

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

VOL.-7

APRIL, 2003

No. 2

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MATRI VANI

No, I have not gone far away from you; I am ever, ever present with you, very, very near you.

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You want to know what I am ? Well, I am what you consider me to be - not more, not less.

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All that I can say is that in the midst of apparent changes of states in body and mind I feel I am aware that I am always the same. I feel that in me there is no change of states.

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Don't you know why one cannot concentrate? Desires act as repellents. Just as when you enter the sea, the waves keep on throwing you back to the beach; if you persevere and attain a deeper level then the waves cease to hinder.

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It is necessary to realize that there is nothing but One alone. Desires are return tickets, that ensure one's coming and going in the world of duality.

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If you perceive Siva, you do not see a stone. And if you see a stone, you do not perceive Siva.

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Don't sit back thinking I am not ready yet - the errors will fall by themselves. Abstention drives away the springs of desires. Do not waste time.

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Unless He makes it possible for you to put your trust in Him, you cannot do it. What is striving? (Willed action) whatever action He makes you perform can be converted into your striving.

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This is His *lila*, He is having a game with Himself. Even so, does not the Durga-Saptasati say, 'In the guise of delusion it is you only.'

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The small girl does not know how to give lectures or discourses. As your little daughter and friend (to young people), it is my childish demand that you stay with His Name always.

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He, who has created the world, is sustaining it, is to be depended upon for everything.

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You yourself are the head of a family. Do you need your children to tell you what is best for them?

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He, who is Father of the world, knows what arrangements to make. Try to leave everything to His care. Let His will reign supreme.

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God is the Supreme Father, Mother, Beloved, Friend, Companion. Of course He is a friend, He is indeed the friend.

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Everything that appears is the manifestaion of the Supreme Lord. He is the true friend. All pain and sorrow are due to the sense of 'I' and mine.

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The world is God's creation. In God is everyone and everything.

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Where is He not ? This is how Ma is always near, although the body does not go everywhere. In the *Paramatma* (Supreme Being) there is no possibility of impurity or insincerity at all.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH MA ANANDAMAYEE

[Translated from Bengali]

—Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

Dhaka, January 7, 1937

In the morning coming back from the college, I heard that Sri Sri Ma would be reaching Dhaka today. It gave me a great delight to hear that, I had some work in hand which could not be put off. I was a bit worried to think if I shall not be found wanting in either. However, I was out of the house at once and having extended the information to a few friends, finished my lunch and rushed to the station. We set out all together for Narayangunj.

As soon as the train reached Narayangunj, the steamer from Goalanda was found to have got very close to the ghat. We took our stand on the flat and from there we saw Didi and Ma. In the same steamer Mr. Jinnah, Khan Bahadur Azizul Huque, the minister, and others were also coming to Dhaka. Many Muslim volunteers carrying flags were present at the ghat to welcome them. After the crowd had thinned out a little, we went to Ma in the steamer. By that time, Ma had stepped down from the upper deck. We made *pranama* to Her and Baba Bholanath at the foot of the staircase.

There was a great gathering at the Dhaka station for the reception of Mr. Jinnah and others. After detraining, we were trying to get into a horse-drawn carriage when somebody came with news that Dadamahashay* was missing. I and Shib Babu combed the in and out of the station, but there was no grandfather to be seen. At last we went to Ma and said, "Ma, Dadamahashay is missing. Where should we look for him?" Ma said, "I saw him in the crowd on my way out from the station." We again went in that direction. In the meantime, Ma's car left for the Ashram. After searching for sometime, we were in despair and set out for the Ashram. When we were near the Ashram, we found grandfather entering the Ashram along with Ma. I came to know that though Dadamahashay could not be found in the station, the car was started for the Ashram at the instruction of Ma. According to Ma's

*. Mataji's father, Sri Bipin Behari Bhattacharya

direction, the car was driven along a path different from the usual route to the Ashram. After the car had gone some distance, Ma said, "Mark him, does he not look like your grandfather?" Truly enough, it was grandfather going along on foot. Then the car was stopped and he was taken into the car. On account of the detour made by Sri Sri Ma's car, we reached the Ashram almost at the same time with Her, though She had left before.

In the evening, Ma took Her seat in the Namghar. The ladies sat on Ma's right while the menfolk were on Her left. The talks cut across diverse topics. Sri Kushari*, came in for discussion. Owing to the death of a well-placed son, both he and his wife had become overwhelmed with grief, Besides, Sri Kushari was himself ill. He said to Ma, "You went to different places twice via Calcutta, but you did not meet me. It did not hurt me. I do not quite feel your presence even when you are near me. It is all the same to me whether you are near me or away from me. Under all circumstances, you are unattainable to me. Physical proximity does not make for true nearness. How can I really feel your closeness to me ?"

But immediately after this he said, 'Ma, but so long as I am sitting with you, I feel I am quite secure.' Ma simply smiled.

Shri Pramatha Nath Bose said, "Ma you are often heard saying, 'I am in Dhaka.' What does that mean?"

Ma : " Thought draws persons near. I think of you and so I am with you.

Pramatha Babu: But you cannot be seen with naked eyes. Had you been with us, we could have seen you. I do not want such evasive answers.

Ma : Thinking and visualizing are one and the same thing. You see, if you now think of your house, the same will flash across your eyes.

Pramatha Babu: These are past our understanding. Say something that we can understand. You have understood my question, have you not ?

Ma : I do not understand you, as you do not understand what I say. If a little boy wants to know a subject prescribed for the Matriculation class, he must abide his time and read all the books he needs. Then alone he will be able to know the subject. Well, first tell me what you make of my statement ?

Pramatha Babu : To me, "I am in Dhaka" means "I am hidden". ("*Dhākā*" in Bengali means "covered up"). I say, now you reveal yourself.

Ma : Well, try to uncover me.

Pramatha Babu : How can we unveil you, unless you yourself stand revealed ?

*. Sri Kali Prasanna Kushari, sister's husband of Sri Bholanathji, Ma's husband.

Ma : Try to the best of your ability. He will do the rest. Get to the end of your capabilities, what remains will take care of itself.

Pramatha Babu : Shall we be referred to *Karma* even by you ?

Ma : Yes.

Pramatha Babu did not like the idea of attaining God through *sadhan-bhajan*. He was through and through a believer in Grace. He was not discouraged by Ma's laying stress on *Karma*.

He continued, "Ma. I am inclined to think that there is an easy and simple path leading to the attainment of God. You are our mother, we are your children. Why should the children be called upon to take pains for attaining you, their mother? The mother would take up the child on her lap, impelled by sheer maternal affection. This is what I understand. Is it true?"

