the Vedic tradition. The multifaceted religious atmosphere which is so characteristic of our country derives its strength and sustenance from the Vedas. The ancient sages lighted for us the path of reverential worship of deities; they also indicated the way towards the knowledge of the One Reality which remains hidden behind the many-splendored world of everyday experience.

It is universally believed that the Vedas are the oldest scriptural lore of a living tradition. Hindus consider themselves Hindus by virtue of this ancient heritage, which has supported them in the past, helps them to live in the present and inspires them to a future of hope and blessedness. Our tradition is unique in the sense that it has remained unbroken down the ages. It can be seen easily that the ever-living fount of Truth, lived and taught by the Vedic seers, has been systematically guarded, preserved and proclaimed by succeeding generations of great exponents of wisdom. Where traditions are broken or radicalized the recovery of meaning of ancient texts becomes an academic process. The strength of the ancient heritage is lost to those who feel severed from their roots. Hindus, however, do not regard the Vedas as 'written books' composed by nature worshippers of an early civilization. They are for the Hindus the embodiment of Reality Itself presented to mankind for contemplation by the 'Seers of truth' (Rishis) in the form of inspired utterances (*mantra*), strung together in a unique sequence (*krama*), and set to specific rhythmic cadences (*chhanda*). The mantra is the heart of the Vedic literature.

A question may be raised if modern methods of evaluating ancient texts are completely inapplicable here, and if so, is this literature to be taken as an inviolable structure totally unrelated to the requirements of changing times? In order to judge the relevance of this question it is well to remember that modern methodology is itself an outcome of a particular tradition which acknowledges many stages of radicalizations in the developing history of its own cultural pattern. The Western tradition starting from ancient Greece recognizes a break between an age of myths and an age of rational hypotheses which led to the birth of science. Modern methodologies reflect therefore an ethos which instead of taking anything on trust, would rather subject all phenomena to rational evaluations and employ verification for gaining exactitude in knowledge.

In this context, it is well to remember also, that rationality is the natural predicament of the human mind. Man does not choose to be rational; he cannot but be rational and must relate to all that surrounds him through his outward-going sensibilities. The most natural attitude for man is therefore appreciation of the world in which he finds himself. This is the foundation on which sciences are built and thus it lies at the root of the Western tradition. This intellectual climate reflects an unwillingness to accept anything outside the framework of finite time, space and modes of verifiability.

If we keep both these points in mind, then we may begin to appreciate the unique message of the Vedas. The crucial point regarding the Vedic tradition is that reverence and rationality are held together in a continuity and not in opposition. That which is to be accepted in a spirit of reverence as Truth Itself is made plausible and reasonable for the seeker of knowledge. The final state of this seeking lies in certainty, a certainty, achieved in the form of a direct apprehension, or in Self-realization because the goal of the Vedic teaching is to indicate the ultimate unity of the Self with Brahman.

The Vedas teach man how to live in the world in which he finds himself; they also teach that although the world is desirable, it is not of supreme value because the

happiness man seeks lies beyond it. The teaching which seeks to take man beyond the framework of finite time-space-objects, therefore, is necessarily of a pedagogical nature only. It has educational value, inasmuch as it is geared toward convincing a mind naturally prone to worldly affairs, of the necessity for knowing that which lies beyond 'time, space and objecthood'. This pedagogical device is for awakening an interest in the 'unnatural' rather than the natural; a dimension of total bliss rather than a preoccupation with fragments of bliss; a possibility of gaining a unity which is universal and immortal rather than what remain at the level of fragmented existence.

Scholars trained in academic methods have spoken of and written about the greatness of the Vedas as ancient religious texts. They have seen in the books a pattern of development from the worship of many gods to the contemplation of the One Brahman; from the preoccupation with worldly affairs and moral social standards toward an a-moral, lonely, asectic way of life; and from the purity of Vedic sacrifices toward a complicated ritualistic mode of worship culminating in the Pauranic tradition of the supremacy of particular gods. Hindus, on the other hand, do not subscribe to this way of understanding their scripture. The method of understanding which seeks to categorise ancient texts into time elements, becomes quite irrelevant in this context, because these are not "books written by men in by gone days" but they are the inspired songs of such men and women who have been vouchsafed the ultimate vision of Brahman as 'Reality, Knowledge, Bliss'. The realization of Brahman spontaneously gives birth to beautiful hymns of celebration and joy. There can be no past, present or future as regards these paens of joy, which are to be meditated upon, contemplated and used for holding on to that dimension of life which sets the real meaning to everyday existence. They are the pulsating, living words which overcome all barriers of time and space; and what can have a greater power of conviction than the direct apprehension of Truth?

The theme of the Vedas may be summarized by saying that it lies in a message of hope that although Supreme Knowledge of Brahman is unknown to man, yet man is the proper candidate for qualifying himself in order that this great Realisation of the unity of *atman* and Brahman may be brought about. The one question the Vedas

deal with is "Why should I be called upon to know Brahman? Why should I discipline myself in this enjoyable world in order to annihilate the I-consciousness which I am?"

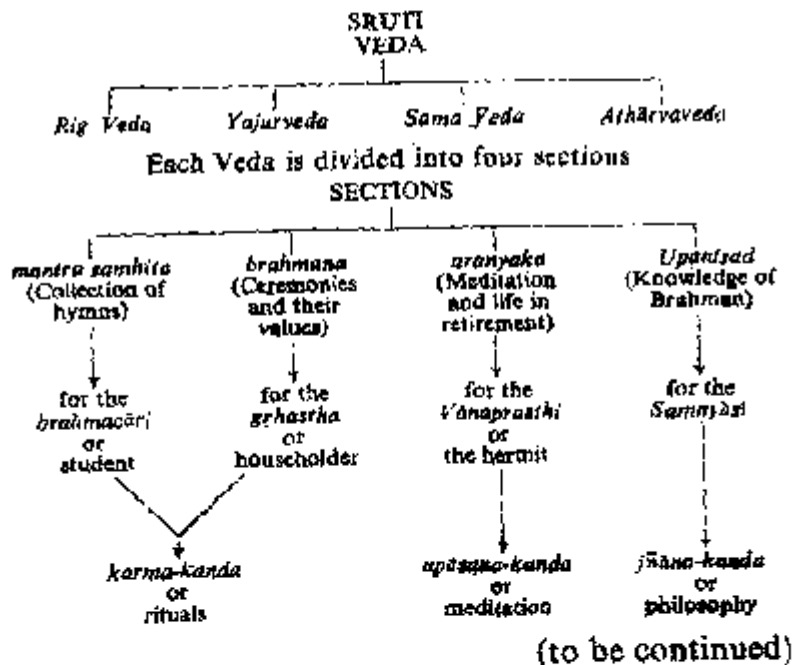
Science requires verifiability for its truths. Since the appeal here is to a mind already seized with thoughts about the other world, a reasonable presentation meets the case. The questioning arises because the possibility of the answer is already within the purview of the seeker. This can be stated in different words: all scriptures emphasize the importance of "The desire for Knowledge" (*mumuksutva*); they also maintain that the desire for Knowledge can awaken only due to Divine Grace, so that the questioning is the penultimate situation culminating in the full certainty of Self-realization, a state of Bliss which finds expression in songs of joy and celebration. The scriptures, therefore, are for those who are already in a receptive mood for the teaching regarding Brahman. They alone may enkindle the desire for knowledge which is the beginning of the quest for the man who is not totally engrossed in the world. The sequence of the transmission of this knowledge has passed from teacher to disciple to form an unbroken tradition from the most ancient times to the present.

The Vedas contain every kind of teaching including the supreme knowledge of Brahman. Nothing which affects the life of a Hindu is totally extraneous to the Vedas in the sense that all teachings down the ages regarding *karma* (social activity) *upasana* (worship of deities) and *jnana* (knowledge) have been in accord with what has been stated in the texts. The heart of the Vedic teaching lies in inculcating a reverential attitude toward the Supreme Being, who is the fountain-head as well as the ultimate resolution of all that there is in the universe.

**Structure of the Vedas:** The Vedas are stated in Sanskrit and are four in number, *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda*. Each Veda is divided into four sections. The first portion is called *samhita* comprising hymns (*mantra*) to gods. The second section is named *brahmana*; it contains instructions in prose regarding ritualistic guidelines. The third section is called *aranyaka* or a forest treatise. It deals with contemplative thinking regarding this and the other world. The fourth section, known as *Upanisad* is also called Vedanta because it comes at the end of the Veda in the literary as well as spiritual sense. It contains philosophical discourses between teachers and pupils regarding the supreme teaching of the unity of *atman* and Brahman.

The divisions are very tenuous. One section flows into another. One *Upanisad* belongs in the first section itself. Thus no rigidity marks the divisions. They are fluid in the sense that one may proceed to the forest from the city whenever one feels called upon to do so, otherwise a steady progress is indicated in the passage from the life of a student, to the life of a householder, then life in retirement in preparation for the life of renunciation. The sections may be classified as follows:

\* \*



# SACRED PLACES OF KASHMIR, JAMMU & LADHAK

A Devotee

## UDHAMPUR

तस्मै नमः परमकारणकारणाय  
दीप्तोज्ज्वलज्वलितपिङ्गललोचनाय ।  
नागेन्द्रहारकृतकुण्डलभूषणाय  
ब्रह्मेन्द्रविष्णुवरदाय नमः शिवाय ॥

(Reverence to Siva, who is the supreme cause of all causes, whose yellowish blue eyes are bright and shining with splendor, who is wearing a necklace and earrings formed by snakes and who gives boons to Brahma, Indra and Visnu)

Udhampur is a town situated about sixty-five kilometers north-east of Jammu. It lies on Jammu Srinagar road.

There are ancient temples of Lord Siva and Sri Rama. Big fairs are held at this place during *Sivaratri* (February-March) and *Ramnavami* (March-April).

आपदामपहतरिं दातारं सर्वसम्पदाम् ।

लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामं भूयो भूयो नमाम्यहम् ॥

(I bow down in reverence again and again to Sri Rama, who is pleasing among men and who destroys all troubles and bestows all benefits).

## UMA

स तस्मिन्नेवाकाशे स्त्रियमाजगाम बहुशोभमानामुमां हेमवतीं ।

तां होवाच किमेतद् यक्षमिति ॥

सा ब्रह्मणेति होवाच ।

ब्रह्मणो वा एतद्विजये महीयध्वमिति ।

ततो हैव विदाञ्चकार ब्रह्मणेति ॥

[At that place in the sky, he (Indra) came near the very beautiful daughter of the snow-clad Himalayas, Uma. He enquired of her who was this divine Yaksha. She replied, "He is the Brahman (Supreme Primordial Being, the cause of all that exists), You felt proud by mistaking the victory of the Brahman as that achieved by your own strength". Then Indra came to know with certainty that the Yaksha was no other than Brahman].

Uma is another name of the goddess Parvati, daughter of the Himalayas and wife of Lord Siva. When she went to perform severe austerities in order to win Siva as her husband, her mother Mena who greatly loved her daughter, fearing that such hardship would tell upon her health, asked her in the following words not to perform austerities:

उ दुर्गे मा कुरु तपस्याम् ।  
[O Durga! Do not perform austerities.]

So the goddess Durga is called Uma.

The great poet Kalidasa therefore gives the meaning of the 'Uma' in the following verse of Kumarasambhavam;

तां पार्वतीत्याभिजनेन नाम्ना बन्धुप्रियां बन्धुजनो जुहाव ।  
उमेति मात्रा तपसो निषिद्धा पश्चादुमाख्यां सुमुखीं जगाम ॥

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\* Kenopanishad.

\*\* According to another version the goddess is called Uma because She is the wife (better half) of Shiva. in 3 in Sanskrit means Siva and ऋ means beautiful woman.

\*\*\* Kumarasambhavam, first canto, verse 26.

[As yet the maiden was unknown to fame;

"Child of the Mountain" was her only name.  
But when her mother, filled with anxious care  
At her stern penance, cried: "Forbear! Forbear!"  
To a new title was the warning turned,  
And Uma was the name the maiden earned.]



The sacred village of Uma is about eight kilometers east of Achhibal which is about sixty kilometers south-east of Srinagar and only eleven kilometers from Ananta Nag. It is so called because it is sacred to the goddess Uma.

There is a beautiful spring in the village which is regarded as an embodiment of the goddess Uma and is also called Uma.