Ma : Yes, it is.

"It is done then. I do not want anything more!" with that Pramatha Babu rose up.

Ma : Done, is it? For how long will you be able to sustain this attitude? Being a son, you should be obedient to your mother. Do as I bid you.

After that one lady said, "Ma, I am burning in endless sufferings."

Ma (smiling): I call it good.

Whatever might be in the mind of the questioner, she said in the tone of one crossed in love, "You want it, don't you?"

Ma : (laughing) Assuming the mortal coil is for suffering. Hence one is afflicted with disease or grief; it implies the wearing over of a corresponding amount of suffering standing to his account. The body and pains are inseparable. One must be burnt to coal and then to ashes. That will be the end of burning. You feel pain as you are still wood. When you are reduced to ashes, there will neither be fire nor burning. Then you will be one with any condition imposed on you. See, ashes smeared on the body becomes one with it and dissolved in water, go wholly into the solution.

Lady : Ma, you are no longer fond of us.

Ma : You may like me or not, but I cannot simply do without you.

With that She began to laugh profusely.

Aruna, daughter of Prof Satyendra Nath Bhadra, was sitting near Ma. Having passed B.A. she was serving as a teacher in the Anandamayee Girls School.

Ma said to her, "Are your studies over? What do you do now?"

Aruna: I am in service.

Ma: How much do you get from the service? How much have you laid by? You must keep me alive by feeding me.

With that She began to laugh.

Aruna: I do not understand what you are driving at.

Ma: What do my words mean ?

Ma put the same question to all. Looking at me She said, "You sit silently at the back; can you tell me what my words mean ?"

Ma (To Aruna) : Knowledge and money you earn merely add to your wants. Such knowledge and money are of no avail.

Aruna: Should I give up the service, then ?

Ma: Why should you ? Devote some time to good work, as you find time for everything else. Take some time out of eating, sleeping and gossiping. Try to devote more time to the repetition of the Name. The time you devote to the Name shall not be wasted. It will no less be stored up. So I was reminding you that you will have to feed me and save my life. Earning money is not useless. It nourishes the body. But the mind also must be nourished. So I say, store up some food for the mind. You serve in the school. It takes up, say, six or seven hours a day. But excluding those few hours, the thought of your work at school recurs to you at all times. Similarly, if you increase your religious inclination, your religious thoughts will be constantly present in your mind amidst all worldly preoccupations. This is how good tendencies have to be increased.

January 8, 1937

On going to the Ashram I found Ma sitting in the Namghar. The room was packed to capacity with men and women. I went in and scraped out a room for myself, Sri Nagendra Nath Datta had brought a sadhu of Navadweep. The sadhu was singing a kirtan before Ma.

The song over, the sadhu said, "Ma, your coming is for the deliverance of the fallen".

Ma: It is from you all that I have heard the epithet, *the deliverer of the fallen.*"

The sadhu : Ma, do not delude us by quibbling.

Ma: Where there is movement, there is delusion necessarily.

Ma's replies were very concise. Also, I could not clearly understand the meaning of Her words. However, I coaxed out of it a meaning to my satisfaction.

Sri Nagendra Dutta : 'With you, it's a continuous act of deluding.'

Ma: Where does deluding fit in ? Your nature itself is a delusion. If He (God) had not been delusive, we could have derived no joy.

The sadhu: God's delusion is the delusion of a humorist. But you have your own way of deluding us.

Ma: One cannot be to the exclusion of the other. So I say, *Yogamāyā* and *Muhāmāyā* are one. In our ignorance we discriminate between them. We do not know how to acquire knowledge either. Why we cannot even press our demand or feel hurt in the proper way. It is because in all these there are desires and hankering. The Ultimate Truth will not be revealed to us until we are purged of desire and hankering.

Nagen Babu: Who has kept hidden our Pure Essence ?

Instead of giving a direct answer to this question, Ma met it with a question of Her own to Nagen Babu, "How do you understand the dynamism of the universe ? In the world nothing moves in isolation. All movements are interconnected. Creation, continuation and destruction—all are going on as a single function. But in leading your worldly life, you have made a mess of everything. So you are all twists and turns inside. What is needed is to keep the worldly affairs in neat folds. Then you have no problems. As you stow them away, so can you open them up."

Nagen Babu: I wish somebody had unwound the twists within you.

Ma: You are seers of the hearts of all.

Ma's answer came to Nagen Babu as a rebuff. He gave up all hopes of eliciting any direct answer from Her and said, "You have just returned from your travels abroad. What have you brought for us ?"

Ma: I did not go to travel anywhere. I am just wandering about in the garden of the same house. When my wanderings are in the same house, what do you expect me to bring for you ?

Nagen Babu: I shall have none of your tricks.

Ma: (smiling) You are not yet sure of your alphabets, and you are asking for the fat book yonder, which you must read. You would not learn your lesson as guided, would not do what I bid you do, but are great at putting lofty questions.

Nagen Babu: Why don't you let us understand ?

Ma: How do I prevent you ?

Nagen Babu: Who else but you prevent us ? If you just appear in our hearts in the form of intellect, we can understand everything. One of our scriptures (Sri Sri Chandi) also says— "The goddess who is present in all creatures in the form of intellect."

Ma: We can use our own intellect in eating and attending to all domestic affairs—only in this particular matter, "*buddhirupena samsthitā* – present in the form of intellect."

The way She made this statement sent all of us into a fit of laughter.

Even after repeated hits-out from Ma, Sri Nagen Dutta was not put off. He said, "Ma, you know our heart's desire. Then why don't you give us what we want ?"

Ma only said, 'But where is Ma ?'

At this time, Prof Hari Prasanna Mukherjee of the University came. I got him seated next to Ma. After a brief silence, he said, 'We often see that we play into the power of the instincts willy-nilly. What is the remedy for it ?'

Ma : Yes, the mind is sometimes subjugated by the instincts inspite of itself. As a remedial measure, provisions should be made against the mind's subjugation. But when one is eager, both provisions and their implementation are taken care of.

Hari Babu : But good ideas and faculties will not be activated so long as there is a hang-over of the past.

Ma : You educate children against their will. Some such measure will have to be adopted here also. Children are averse to studies. They are more fond of play than studies. In their case, you do not wait till they have played themselves out of their fascination for games before undertaking their education. As you forcibly educate children despite their inclination for games, so it is with religious practices. 'Even after being born as a human being—a rare gift from God—my days shall be frittered away in doing nothing. I shall not be able to realize God and must submit to various sufferings, being ploughed back to the cycle of birth and death' – ruminating in this way one should acquire a relish for the Name.

"All aim at joy and peace. Worms and insects also desire joy and peace. But perfect peace cannot be acquired from any worldly objects. The mind is flitting restlessly from one object to another—that too, is in a bid for attaining joy and peace. The mind is in pursuit of worldly objects such as money, respect, fame and the like in the hope of obtaining joy and peace. But these imperfect bits of joy cannot make him happy. He wants perfect joy. The mind is restless because it does not get it. So I say, offer good food to the mind. Kirtan, meditation, repetition of Name and japa are food for the mind. If these are fed into the mind, it will one day settle down to peace. Whatever else is offered to the mind will not appease it, for they are worldly objects having the property of keeping up the wants interminably. Suppose one owns four or five houses, but this does not satisfy his craving and he thinks he would be happier with one more house. Again, a few thousands of rupees saved makes one inclined to saving still more. It is true for every worldly object.

"Only acquisition of the Supreme wealth, which is *Brahma-vidyā* – the Knowledge of Brahma – puts to flight all wants. This wealth instals a man on the broad base of his true nature. Engaged in *sadhana*, one should not give way to

despair. The mind should always be encouraged with the thought that if even a dullard can become a great scholar through studies, why should I not be able to attain Brahma if I strive ?

Hari Babu : How can one profit by education if adverse propensities are strong ? You have spoken of father's educating his son by force; but if it is the other way about, the son dragging the father perforce to games, then who would teach him ?

Ma (satisfied) : You have raised a good point. Few can detect such snags. But, I tell you, a son cannot drag his old father into games.

Hari Babu : Strong impressions from previous births cannot be subdued. Please tell me the remedy.

Ma: In such a case my advice is to make a compromise between enjoyment and renouncement. As you cannot completely keep away from enjoyment, it is better to practise renouncement even in the midst of enjoyment. As for example, you may take rich meals for six days in a week, and take only rice and some boiled vegetables for the remaining one day. Keep it up and the desire for enjoyment will be gradually on the wane. Bear it in mind that the very fact of your being born as a human being presupposes a minimal amount of virtue to your credit, for without it human birth is not possible. Such a birth brings one into the line of self-knowledge. Now he has the option of elevating himself, or he may be degraded to a lower birth. A birth as a human being entails on one the responsibility of devoting some time to God, though reluctantly, by way of *tapasyā*. It is true that with a strong tendency brought forward from a previous birth pitted against him, a man cannot cherish his good intentions for long. There may be occasional lapses. But it is not quite correct to say that nothing can prevail against such strong tendencies, if one makes an attempt to proceed along the path of virtue, the mind is conditioned by it to some extent. It sends out an occasional pulse of repentance and urges the man along the right path. Similar is the effect of being in the company of the good. It also leaves an imprint on the mind. The *sannyasa* you so often refer to, has nothing to do with the wearing of saffron garment. It comes to a person as a logical conclusion to his nature, As a plant regularly watered bears flowers and fruits as a matter of course in the fulness of time, similarly, if a person sticks to the Name of God, he has the spirit of renunciation (*sannyasa*) activated within him naturally, when the time is ripe for it. Once the spirit of renouncement becomes truly active in a man, even the gods cannot tempt him away from the path of *sannyasa*. So I say, go on repeating the Name of God. It is not true that it is of no use. Jiva is such a frame of joy, that

he will not be satisfied with imperfect joy. Let your attempt be to offer him perfect joy."

Hariprasanna Babu was fully satisfied and making his obeisance to Ma, he left.

Then Baul Babu put in an appearance. He sat near Ma and said, "When will you come to rest?"

Ma : There is no unrest for one who by nature is at rest.

Baul Babu : Does *Saguna* not change into *Nirguna* ?

Ma : Does it ? Does a Jiva change into Siva ?

Baul Babu : You are a shrewd person, there's no worsting you at an argument.

Ma : So, you have taken your position as a *Purusha*, have you ? (All laughed)
Where is your female consort ?

Thus began Baul Babu's verbal fencing with Ma. Being at a disadvantage, Baul Babu broke into a song—

"How will you know what a woman is like?" etc.

This was followed by another :

"Stir up in me old memories,
Let them come back renewed....."

Hearing the song of Baul Babu, Baba Bholanath took his stand on the north of the Namghar and made a sign to him. Ma said to Baul Babu, "Now go and take up pens both of you." Baba Bholanath was under a vow of silence then; to communicate with him one needed pen-and-ink.

Baul Babu : What shall I do with pen, unless you serve as ink (a pun on the word 'Kali' which in Bengali means ink and also the Goddess so called).

Ma : Bholanath has both pen and ink.

Baul Babu almost gave up the hope of getting an edge on Ma in the exchange of words and before going to Bholanath said, "Do not be miserly, give away all you have."

Ma (smiling) : Baul is the custodian of all treasure.

Baul Babu again sang— "Come on heart, let's steal, etc.

Singing was almost an obsession with Baul Babu. He was one of the first batch of Ma's devotees.

After he had left, Ma said to us, "When I lodged myself in the Siddheshwari temple for seven days, Baul used to go there every day. You could not have done the same, for it involved a lot of pains. He worked in the school by day and at night he waded through water and mud carrying fruits for me. I lived on those fruits only."

[To be continued]

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

—Sri P.C. Mehta

MATERIALISM

1. 'Yadracchā-vāda' or 'Animitta-vāda'

'*Yadraccha-vāda*' or '*Animitta-vāda*' i.e. Accidentalism claims that the world is a chaos and whatever order we see in it is mere chance. It denies causation. The doctrine must have been well known because we come across reference to it in the works of Sankarācārya and the Mahābhārata. In Mahābhārata, it provides a contrast with the '*Adrsta-vāda*' or belief in the supernatural, found in the Mantras and Brahmins and the metaphysical view of the Upanisads. It is prepared to accept a self or soul so long as it is supposed to last only as long as the body lasts. It does not accept any transmigrating soul. Thus it does not believe in *karma*. On the question whether the ultimate source is one or many, there is evidence supporting both in the Mahābhārata. The later Carvaka school has its roots in Accidentalism. Its 'mundane metaphysics' is probably what is meant by '*Lokāyata*', literally meaning 'restricted to the experienced world.' A '*sutra*' on it, ascribed to Brhaspati, whom the Maitrī Upanisad describes as a heretical teacher, is mentioned in old works and a '*bhāṣya*' upon it also alluded to. But these works are not extant. The only account of the doctrine we now have is in the works of other schools for refutation. The chief importance of the system lies in the evidence it affords of the then prevailing liberty of thought and expression.