The following two verses from the Nilamata tell about the glory of the goddess Uma and her worship”

यैव देवी उमा सैव काश्मीरा नृपपुङ्गव ।

आसीत् साः पूर्णजलं सुरभ्यं सुमनोहरम् ॥

(O Great King : She, who is the goddess Uma, manifested as the land of Kashmir, which was originally a beautiful and charming lake full of water).

माघमासि सिते पक्षे चतुर्थी या भवेद् द्विज ।

उमासंपूजनं कार्यं तस्यां सौभाग्यमिप्सुना ॥

[O Twice-born! One wishing good fortune should worship Uma on the fourth day of the bright half of the month of *Magha* (December-January)]

### VAISHNO DEVI

त्वं वैष्णवी शक्तिरनन्तवीर्या

विश्वस्य बीजं परमासि माया ।

सम्मोहितं देवी समस्तमेतत्

त्वं वै प्रसन्ना भुवि मुक्तिहेतुः ॥

Thou art infinite power.

Thou art the strength of Vishnu.

Thou art the seed (cause) of the universe and Thou art the greatest delusion.

All that exists is enchanted by Thee.

Thou, when pleased, becomest the cause of salvation.

The sacred shrine of the goddess called Vaishno Devi is situated on a cave of the Trikuta hill, about fifty-eight kilometers north of Jammu town. The road from Jammu to the cave shrine passes through beautiful forests and mountains with waterfalls and streams. The Trikula hill, which is about 5300 feet above, is also regarded as an emblem of the goddess Vaishno Devi and is considered very holy.

Vaishno Devi is another name of the goddess Bhagwati. It is said that the goddess originally resided at a place called Adi Kumari which is about six kilometers

below the cave. A demon wanted to marry the goddess by force. She therefore shifted her residence from Adi Kumari to the cave on the Trikuta hill. but the demon followed her there also. Thus the goddess had no alternative but to kill the demon.

The cave is nearly one hundred feet in length. It has a narrow entrance. A small stream called Charan-ganga, which literally means the sacred stream issuing from the feet of the goddess, flows from beneath the image of the goddess in the cave.

There is a sacred spring also in this place, the water of which rises in jerks. The water is warm in December, January and part of February. It is cold for the rest of the year. The spring is regarded as a manifestation of Vaishno Devi. There is a reference about this sacred spring in the Nilamata, which is quoted below.

त्रिकोटयां तु नरः स्नात्वा देवलोके महीयते ।  
स्नात्वा हर्षपाथायां च शक्रलोके महीयते ॥

[A man, who bathes in the holy water of Trikoti, glorifies in the region of the gods. A man who bathes in Harshapatha glorifies in the region of Shakra(Indra),]

The pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi starts from the month of Ashwin (September-October) and continues for about four month.

### VICHAR NAG

शिवं भज शिवं ध्याय शिवं स्तुहि शिवं यज ।  
शिवं नम बराक त्वं ज्ञानं मोक्षं यदिच्छसि ॥

(Poor fellow, if you desire knowledge and final libration then worship Siva, meditate on Siva, sing the praises of Siva, perform sacrifices for Siva and bow in reverence to Him.)

Vichar Nag is a sacred Spring situated in the village of the same name which is at a distance of about twelve kilometers from Srinagar on the way to Gangabal lake. The village is on the eastern bank of Anchar Naga a shallow lake of which the water is full of green lotus leave and the shores are lined with luxuriant chestnut trees.

There is an ancient shrine of Siva called Vikrameshwara at Vichar Naga near the spring. The temple was originally built by Vikramaditya who ruled Kashmir in the sixth century A. D. The pilgrims visit this place in the month of Chaitra (March-April).

The presiding deity of the spring called Vichar Naga is Elapatra Naga. He is a brother of the famous nagas called Shesha, Vashuki. etc. The name of the illustrious Nagas are given in chapter 35 of Adiparva in the Mahabharat. the first two verses from that chapter are quoted below:

शेष प्रथमतो जातो वासुकिस्तदनन्तरम् ।  
 ऐरावतस्तक्षकश्च कर्कोटक धनञ्जयो ॥  
 कालियो मणिनागश्च नागश्चापुरणस्तथा ।  
 नागस्तथा पिञ्जरक एलापत्रोऽथ वामनः ॥

(Among the Nagas, Shesha was born first. Then Vasuki and thereafter followed in succession Airavata, Takshaka, Karkotake, Dhananjaya, Kalia, Maninaga, Apurana, Pinjaraka, Elapatra and Vamana.)

Elapatra was loved by all the Nagas because it was he who dispelled the fears of the Nagas by disclosing the secret by which they could be saved from the destruction that would have been caused by the snake-sacrifice of king Janmejaya, the great-grandson of king Yudhisthira.

#### WANGAT

स्वयंभूः प्रकटीभूय पूजां स्वीकुरुते स्वयम् ।  
 ज्येष्ठरूद्रो वशिष्ठस्य यस्य वा बालकेश्वरः ॥

[The Siva-Linga called Balakeshwara is a natural one and has come to light by itself. It receives from him ( Kind Jayasimha, 1128-1149 A. D. ) worship as the Siva-Linga called Jyestheshwara received worship from the sage Vashishtha ].

Wangat village is about fifty-three kilometers north of Srinagar. It is said that the great sage Vashishtha lived there for some time and worshipped the Siva-Linga called Jyestheshwara. The ancient name of the place is Vashishthashram.

Near the village there are the ruins of the ancient temples built by the kings of Kashmir at different times. These are by the side (south-west) of a sacred spring called Anant Nag, which is at the foot of the Bhuteshwara spur (modern Busther) lying south-east of the Haramukh peak. Naran Nag is the modern name of Sodara Tirtha which has been an important place of pilgrimage from ancient times. The pilgrims to the Haramukh lakes terminate their pilgrimage after visiting this holy spring. It is said that Lord Siva came to dwell here from the lake called Nandkol.

उत्तिष्ठ नन्दिकुण्डात् तू स्वयं मत्स्योदेर स्थितः ।  
 भुतेश्वर इति ख्यातः कृत्स्नपापप्रणोदकः ॥

[Rising from Nandukunda (Nandkol) the god,\* who is known as Bhuteshwara and who removes all sins, established himself at Sodara.]