2. 'Svabhāva-vāda' or 'Naturalism' :

The Vedic inquirer found that all phenomenal things were in a state of flux. Nevertheless, the phenomenal universe endured because it was upheld by an abiding principle which they called 'Brahman'.

The adherents of this school postulate that there is no need to assume any divine or transcendental power working behind the phenomena as they present themselves to us. They say that things are what they are. The nature of things as they are, explain all that there is to be known. They explain all the variety of the universe and the order that is noticeable. There is no reason to assume more, such as any divine power working behind them. They accept causation as a universal principle but claim that the inherent nature of the thing itself determines its behaviour.

Whatever character an object might manifest is traced to that very object and not to any extraneous agent.

*'Agnirusno jalam sitam sama-sparsah tathānilah,
Kenedam citritam tasmāt svabhāvāt tadvyavasthitih.*

'Fire is hot, water is cold and the air is temperate to the touch. Who could have brought such distinctions into being, if they were not of the very essence of those objects?'

In the Mahabharata we find this doctrine affecting '*Brahma-parināma-vāda*' or 'self-evolving Brahman' by doing away with the absolutism of Brahman and introducing in it the concept of realism and pluralism. Thus soul or '*Purusa*' which are many and are passive are pitched against '*Prakriti*' or matter, which is creative and from which the physical universe emerges. '*Purusa*' and '*Prakriti*' are both independent ultimate entities. The notion of the Absolute and the same sometimes as God, is retained with '*Purusa*' and '*Prakriti*' being subordinate to it. It is the perception of the distinction between '*Purusa*' and '*Prakriti*' which brings about liberation from '*Sansāra*'. In the recognition of souls as permanent, this doctrine differs from '*Svabhāva-vāda*', but in claiming creativity to '*Prakriti*' it resembles it. This view differs from absolutism by admitting matter and spirit as two ultimate entities. This is '*Sāṅkhya*' in the making.

3. The '*Cārvāka*' system :

The '*Cārvāka*' system of materialism, emerges from '*Yadrcchā-vāda*' or '*Animitta-vāda*' i.e. Accidentalism. It is also called '*Lokāyata*' meaning 'restricted to the world of common experience' and points to its positivistic character.

4. The chief tenets of these schools are :

i) *Pramāna* :

They admit only one *pramāna* i.e. perception. They reject not only *śabda* but even inference. By denying 'inference' as a '*pramāna*' what they in fact are alluding to is that they are not prepared to accept '*vyāpti*' or some inductive relation which may not be demonstrably certain but have a high degree of probability. Our belief in inference, *Carvaka* explains, is due to associations. Where the belief is verified in practical life, it is due to accidental coincidence.

This conclusion that inference is not valid, is itself the result of induction and points to the conviction that in one case at least the relation of '*vyāpti*' holds true. It would then refute itself, for what is rejected would be admitted in the very act of

rejecting it. Thus philosophy which ought to be a discipline of life, ceases to be even a discipline of mind.

Since all reasoned conclusions rest on some inductive truth which may not be demonstrably certain, but have a high degree of probability, their acceptance of 'perception' as the only '*pramāna*' would prevent finality in reasoned thinking. According to his premise, we cannot predict that the sun will rise tomorrow after it sets today.

ii) *Elements* :

Materialists admit of only four elements, all physical and grasped by the '*pramāna*' or perception :-

1) earth, 2) water, 3) fire and 4) air.

They do not accept '*Ākāśa*' as an element, since '*Ākāśa*' is the result of inference.

These are taken as the ultimate facts of the whole universe. Thus matter is the ultimate reality. They are to be understood as gross in form, because materialists cannot believe in any subtle state which can only be arrived at through reason.

iii) *Mind* :

Mind is only a function of these elements brought about through a unique mingling in the living body.

iv) *Soul* :

Therefore, the conscious physical body is the only self or '*Ātman*', and there is no soul apart from it. Some materialists accepted the existence of 'a unitary knowing self' as soul, but it only lasted as long as the body did. (See *Nyāya-Manjari* of Jayant Bhatta).

The denial of the *Atman* provoked the keenest controversy. That the existence of '*Atman*' or soul cannot be theoretically demonstrated was a fact recognized by some orthodox thinkers also. Therefore to refute the *Cārvāka* doctrine they argued that it cannot be demonstrated that the body and soul are not distinct. If consciousness was the property of the body, it should be either essential or accidental. If it was essential it should be inseparable from the body and last as long as the body lasts. But this is not so because in a swoon or in a dreamless sleep, the body is seen without it. If it is accidental, it implies that another '*upādhi*' or agency is at work in producing consciousness and cannot therefore be wholly ascribed to the body. Again it may be true that consciousness is found in association with the physical organism, but it does not prove that it ceases to be when the organism perishes. The constant association of the two does not prove that one is a property

of the other. With these and other arguments it was sought to be proved that consciousness was not the property of the physical body, but was itself an independent principle which found its medium of expression in the body.

v) *Vedas* :

They do not accept the authority of the Vedas on the ground that various parts of the Vedas contradict and one cannot make out what they teach.

vi) *Suffering & pain* :

They maintain that in life pleasure and suffering or pain go together. Therefore unmixed pleasure need not be sought.

vii) *Values* :

They reject the idea of any divine or transcendental power working behind the phenomena. Therefore there are no higher or spiritual values which would triumph over personal pleasure. Though recognizing pain as inevitable, they do not try to secure freedom from pain. They admit only 1) *Artha* i.e. wealth and 2) *Kāma* i.e. pleasure.

Therefore the only value is the pursuit of pleasure without conscience. They discard morality. Wisdom is in trying to secure the greatest pleasure within one's reach; '*Rinam krtvā grtam pibet*'-i.e. 'Partake of ghee (meaning pleasurable things of life), even by incurring debt'.

The doctrine on the ethical side may therefore be termed hedonistic.

5. Mind as the function of matter :

As we saw, this doctrine accepts the existence of four elements which constitute matter and explains mind as only a function of matter.

We are aware of the mind. In fact matter as we experience consists of sensations in our mind. We are therefore more aware of mind than matter. Even the postulate that we experience matter amounts to our experiencing the mind. If we try to reduce everything to a single source, then it has to be some thing other than matter.

This doctrine is therefore untenable.

[To be continued]

JAI MA

—Dhiraj Sapru

Jai ma

.....and presiding was a poetic flight, one fine spring night.....
to behold-in the passing is she...

Oh! this twinkling sky - with many - a- eye
in sapphire gleam-this silver streak
to behold in the passing is she...

smiling down on yonder youth
dawns to mind those-days-withstood
to behold in the passing is she...

waxing high -sometimes low
as though a brilliant magic show
to behold in the passing is she...

heaving tides-the ocean roars
yet glistening pathways-easing soars
to behold in the passing is she...

so near-yet afar - floating loose
cut free from bonding warp 'n' woof
to behold in the passing is she...

bashfully - coy as day-light-breaks
gallant again-when-twilight makes
to behold in the passing is she...

queen 'n' crowned-on Her night
potent-awesome-in splendid might
to behold in the passing is she...

Jai ma



**PAGES FROM THE DIARY
OF
DIDI GURUPRIYA**

[Translated from Bengali]

January 13th, 1937.

In the early morning we proceeded to Varanasi from Vindhyachal with Ma. We left at seven a.m. and reached Kashi at ten a.m. where we stayed in Bireshwar Pande's dharmasala. From Vindhyachal we were to go to Delhi and a telegram was nearly sent, but at the last minute the plans were changed. On January 14 non-stop kirtan for twenty four hours was to be performed in Delhi by devotees of Simla who were now in Delhi for that purpose. They were extremely restless for Ma's darshan and had sent many telegrams requesting her to come. Yet somehow Ma did not go to Delhi. Ma told us, "You all must try to do kirtan in Kashi from morning to evening tomorrow just as akhanda kirtan had been planned for tomorrow." She told Bacchu's mother* to start the Kirtan next morning.

January 14th, 1937.

Early morning Bacchu's mother commenced singing kirtan. Nepal Dada and others helped to keep up *akhanda nama* kirtan throughout the day. Gradually Jogendra Rai and others all arrived and the kirtan gathered strength. When the crowd became very large arrangements were made for people to sit all the way from Ma's room till the terrace. Everyone was anointed with a flower garland and sandal paste. Baijnath Pande and Bhargavaji of the Theosophical Society arrived with families. They saw Ma for the first time and were extremely happy. Soon after dusk the kirtan was ended and devotees did *pranama* to Ma and left.

January 15th, 1937.

Today again a large number of people came for Ma's darshan. Ma sat on her bedding and talked to all the people.

Ma was speaking to the University Pro. Jeevanshankar Yajnik, saying, "Study some of that knowledge also. Just as you have passed B.A. and M.A. here and become a professor, so should you be there also." Prof. Yajnik replied, "But my

* Didi Gurupriya's elder sister, who was also a very old devotee of Ma.

mind refuses to be steady. If the mind got happiness I could have sat." Ma replied, "How much time have you spent in your life time studying ? Just think it over. And what is *tapasyā* ? I say everything in a topsy-turvy fashion." Saying this Ma continued with joined palms, "I say nothing - I only say what you make me speak. *Tapasyā* means '*tāpa sahan*'. Even if the mind does not want to, you must try. Whatever trouble you take is itself *tapasyā*. If there were no trouble then the value of *tapasyā* would not be known. When the trouble is not experienced any more the mind begins enjoying bliss of its own accord and then there is no talk of *tapasyā* because *tapasyā* has ended. Look, children are naturally attracted towards playing but they are forcibly made to sit and study. Yet their minds do not concentrate and only after they are made to study regularly as a routine do they start liking studies. After that they do not need to be forced. They themselves begin studying regularly because now they cannot remain without studying. They know that if they do not study they will fail in the examination and they do not like failing." Finally Ma said with folded hands, "Look Baba, this is the prayer of this girl, that you must give a little time everyday to Him and gradually increase this time." Yajnik was greatly pleased by Ma's words and touched her feet and did *pranama* before leaving.

Another incident worth mentioning: Nepal dada** told us that two days earlier Dr. Gopal Dasgupta of Kashi had come to him and asked, "Can you tell me when Anandamayi Ma is coming this side?" Nepal dada enquired, "Why do you ask?" He replied, "Last night I dreamt that Anandamayi Ma was sitting on my mattress and saying, 'I have come so close, yet you do not come to see me.' Then Nepal dada told him that he had received a telegram just the day before with the information that Ma was arriving at Vindhyachal on January 13th. Nepal Dada requested the doctor to accompany him to Vindhyachal, but the doctor declared, "I shall not go. I do not even know Ma. When she has herself given me *darshan* she will come here herself if necessary." Truly enough Ma has come to Kashi in the course of events.

Yesterday when Nepal Dada rang up the doctor and informed him that Ma had come to Kashi, the doctor came for Ma's *darshan*. Ma laughed and asked him, "So Baba, how are you? It appears that this time you have pulled this body (pointing to herself) here. Therefore, I have come for Baba's *darshan*. Baba, you cure diseases of the body, please treat the mind also." The doctor gazed steadily at Ma.

A number of varied topics came up for discussion. One boy told Ma, "Ma, Tulsidas was a great *jnani* and a *bhakta*." Ma agreed, "Yes indeed he was." The boy queried, "All right, then why did he look at Lord Krishna's image and say, 'I

** Sri Nepal Chakravorty, who later on became Swami Narayanananda Tirtha.

do not want to see you in this form. I want to see you in the form of Rama.' How was this an expression of knowledge? When all are but One, then why feel that one form is different?'

Ma replied, "Look, you yourself said that he was both a *jnani* and a *bhakta*, then his declaration was surely one of knowledge. The very fact that he said, 'Give me darshan in your Rama form, I do not want to see this form of yours, I want to see the Rama form.' It is a proof that he knew that Rama and Krishna are one. 'Give me darshan in Rama form'- his saying this makes it evident that only forms are different but in reality both are One. By this his knowledge is established. 'I want to see you only in my *Ista* Rama form because I love that.' This expresses his devotion. In this manner both *jnana* and *bhakti* (knowledge and devotion) are expressed."

M. M. Pd. Gopinath Kaviraj had also come for Ma's darshan. He told all those who were present, "Ma never has to think before answering any question. The reply which is apt and necessary at that moment emerges from her lips."