One of the temples, the ruins of which are seen near the spring, have been identified with the temple of Jyeshthesha and another with the temple of Bhuteshwara. Both are dedicated to Siva. The former was constructed by King Lalitaditya at the beginning of the eight century A. D. while the origin of the latter is lost in antiquity. The ruins are in the narrow gorge of the Kankvai river, the ancient name of which is Kanakavahini, (one carrying gold), which flows past the southern foot of the spur.

About a kilometer from the sacred Naran Nag there is in the middle of the Kanakavahini a rock with a cave=shrine of Siva.

The following verses from the Rajatarangini and the Nilamata tell the glory of the sacred spring Naran Nag.

श्रुतनन्दिपुराणः स व्यासान्नेवासिनी नृपः ।  
सेवनं सोदारादीनां नन्दीश स्वर्धया व्यधात् ॥

[The King (jalauka, son of Ashoka) having heard the Nandipurana from some pupil of Vyasa visited Sodara and other sacred spots vying in holiness with Nandisha].

सोदार तु नरः स्नात्वा गोसहस्रं फलं लभेत् ।  
तथा कनकवाहिन्याः संगमं याति यौ नरः ॥

(By bathing in the waters of Sodara and also by visiting the confluence of the Kanakavahini one gets the benefit of the gift of a thousand cows.)

The confluence of the Kanakavahini mentioned in the above verse is perhaps the junction of its tributary with the Sind river which lies about six kilometers above Mangam village nearly four kilometers east of Tulmul (Kshir Bhawani). Stein identifies this confluence with the ancient Chiramochana Tirtha. The pilgrims visit this on their way to the Haramukuta lakes.

### VASUKI NAG

Vasuki Nag is a sacred spring situated about twenty kilometers west of Veri Nag. The spring remains dry in the winter but flows with water in summer.

It is sacred to the serpent-god Vasuki.

Vasuki Nag was one of the sons of the great sage Kashyapa. His mother's name was Kadru, one of the daughters of Daksha Prajapati. Vasuki acted as the rope

for churning the ocean by the gods and the demons for getting nectar ("amrita") by drinking which they became immortal. The Mandara mountain was used as the churning rod which was supported on the back of a very huge tortoise in the sea.

अथ देवसुराः सर्वे ममन्धुर्वरूणालयम् ।  
तत्र नेत्रमभून्नागो वासुकिर्बलिनः षरः ॥

[The gods and demons churned the abode of Varuna. There Vasuki Nag, the mightiest among the mighty, acted as the rope for churning the ocean].

### VIAN

There are two holy springs called Kailas Nag and Phuk Nag at Vian. Phuk Nag is a mineral spring.

### WATNAR

स जयति सिन्धुखदनो देवो यत्पादपञ्कजस्मरणम् ।  
वासरमणिरिव तमसां राशीन्नाशयति विघ्नानाम् ॥

(Glory to the elephant-faced gud Ganesha, the remembrance of whose lotus feet destroys all troubles just as the rising sun dispels all darkness).

Watnar is situated between the range of hills lying between Shahabad and Bring. It is in Kother Pargana located about ten kilometers east of Banihal as the crow flies.

There is an ancient shrine of Maha Ganesha by the side of a sacred spring called Dumatabal.

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**COVER PAGE : Kall Mandir, Uttar Kashi**

# **YA DEVI SARVABHUTESU**

**Sri Sri Ma in the Company of Saints**

- Dr. Premlata Srivastava

(to be continued)

Once during a lecture series, Avadhootji said, "When a Sadhak attains an impartial view, he can realize the truth in every cell. He attains this level after the elimination of attachment and jealousy."

In this context he mentioned that once Sridama is said to have asked Krishna for his picture as Krishna's absence was unbearable for him. Chitra who was known to be a good artist, was called. Chitra told Yashoda that she wanted to see her lala (dearest child). She had not seen him before.

So Krishna came and posed. Such was Krishna's posture that Chitra's heart was drowned in Eternal Love. She could not draw the picture; every time she tried to sketch, the lines were swept by her tears. Because of this strange experience of love and happiness she prayed to Saraswati to draw this picture for her. Saraswati expressed her inability. Instead she asked her to pray for Krishna's blessings. She took the advice, and soon an extremely beautiful picture was drawn. Both lala (Krishna) and Yashoda were delighted. Yashoda asked Chitra what she expected by way of remuneration.

Chitra asked for Krishna, and Yashoda fell unconscious. Then Krishna told her that Yashoda would be hurt if he was taken away. He promised to remain in her company as the same personality forever.

After narrating this incident, Sri Avadhootji exhorted all devotees of Ma to surrender themselves before Sri Ma.

The tradition of Sri Ma's birth celebration is the outcome of Sri Avadhootji's immense regard, love and devotion for Sri Ma.

He once saw Ma sitting on a lion. Then he suggested to Didi that a throne of a similar design should be carved. Most of the devotees including Didi, were against this idea but at the initiative of one Mahatma, a fabulous throne fitted on the back of a lion was made out of eight different metals. This throne, now kept at Kankhal

Ashram, was not used by Ma. Despite repeated requests of Avadhootji, Ma preferred to sit on its steps rather than on the throne.

In 1952, when Triveni Puriji met Ma during Shivaratri at Haridwar, he requested that in May 1953 Ma's birth celebrations be held in Punjab. However within a few weeks of the beginning of the celebrations, he departed for his heavenly abode. Avadhootji, who constructed a temple on the samadhi of his Guru, held akhand kirtan throughout Ma's birth celebrations. He was the person behind this great show. Ma praised his tremendous efforts in organizing such grand and joyous celebrations.

### **Swami Shankar Chaitanya Bharati**

Kashi's famous saint Shankar Chaitanya Bharati was better known as Chaitanya Giri. Preferring to remain aloof, he lived at Lalita Devi Math. He was a renowned scholar and wrote many religious books. He lived a secluded life, and never used to meet women. He had not even met Ma, despite living in Kashi. He had restricted his disciples to just a few, who closely served their Guru.

One day when this devotee of Bhagawati Tripur Sundari was meditating in the temple, Bhagavati Herself asked him to meet Ma Anandmoyce, who was Her personification.

Shankar Chaitanya Bharatiji came to see Sri Ma during Her 60<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebrations at Kashi. As Shankar Bharatiji's boat touched the Ashram Ghat, he was escorted with great reverence to Ma on the podium. He prostrated before Sri Ma uttering a hymn in praise of Mahadevi, and was moved as if he were getting God's darshan in reality. He presented Her a huge, beautiful garland that touched Ma's feet. Someone asked him Who is Ma? Shankar Bharati replied, "Chaitanya Chidananda." During this occasion, he participated in the Satsang with Sri Ma and Gopibaba for two hours. He returned to Ma, thereafter, frequently for religious discourses and discussions.

A very trusted devotee of Ma later told me that actually Shankar Bharatiji had Sri Ma's darshan earlier also. Only Ma and Shankar Bharatiji were present at that occasion. Ma later confirmed this meeting. It was Shankar Bharatiji who named the Diamond Jubilee Celebration as '60<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary Festival'. During the festivities, Shankar Bharatiji once came to the Ashram and discussed several religious questions like manliness, and the relation between powers and compassion. Shankar Bharati, in his lucid speech, said that distinct compassion and kindness is manliness.

In an article published in 'Anandavarta' Swami Brahmanandaji had written that once Pannalaji asked Bharatiji about Ma's real form. His reply was that Ma is Chidananda personified.

Once a Brahmachari, who attended to Bharatiji and received alms for his Guru also, had gone to his village for some reason. Thus, Bharatiji went without food for a few days.

Then one day, Bharatiji came to the Vishwanath temple and Annapurna temple during his early morning visit to these places, and said, "He was living in their place. Was he not entitled to even his 'bhiksha'?" It was akin to how Bhagavan Shankaracharya asked for alms from Ma Annapurna.

Bharatiji proceeded from this place to Lalita Ghat.

During those days Sri Ma was in Kashi. That particular day, Ma sent a brahmachari to Lalita Ghat for Bharatiji. The brahmachari returned with news about Bharatiji. Thereafter, Sri Ma immediately arranged for care and regular meals for this great Mahatma.

The following is a unique incident involving the two great souls.

Swamiji became very weak, suffering from blood dysentery. He could take only vegetable soup. Kashi's famous physician Dr. Gopal Das Gupta, an ardent devotee of Ma, was treating him while Ma arranged for his meals and other things with Swamiji's consent. This arrangement continued for almost eight years until Swamiji left for his heavenly abode on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1957.

### **Swami Devi Giriji**

Swami Devi Giriji was a famous seer of Uttar Kashi. Swami Paramanandaji of our Ashram described his religious discourses as simply splendid. He had a wonderful voice, coupled with lucidity of speech and excellent pronunciation of Sanskrit. During his sadhana in Uttar Kashi, Swamiji frequently visited him for his guidance on Kathopanishad.

According to Swamiji, Devi Giriji had memorised the entire Tulsi Ramayan and his prayers to Lord Shiva were unmatched by any other devotee at Uttar Kashi.

Swami Devi Giriji visited Ma in 1948 at Kashi Ashram. During his visit, the Ashram was the venue for the Savitri Mahayajna. Both Devi Giriji and Sri Ma had religious discussions for several hours. One night while Kirtan was being held in the presence of Baba, Ma herself started singing :



“Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram

Jayati Jayati Jai Sitaram”

What an auspicious occasion was that! In presence of Devi Giriji and the rippling sound of the Ganges flowing by the Ashram, the night must have been wonderful with Ma Herself singing. What a thrill to imagine that moment! In the midst of Her song, suddenly Baba said, “Ma, you are happiness personified.”

Baba left his worldly body in October 1950.

The old, dignified saint Swami Gyanananda lived in Kashi. Founder of Bharat Dharma Mandal, Swamiji was on his deathbed when he told his doctor Gopal Das Gupta that his last wish was to meet Ma. Dr. Das hurriedly went to Ma’s Ashram but Ma was not there. He was very much upset thinking perhaps the old man may not survive to have Sri Ma’s darshan. After two hours, Ma returned and just on seeing Dr. Das Gupta, she said, “Pitaji, I went to see Gyanananda Baba.”

Dr. Das Gupta was stunned, how could Ma know about Swamiji’s wish? Ma said She had the kheyal while She was in Vindhyachal.

[Dr. Gopal Das Gupta was an outstanding person. A competent doctor he had a flourishing practice, the earnings from which he distributed among the poor and needy. Dr. Das Gupta used to be very affectionate towards Ma. He would cry while talking about Ma and make the listeners to cry. At times, he disclosed his troubles to Ma in private.]

(to be continued)

\* \*

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

Matri Vani (Volume II)

## **Non Suppressible, Urges, Suppressible Urges and Behavioral regimen**

- Dr. Kavita Vyas (ayurveda specialist)

### **A. Non Suppressible Urges (Adharaniya vega)**

Acharya Charaka says the wise never suppress the following urges- urine, stool, semen, gas, vomiting, sneezing, upward movement of air through mouth (Dakar), yawning, hunger, thirst, tears, sleep and rapid respiration after heavy work.

- (a) **Urine-** If one suppresses the urge of urine, pain starts in the urinary bladder and penis; it also causes other symptoms like obstruction in urination, headache, swelling and pain in lower abdomen.
- (b) **Stool-** When one suppresses the urge for stool, the duodenum starts paining; also it causes other symptoms like headache, obstruction in passing the gas and stool, pain in calf muscles and swelling of abdomen.
- (c) **Semen-** If one forcefully stops the flow of semen, then it causes the following symptoms- swelling, pain and heaviness of testicle, vasa deference, seminal vesicle, prostate glands some times and pain in anus and obstruction in urination.
- (d) **Gas-** If one suppresses flatulence, it causes obstruction in passing urine and stool, swelling of abdomen, tiredness, pain in abdomen, headache, and disorder of nerves.
- (e) **Vomiting-** Actually it is difficult to stop vomiting, but if one forcefully stops the urge of vomiting then it causes itching and swelling on skin, disinterest in food, jaundice, fever, nausea etc.
- (f) **Sneezing-** Suppression of sneezing causes heaviness of head, pain, facial paralysis migraine and weakness of sensory organs.
- (g) **Belching (udgar)-** This generally comes after food; suppression of this causes hiccups, difficulty in respiration, anorexia, heaviness in heart and chest.
- (h) **Yawning-** Suppression of this urge causes convulsion, bending of body, shrinking of organs, tremors in hands and legs and heaviness.