Pd. Gopinath Kaviraj then went on to describe an incident in Varanasi that occurred when Ma and her father were staying at Girin Babu's house on their way back from Navadweep. "Two or three of us went for Ma's darshan. It was raining heavily and we halted at a couple of places before we reached Ma. In the midst of conversation there Ma suddenly spoke up, 'I was clearly watching you with my eyes as you all were coming,' so saying she accurately described where we had halted on the way. The same day she told us numerous facts about *Ichhā Sakti* and *Mahā Sakti*. Once in Hardwar when the topic of the essence of creation came up Ma explained it so beautifully and simply that everyone was surprised."

In the morning Ma was conversing with Jiten dada* , "While I was at Rishikesh Purnananda Swami sent his disciple to me. The disciple wanted to speak to me in private because his Guru had sent him and he did not allow even Jyotish* to be present. He told me, "My Guru has asked me to find out whether or not you have dreams. And, if you have dreams, what kind of dreams do you have?" I replied, 'If you talk about dreaming then my speaking to you now is also a dream. And if you don't accept that then those who are true knowers are always awake, they never sleep.' And so forth. Ma continued, "Purnananda Swami became very fond of me and gradually I met him and spoke to him. When he was ill I visited him at his ashram. He was so good natured and simple that as soon as he heard that I had come, he came down, though he was unwell and sat on the ground with me. I

*. Sri Jitendra Chandra Mukherjee, Advocate, who was Didi Gurupriya's cousin brother.

** . Sri Jyotish Chandra Ray (Bhaiji), one of Ma's first and foremost devotees.

called him 'Baba'. How many times did he cook for me and feed me. When he recovered he visited me in my hut on the bank of the Ganga. That time I stayed in Rishikesh."

Ma was to leave by the three p.m. train for Chittagong*. Arrangements for Ma's bhoga had been made at Mahesh Bhattacharya's *dharmasala*. At one p.m. Ma went there with us all and sat down with Sri Mahesh Bhattacharya. Moving all others aside Ma said to Kanhai dada, "All this time Baba (Mahesh Babu) has been giving in charity after reasoning. Now let him perform charity without reasoning. Baba once told me, 'When I and my wife were in Baidyanath a beggar came begging for alms, I told the beggar to work for his living and did not give him any alms. All my life I have always given in charity only after reasoning in this manner.' Baba remembers this incident, therefore I say, that once let him give in charity without reasoning." In response to Ma's advice Mahesh Babu only smiled.

A person asked Ma, "What is *aisvarya*? Do you have *aisvarya* or not?" Ma laughed and replied, "Is *aisvarya* different? If there is something, there is *aisvarya*. Where there is *aisvarya*, there is difference. Only when there is *aisvarya* does distinction arise." After lunch Ma set out for station.

In the train the topic of protecting the sacrificial fire was raised. I asked, "Ma, why is it necessary to protect sacrificial fires?" Ma narrated, "After the Kalipuja in Dhaka in 1926, a sacrificial fire was kept burning constantly. At that time I had the *kheyala* that just as Kali sported in such a lifelike manner and at the time of her immersion (*visarjana*), obstacles arose, similarly there was no *kheyala* for the *visarjana* of the sacrificial fire. Just as there was no inclination towards immersing Kali, there was also no inclination towards putting out the fire and thus the protection of the fire began. Later when we were to go the Kumbha Mela in Hardwar, a *kunda* was made near the pond in Shahbagh and the fire was installed there for protection. At the time when the *kunda* was being prepared you saw me taking Bholanath there and no one else was allowed to go there. Bholanath was asked to fetch three peepal leaves. When he brought the leaves I took a cinder from the sacrificial fire and began writing on the leaves. All this happened of its own accord; this was similar to the invocations which emanated from this body spontaneously. Three different languages were written on the three leaves."

Ma was asked by me about the three languages and she replied, "Try and understand; first of all there were three, then they became many; like *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*; Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva. From *vāsanā* arises creation (*srīsti*), in *vāsanā*

* Chittagong, which has now become a port of international fame in Bangladesh.

is maintenance (*sthiti*) and from *karma* arises destruction (*laya*). The exhaustion of *vāsanās* is *laya*. As you first take one letter, then break up one to form three; from three you get many. Then again to go back to one, you break the many and get to three, break three and reach one. In the case of words and letters it is the same. Similarly, the basic language (*mula bhāsā*) is also formed by getting three from one and again by splitting the three many are obtained. Understand these three languages to be thus. The three languages which were derived from the basic one language were written when the need arose."

Ma continued, "Those three leaves were then kept inside a coconut shell and covered. An incense pot was placed over that and mud was spread over the pot while preparing the *kunda*. These facts remained undisclosed for so long."

After this incident Kulada dada was entrusted with the duty of performing *yajna*. When leaving, Ma instructed him, "If the fire gets extinguished for some reason, rekindle it in this manner."

Later when Ma had once been to Adinath with her father, she told him on a particular day, "Something has gone wrong with the fire." When they returned to Dhaka and calculated the day on which Ma had uttered this statement they found that the fire had in fact got doused on that very day. At another time in Salkia, Ma was talking to Biren dada* when she suddenly exclaimed, "The fire is not burning properly." That time again, on returning to Dhaka it was discovered that some problem had cropped up with the fire. I have heard that similar incidents occurred on many other occasions.

The width and depth of the *kunda* that was constructed in Vindhyachal ashram was that of Ma's body. Ma was asked the reason for this and she replied, "Once when I was in Dehradun I saw the Vindhyachal ashram before my eyes vividly, just as I am now seeing you. A person was performing *yajna* there and it was visible exactly as it was happening. The person doing the *yajna* expressed his desire and therefore you were told to make a *yajna kunda* at that place. I do nothing of my own will. That person had some connection with Akhandananda and therefore he was made to prepare the *kunda*."

When she was questioned about giving the measurement of her body Ma replied, "You wanted to know the dimensions. You normally take measurements using the hand, which is a part of the body. I had the *kheyala* that *Savitri yajna* is *Brahma yajna* and *Brahma* is *akhanda* (unbroken), therefore the measurement of the entire body was given. It is true that when doing anything actually there is a limit

* Prof. Birendra Mukherjee, elder brother of Didi Gurupriya.

and therefore the body is also limited, but your *bhāva* was perfectly complete and unbroken (*akhanda*). Again as per your opinion the inside of the *kunda* was asked to be made by measurements of the hand."

Ma— "A similar thing happened at the Ramna ashram. I often visited that place from Shahbagh. The people there expressed their desire to have a place for an ashram, but I said nothing to anyone because whenever necessary a particular job gets done anyway. Sometime later when you all tried to make an ashram there Niranjana once said to me, 'We feel ashamed to go to see land for the ashram because whichever place we try to acquire, the deal falls through for some reason or the other and we are unable to purchase any land.'"

Soon after Niranjana Babu said this to Ma, they received some instruction from Ma and the site at Ramna was acquired for the ashram. Ma said, "The temple and other constructions at that site came up in accordance with the desire of those who had lived there earlier."

January 16th, 1937

At Ranaghat some people got into the train in which we were travelling to Goalando. They caught sight of Ma and came to do *pranama*, praising their good fortune on getting Ma's company thus. Four or five of them distributed Ma's *prasada* amongst themselves and began eating it happily. Some of their companions sat a little distance away and watched them laughingly, but did not come closer. Ma asked me to send them also some fruits. I sent them some oranges with one of the persons who had already received *prasada*. On obtaining the oranges those people again burst out laughing.

Meanwhile Ma started talking— "Listen, I shall tell you a story. Two spiritual aspirants sat down to do *sadhana* and resolved that they would not get up leaving their penance but would subsist on whatever God gave them as they remained seated there. Within a short time one aspirant became very hungry and he had grave doubts as to whether God would really come to the forest and give them any food at all. So he told his companion, 'Come brother, let us go and get some food and then continue our penance'. The other replied, 'No brother, when I am seated in His contemplation I shall eat whatever He sends. Even if I have to go hungry I shall not get up.' On hearing this the other aspirant got up and went to some place to procure a meal for himself. While returning, it struck to him that his companion was sitting in the forest and that he should take something for him. So he returned with some food for his companion and placed it near his companion's *āsana*. The companion

laughed and exclaimed, 'See brother, if one sits in contemplation of Him, He sends food even to the forest.'

While sitting in the train Ma again started talking "When I first started visiting Siddheshwari one day as we were returning Bholanath spoke somewhat despondently, 'What *sādhan* and *bhajan* are you doing? My dependence on my job has not ceased. Why does one have such sorrow in this house when the conditions here are of this nature?' This comment caused a strange *bhāva* in me and made me walk out swiftly into an area where it was raining heavily. Bholanath caught me and made me return. In the same *bhāva* I kept saying, 'Then I shall go.' Bholanath consoled me in many ways and took me back to Siddheshwari."

This incident occurred at Siddheshwari when Ma stayed there for seven days before returning to Shahbagh. Later, when Ma returned to Shahbagh from Siddheshwari after *bhoga*, Bholanath again made some comment in the same strain as before about his job which caused Ma to get into a strange *bhava*. While in that state she told Bholanath, "Look after this body just for another three or four years. Now you all have come and gathered." So saying Ma began laughing.

Bholanath also narrated an anecdote about the time when they were at Bajitpur and he had declared his wish to build a house in Dhaka. Ma had replied saying that he already had a house in Dhaka. She then named a person who long ago owned the place where the Ramna ashram situated and told Bholanath, "That person's house is yours." Later when the ashram came up it was found on enquiries that the name mentioned by Ma actually belonged to the earlier owner of that place.

January 18th, 1937.

We reached Chittagong this morning. Shashi Babu* and others had come to the station and we were taken to the temple of Rajarajeshwar. I have heard that this is a very ancient temple.

Some days ago Ma had received the news that Jyotish Dada's daughter was lying seriously ill here. Today after Shashi Babu escorted Ma to the temple, he went to enquire about the girl because he had not received any news for the past two days. After he left, Ma suddenly declared, "I can see a woman has died." Being startled I said, "They have just gone to find out about Jyotish dada's daughter and what is this you are saying now?" Ma did not say any more. A short while later Shashi

* Sri Sashi Bhusan Das Gupta, a renowned photographer of Chittagong and a staunch devotee of Ma, who had taken some rare photos of Ma.

Babu returned and informed us that Jyotish dada's daughter has died last night. Ma remarked, "Last night at that very time I saw that I was present near the death bed and could see everything clearly."

Swami, Shankarananda, who has come with us from Kashi, questioned Ma, "Ma, you have come so close, then what sin prevented the girl from having your darshan?" Ma replied, "Why do you say that she did not see me? Yes, you could not see. I shall tell you in your language. You say, don't you, that if one dies while on a pilgrimage towards Kashi one gains the merit of dying in Kashi? You may understand this similarly. There was no idea of our coming this side. Only because we came here inspite of not intending to, shows that the girl was in my thought. Otherwise if I had gone that way I would not have thought of the girl at all." Hearing this we mentally extolled the girl's good fortune.

Sri Jashoda Ghoshal's* house was very close to the temple and so Ma's *bhoga* was prepared there. Ma went to a house where a gentleman came forward to do *pranama*. The gentleman had many teeth missing. Looking at him Ma laughed and said, "What, Baba you are becoming toothless. To begin with you had no teeth and now again you are becoming toothless. No teeth in the beginning and no teeth in the end, in between during the time there were teeth there was so much confusion." Everyone laughed heartily on hearing this.

Someone asked a question dealing with *samskāra*, Ma replied, "On seeing any object an impression is created on the mind and to remove that impression it takes that much time again."

She told a girl, "You are studying regularly; take God's name also. If He comes in a gross form as your husband then it is well and good, otherwise *Paramātmā* is the Supreme Lord." Ma advised the women folk, "If you serve your husband in the right spirit then the feeling of, 'What else can I do?', this feeling of inferiority will not remain. You are not able to do this properly and therefore, 'What can I do?', this question arises in your mind." Hearing this all the men started laughing. Immediately Ma spoke up, "Each of you should also try to regard your wife as the '*Griha Lakshmi*'."

At night Ma was seated on the verandah of the temple and many people had gathered for her darshan. Prof Girija Bhattacharya of Rajshahi, who was then in Chittagong, had also come. In the course of conversation the topic of *samadhi* came up. Ma said, "How can there be *samadhi* without *samādhāna*?" A Pandit who was present was very happy to hear this and remarked, "Ma, I have never heard such a

* . A very old and devoted family of Ma.

beautiful explanation." Various other topics came up and the Panditji discussed them at length. Girija Babu commented, "What is the use of all this talk? We don't understand this at all." Ma said, "Look, when you work out a sum even if you add and subtract correctly all along but make one mistake somewhere, you get it all wrong. Your situation is similar. Have faith in all, presume faith is the sum. Without actual experience all facts cannot be understood."