Shringar of Gopalji during Holi



Playing Holi with Gopalji



Shri Chintamani Ganesh



Shri Dhundiraj Ganesh

- (i) Hunger- Suppression of hunger causes weakness in body, pain in different organs, anorexia, fainting.
- (j) Thirst- Suppression of thirst causes dryness in mouth and throat, tiredness, depression, pain in heart and deafness.
- (k) Tears- Suppression of tears causes cold, heart disease, eye disease, anorexia, heaviness in head.
- (l) Sleep- Suppression of sleep causes yawning, tiredness of body, dizziness, headache, heaviness and burning sensation in eyes.
- (m) Rapid respiration after laborious work- Suppression of this causes pain in heart and chest, uneasiness, fainting.

#### B. Suppressible Urges

The one who wants his welfare, he/she should avoid doing any prohibited (ethically, legally) work, and any wrong by mind, speech and body. According to Charaka Samhita one should suppress the urge of greed, sadness, fear, anger, ego, attachment, shamelessness, jealousy, wanting to steal other's wealth etc.

### **Acharya Rasayan**

(Behavioral regimen which acts as Rejuvenation)

Ayurveda believes that if one doesn't take any rejuvenating herbs or treatment then also he can get benefit of rejuvenation, if he/she is following behavioral regimen which is called as sadachar ('sad' means good, 'achar' means behavior). Good behavior morally uplifts the person and increases confidence.

Acharya Rasayanam (Behavioral Regimen) includes-

- Speaking truth, not getting angry
- Not drinking alcohol
- Control on senses, non violence
- Calm mind, cleanliness of body and sweetness in speech
- Keeping patience, giving donation, doing pesance
- One who serves cows, priest, masters (Guru), scholars, aged people
- One who has compassion for all living beings
- One who has equanimous attitude for sleeping and waking state
- One who daily eats ghee and milk
- One who is egoless and generous
- One who has controlled his senses and who is in the company of saints
- One who reads spiritual scriptures and behaves according to them

All these habits of behavior give effect of rejuvenation to the body and mind

### Behavior Regimen with ladies (As given in Charaka Samhita)

- Don't insult the ladies
- Don't tell your secret to ladies
- Don't make physical relations with the lady who is under menstrual cycle, who is not clean, who is suffering from any disease, who doesn't have good behavior, who loves other persons.

### Behavior Regimen for Students (As given in Charaka Samhita)

- Don't criticize wise people and Guru
- In unclean state don't worship the gods, trees; also don't study
- Don't study during earth quack, heavy rain, fire accident, during big festivals, during sun eclipse or moon eclipse, at the time of sun set
- One should not take knowledge from unqualified persons
- One should not read the subjects (verses etc.) in very high volume, very low volume or in a strange volume of speech

The summary of behavioral regimen is to indulge in knowledge, charity, friendship and compassion, happiness, neglecting wrong things controlling senses, and keeping peace. By following the above social and ethical regimen one gets good health, praise and fame in society and after death one goes to heaven according to Charak Samhita of Ayurveda.

### Dietetics and Regimen for Spring Season (Vasanta Ritu)

The kapha dosha accumulated in the body during winter, aggravates in spring season because kapha dosha melts as rays of the sun are more prominent in the spring season. That melted kapha dosha in the body weakens the digestive fire of a person and causes a number of diseases. To get rid of this accumulated kapha dosha one should undergo purification method like vamana karma.

- One should not take heavy, oily, acidic and sweet food products
- One should avoid day time sleep

In this season the following things are beneficial-

- Physical exercise, scrubbing the body (Ubatan), Having medicated smoke, Using warm water, applying sandal wood paste on the body, using barley and wheat, mung dal (with cover), green vegetables, ginger, honey etc, drinking milk with little turmeric powder; walking in garden & watching nature.

In the month of Chaitra (15 March- 15 April) it is good to chew 10-15 leaves of neem tree, early morning. In this season one can have Haritaki Churnam (Terminalia chebula) 5gm with honey; it has rejuvenation effect.

## ASHRAM VARTA

Anandasvarupeshu.

The new year 2018, like always, got started with the celebration of *Paush Parvan*. On the day of *Makar Sankranti* which is associated with the reminiscences of the commencement and *Purnahuti* of *Akhanda Savitri Mahayajna* in the Varanasi Ashram from *Makar Sankranti* in 1947 to the same day of *Makar Sankranti* in 1950. This year *Makar Sankranti* took place on 14<sup>th</sup> January. Special oblations with *Shodashopachara* (sixteen special offerings) were offered with the chanting of *Gayatri Mantra* to the *Yajna* fire. Special *puja* of the deities was performed in the Ashram temples with dawn to dusk *kirtan*, sumptuous *bhog* offerings of *Pitha* (*pishtaku*), *Payasa* (thickened milk with rice) and varieties of food sweets and other food items.

“*Parama punyadham Varanasi Ashram, pranami*” – this was the song of the *udayasta* (dawn to dusk) *kirtan* performed by the Ashram inmates and other devotees circumambulating the *Yajnasala*.

*Sarasvati Mahabhage Vidye Kamalalochnane Vishvarupe Vishalakshi Vidyum Dehi Namostute*. (O great *Sarasvati Devi*, Goddess of learning with eyes like lotus petals, one who resides in all Divine Forms, O large eyed Goddess, please give us knowledge, We bow to thee). This *pranama mantra* was repeatedly heard during the *Sarasvati Puja* on the day of *Vasanta Panchami*, which occurred this year on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. A beautiful idol of *Ma Sarasvati* graced the *Kanyapeeth Hall* in the *Varanasi Ashram*.

*Vasanta Panchami* was thus celebrated amid gorgeous beauties of nature. The devotees of *Devi Sarasvati* were brimful with the springtime joys emanating from the divine splendour of *Ma Sarasvati*. *Devi Sarasvati* was worshipped with due solemnity and gaiety also in *Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Vidyapeeth, Kankhal*, in the *Bhimpura Ashram of Shree Shree Ma* and in many other Ashrams under the *Sangha*.

Republic Day, the *Ganatantra Divas*, the day on which India adopted the rule of democracy, was duly celebrated with solemnity and gaiety on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 and special programmes inspiring patriotic zeal were held with the hoisting of the Tricolor National Flag in *Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth, Varanasi* and also in *Bhopal, in Ma Anandamayee Shiksha Upavan*.

On the full moon day of *Maghi Purnima*, a *Mahotsava* (grand festival) was celebrated in the Tarapeeth Ashram of Shree Shree Ma. In the Varanasi Ashram, the annual *Satyanarayan puja* took place with special programmes like the recital of *Panchali* etc. A lunar eclipse occurred that day. The inmate Brahmacharinis of Kanyapeeth held *kirtan*. They and other devotees took a holy dip in the Ganges (*mukti snana*) after the eclipse was over.

On the occasion of the birth centenary of the veteran sannyasi of Shree Shree Ma's Ashram, Swami Bhaskarananda, a grand celebration was organized in Shree Shree Ma's Bhimpura Ashram on the holy bank of the divinely beautiful river Narmada from 31<sup>st</sup> January to 7<sup>th</sup> February. This year too, during this time, the *Samyam Saptah Mahavrata* was held in the Bhimpura Ashram, following the tradition of the past years. This year, it was the 20<sup>th</sup> *Samyam Saptah*. A group of Kanyapeeth Brahmacharinis took part in the *Samyam Saptah* in Bhimpura.

On 30<sup>th</sup> January, during the inaugural ceremony, the Brahmacharinis of the Kanyapeeth recited *Veda mantras* as an auspicious beginning of the programme. Next, Brahmacharini Dr. Geeta Banarjee sang the following inaugural song—

O *Madhava*, I will express my soul's suffering to Thee alone.

I will take refuge at Thy feet alone, O *Madhava*! Let the chant of Thy name raise ripples of joy, and again, when the heart weeps in sorrow, even then let me not forget Thy name, O *Madhava*!

May my heart never beg for any favour from anyone else except from Thee, O *Madhava*!

May no one else be dearer to me than Thee!

May I see only Thee everywhere in the world.

I will undergo the pains of defame and hundreds of obstacles and fears, just in love of Thee, O *Madhava*! (English translation of the original Bengali song).

After the inaugural song, Shree Jagat Bhai, President of the Bhimpura Ashram, spoke a little about the Bhimpura Ashram and told the *vratis* about the rules and regulations of the *Samyam Saptah*. After this, Swami Chetan Giri of the Sannyasa Ashram and Brahmachari Samanandaji of the Chinmaya Mission delivered short speeches to inspire the *vratis*. Swami Achyutanandaji, President of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, also informed the *vratis* about the rules and regulations of the *Samyam Saptah*. Then, after *kirtan* and the recital of *Pranama Mantras*, the inaugural function was over. Smt. Mandira, a pupil of Late Smt. Chhabi Banerjee, delighted the audience with her presentation of *kirtan*.



Next day, on 31<sup>st</sup> January, the regular *Samyam Saptah* programme got started, beginning with the Usha Kirtan. Before and after the morning meditation, the Kanyapeeth girls recited *Veda Mantras*. *Kirtan* was sung and *path* of the Gita and Chandi (Durga Saptashati) was also done. Swami Achyutanandaji recited verses from the Upanishads. Swami Uttamanandaji of Kailash Ashram delivered scholarly speeches on the *Ishavasyopanishad*. Brahmachari Samanandaji daily gave discourse on the *karmayoga* of the Gita in the light of its usefulness in practical life. The programmes were successfully conducted by Swami Vimalananda of our Ashram. Vishnu Sahasranama and Shree Narmadashtaka were recited to conclude the daily morning session. In the afternoon, *kirtan* and *bhajan* were sung again before and after the meditation. On two days, after the meditation, Brahmacharini Geeta spoke on “*Venu Geet*” and “*Bhramar Geet*” from *Shreemadbhagavatam Mahapurana* during the time of *Purana Path* she also spoke about Shree Shree Ma. She read out from Milanda’s book; the words of Shree Shree Ma which she had uttered to Kalachandda. The incident was as follows: Panuda’s uncle Kalachandda was a nephew of the famous patriot Shree Ashwini Kumar Dutta. Kalachandda had Shree Shree Ma’s *darshan* in Dhaka. During the freedom movement of India, he was also imprisoned many times. He had also stayed in the Ashram of Shree Aurobindo in Pondicherry. He used to carry Shree Shree Ma’s photo with him. He was criticized for worshipping Shree Shree Ma when he was in Pondicherry. So he came to Shree Shree Ma with Shree Shree Ma’s photo. After some time he was called again from the Pondicherry Ashram. Kalachandda sought Shree Shree Ma’s advice. Ma told him that if he would go back to Pondicherry, he would receive a lot of praise, fame, honour and the good name for his quality of successful management, and if he would stay in Ma’s Ashram, he would receive only defame, dishonor and criticism, but in the end he would gain the jewel of spiritual progress. He had to decide as to what he wanted, Ma said in addition. Kalachandda chose the option of not going back to Pondicherry. Br. Geetadidi said that we should all remember the song which says that we should be ready to undergo the suffering of defame, calumny and hundreds of obstacles for the love of God (*taba preme shakoli shabo, he Mulhava*) Shree Shivamahimna Stotra and Hanuman Chalisa were recited after Br. Geetadidi’s speech. Smt. Sujata Ben’s sister Smt. Nandita had published Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Sahasranamavali as a tribute to Swami Bhaskaranandaji on the occasion of his anniversary. This book was musically recited one day after the *Pravachana*. During the night session, Swami Nirgunanandaji of Shree Shree Ma’s Ashram spoke about Shree Shree Ma. His speech was quite captivating. After the *maunam*, and after his speech till 9:30 p.m., *arati* was done and *pranam mantras* were recited. Thus the programme of the first day was concluded.

On the third day, Swami Adhyatmananda, President of the Ahmedabad branch of Swami Shivananda Ashram arrived and delighted the audience with his speech. Every day, he delivered speeches on Shreemad Bhagavatam and also spoke about Ma. On the first day, he spoke about the daily life of Shree Krishna. After this, he talked about the *Gopi Gita* daily. Besides, he also spoke about Shree Shree Ma daily in an attractive way.

During the night session, Brahmacharini Guneeta sang *kirtan* in praise of Ma Narmada (Jaya Mayi Narmada, Mayi Reva, Shivavallabha, Sadashiva). She also spoke about the grace of Shree Shree Ma, Her sweet *lila* and Her boundless love. Swami Adhyatmanandaji and other Swamijiis who presented scholarly speeches were present during Guneetadidi's lecture. She spoke on two nights.

One day, Swami Uttamanandaji said, that the Ishavasyopanishad contains explanations of the meaning of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* – the four *Purusharthas*. He explained the meaning in the following way:

1. "*Ishavasyamidam sarvam yat kinchit jagatyum jagat*" – these words speak of *moksha*.
2. "*Tena tyaktena bhunjithah*" – these words relate to *kama*.
3. "*Ma gridhah kasyesvid dhanam*" – these words relate to *artha*.
4. "*Neha nanasti kinchana*" – these words relate to *dharma*.

One day during the afternoon session Swami Achyutanandaji spoke on Shree Shree Ma and Swami Bhaskaranandaji. During the night session, Brahmacharini Geeta also spoke on Shree Shree Ma and Swami Bhaskaranandaji. Brahmachari Shyamal Bhai presented memorable vocal music (*kirtan*). Brahmachari Bula carried on regularly the *puja*, *arati* etc. in the room on the upper storey in the morning and in the evening. He also did *stava path*, *kirtan* and *satsang*. *Puja*, *bhoga* and *arati* were regularly done in the Shiva Mandir, Rama Mandir and Hanuman Mandir.

Swami Jagadishwaranandaji (Jagadish Bhai) and Swami Jyotirmaya also took part in the *Samyama*. A *yajna* was held in the adjacent Anandabhavan in the memory of Swami Bhaskarananda. On 6<sup>th</sup> January during the night session Shree Christopherji (Mr. Pegler) showed video films on Shree Shree Ma. Shree Swapan Ganguli, General Secretary of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, was present during the show. Before the *Mahanisha Dhyana*, Smt. Mandira's singing of Swami Vivekananda's composition about the experience of *Samadhi* ("*Nahi Surya*" etc.) enthralled the audience. She presented the song with great *bhava*. Then *kirtan* was sung and *pranama mantras* were recited. Thus the *Samyam Mahavrata* was concluded and the participants received *Prasad* from Swami Achyutanandaji and Swami

Adhyatmanandaji. The next day, the *udyapana* of the *Samyam Mahavrata* took place with the performance of *Homa*, the devotees took the *yajna* ashes and smeared their foreheads with the holy *Vibhuti*.

The next day, on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2018, *Sadhu Bhandara, Bhandara* for all devotees and distribution of *Prasad* took place. In the afternoon, a Ramayana Party came from Varodara and presented Ramayana song, *Sandhya kirtan* and discourses on Shree Shree Ma took place in the evening. Shree Sanjay Kapoorji, Secretary, Bhimpura Ashram, Shree Jagat Bhai, President, Bhimpura Ashram and the Sadhu Incharge Swami Vasudevanandaji, had the credit for successful organization and successful completion of the *Mahavrata*.

One day, Swami Vasudevanandaji narrated the interesting story of his *Narmada Parikrama* in response to the eagerness expressed by the audience. He said that a salient feature of the Bhimpura Ashram is that the visitors and residents also have the good fortune of the *darshan* of Shree Narmadaji. It is said that a dip in the river Ganga grants *punya* whereas just the *darshan* of Shree Narmadaji produces *punya*. The Kanyapeeth inmates one day went with Swami Vimalanandaji and had the *darshan* of important places in and around Bhimpura. They recalled the song, "*Hara Narmade Hara*".

Maha Shivaratri was observed with due solemnity and joy in all the Ashrams of Shree Shree Ma.

On 28<sup>th</sup> February, on the eve of Dol Purnima, *Chanchar Utsava* (fire ceremony) took place in the Varanasi Ashram. In the courtyard of the Kanyapeeth, Shree Narayana was placed in the *Dol Mancha* (special pedestal for the *Dol* worship) and was offered *Puja* and *Adhivasa*. *Holika Dahan* (setting fire to *Holika*, the evil) was done. *Kirtan* was sung.

The next day, on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2018 in the morning, Shree Narayan *Puja* was performed in the courtyard of Kanyapeeth. All the idols of Gopalji, worshipped by the Kanyapeeth inmates, were brought and worshipped there. All the devotees present there did *arati* to Shree Narayanji and offered *abir* to Him.

After this, Gopalji was brought down from his throne and placed on a large platter on Shree Shree Ma's cot, where Shree Shree Ma's photo is placed. His *simhasana* (throne) was beautifully decorated with garlands and flowers. There was an abundance of flowers strewn everywhere. All the devotees present there touched His feet and put *abir* on Him. Gopalji's *arati* was done Shree Hiranmay Gupta, a great devotee of Shree Shree Ma and Shree Gopalji, came from Kolkata to observe the festival of *Dol Purnima* in Varanasi and have *darshan* of his dear Baby Gopal.

After playing Holi with Gopalji with *abir*, they took Him back to His *Mandir*. His *Mahasnana* was done and *Maha Abhisheka* was also performed.

The other idols brought and placed together with Baby Gopal were also given *Mahasnana* and *Maha Abhisheka*. Child Gopal was dressed up in new garments in keeping with the rules of purification and was beautifully decorated with shining gold ornaments and jewellery fit for the occasion of special *Shringara, Rabri, Malai, Makhan, Misri, Sweets, laddons* of coconut chips, fruits etc. were served as *Naivedya*. Special food items of *Naivedya* were prepared and served at noon. Special *Naivedya* and noon time *Bhoga* were prepared and served to Gopalji. *Dol Mahotsava* was thus concluded with joy.

*Dol Mahotsava* was celebrated with all due colourfulness also in the other Ashrams of Shree Shree Ma and specially in Ma's Vrindavan Ashram. Holi was observed by common people in the town of Uttar Pradesh and in some other provinces of India on the next day.

*Vasanti Durga Puja* during the *Chaitra Navaratri* was performed in Shree Shree Ma's Varanasi Ashram with a lot of devotion and bliss. A detailed report is expected to appear in the Amrit Varta of July, 2018.

With our best New Year wishes,

Jai Ma!

Editor

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### NOTICE

In order to ensure receipt of Amrit Varta, it was decided in the Governing Body meeting that the annual subscription of the journal be enhanced from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 300/- w.e.f. January, 2018. Your cooperatoin is earnestly solicited.