Girija Babu then began talking about certain incidents that had happened earlier, saying, "Once in Dhaka, Prangopal babu, Baul, Atal and I were seated around Ma when she suddenly touched Prangopal babu's hand as if she was giving him something. Prangopal babu placed his hands over Baul's, Atal's and mine. It was a very marvellous happening that when this was done a wonderful *bhāva* came over us all, as if we had been struck by lightning. We all sat in this state for some time and then came back to normal."

Further he continued, "When I first saw Ma in Dhaka she had a long veil and she spoke very little. One day when she went and sat just on the altar of Siddheshwari, she was no longer a housewife, her personality was completely different. For some time invocations poured forth from her lips and then she told me emphatically, 'I am seeing that all is One.' To this day I remember the manner in which she said that. Then once when I was ill Ma ate up the barley that had been cooked for me and told me to have the *prasad* of her *bhoga* at another house. First I received fruits which I ate and then I had all the rest of the items. The same day my fever ceased. I have witnessed many such incidents."

[To be continued]

ABOUT THE ASHRAM IN DEHRADUN

—Hari Ram Joshi

I had repeatedly prayed to Mataji to bless us by the construction of an Ashram in Dehradun, But Mataji told us not to worry about Ashram, as the real Ashram or temple should be located within everyone's heart. However, when I visited Mataji in Ananda Chowk temple in March, 1935, Bhaiji told me to make efforts for establishing an Ashram in Dehradun for Mataji, which I had been eager to do for so long.

I straight away went to see Ch. Shamsher Singh, the proprietor of a medical hall, who lived close to my house, and suggested to him to give his bungalow at Kishenpur with the adjoining eleven bighas of land for an Ashram for Mataji. He had been confined to bed for a long time after a stroke of paralysis. Ch. Shamsher Singh appreciated this proposal and the same evening informed me that he had decided to endow his property at Kishenpur for that noble cause. He suggested that Mataji be persuaded to visit his bungalow at Kishenpur the following evening at 5 P.M. when he too would be present for Her *darsana* and thereafter he would take the necessary steps to legalise the endowment. This was arranged, but for inexplicable reasons Mataji did not enter the premises, but sat outside in the garden. She said that if She had the *kheyala* She would enter the bungalow on Her next visit.

The deed of endowment of the property was drafted by Sri Chatterji, Bar-at-law, and registered that very day in the office of the Sub Registrar in Dehradun, with Ch. Shamsher Singh, Bhaiji, and Captain Mitra as its first trustees. In spite of the insistence of Ch. Shamsher Singh, my name was not included among the first trustees as Mataji did not endorse this.

About a month later, when we were just thinking of celebrating Mataji's birthday at this new place, I suddenly received a letter under registered cover from one Bar-at-law, that Mataji was not at all interested in the said property, as was apparent from the fact that She did not enter the bungalow even after the execution and registration of the deed of endowment. For the reasons stated above, his client had been obliged to revoke the deed of endowment and had got the deed of revocation duly registered. His client thereafter endowed the aforesaid property in favour of the Ramakrishna Mission.

The above letter surprised and shocked me immensely as we were also planning to establish a *Vidya Peeth* for the training of brahmacharis in that bungalow after

celebrating Mataji's 39th birthday there during May. Mataji, always full of mercy, tried to console me and explained that it was for that very reason that She had not allowed Bhaiji to include my name among the first trustees. She also encouraged me to have another place out of my own efforts. Bhaiji also supported this suggestion. Half an acre of land was thereafter soon purchased at Kishenpur itself adjoining the bungalow of Ch. Shamsheer Singh. Mataji's birthday was celebrated on this new plot of land in May, 1935.

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Pandit Madan Mohan Malviyaji used to visit Dehradun during the summer months almost every year for a change of climate. He usually stayed at Dalanwala in the house of Sri Hari Datt Sastri of Tehri, who was a great scholar of *Tantra Sāstra*. Pt Malviya was a close friend of my father's elder brother, the late Pt. Durga Datt Joshi, District Judge. I used to meet Pt. Malviyaji very often during the period from 1935 to 1937, whenever he visited Dehradun. I drew his attention to the fact of Mataji's presence in Dehradun and related to him how I myself had come in contact with Her and suggested to him that he might also see Her.

Malviyaji along with Sastriji went for Mataji's *darśana* and was much attracted by Her Divine Personality. In 1936, I gave him a copy of the collection of Mataji's sayings '*Sad Vāṇī*' by Bhaiji, and a photograph of Mataji standing on the sea-shore at Cox Bazar, which had been taken during the period of Her three years' silence. Malviyaji kept the book and the photograph in his attache case which used to be placed on his bed-side table close to his head. Whenever I had the occasion to meet Malviyaji at Varanasi during his illness, he always would make enquiries about Mataji. On one occasion Pt. Malviyaji persuaded Mataji to bless the spot within the compound of the Benaras Hindu University, where the new Vishwanath temple was to be constructed. Recitation of *nāma kīrtana* was also arranged on the occasion of Mataji's visit.

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Thanks to the strenuous efforts of Sri Hansa Bhai, the construction of the Ashram building at Kishenpur was completed before the celebration of Mataji's fortieth birthday, which commenced on May 2nd, 1936. A large number of devotees from all over India, specially from Bengal, came to Dehradun to attend the function. Bhaiji told me that in future Dehradun should be the centre for all the activities connected with the "Mission of Universal Brotherhood, Peace and Love" as contemplated by him.

One day in August, 1936, at the time when Mataji was moving about incognito with only one lady, Virajmohini, Talattuf Hussain of Dehradun, an old man of over sixty, who had retired as an officer from the Survey of India, came to my house. Though a staunch Muslim, reciting *Namāz* five times daily, he had been visiting Mataji and was known to Her. Earlier in life he had travelled to foreign countries, specially to Mecca and Medina. Talattuf Hussain confided to me that he had long ago heard about the presence of Mataji from an Arab Faquir in Mecca. The Faquir had told him that on his return to India he would, at an opportune time, come in contact with a woman saint of a very high order who would give him necessary instructions for completing his *sādhanā*,

Talattuf took me once to his residence at Karanpur and introduced me also to his wife and daughter, although they observed strict *pardah*. He wanted to know what I had seen in Mataji that attracted me so much to Her. I replied that at the very first sight of Her at Raipur in March, 1933, Her Divine Personality appeared to me most fascinating and enchanting and that I felt as if I was having *darśana* of a *Stithaprajñā* as defined in Chapter II of the *Bhagavad Gita*. I had until then thought it impossible for anyone to achieve that state. However, I had not yet seen any *vibhūti* (supernormal power) of Mataji. He was pleased to disclose to me what he had seen in Mataji that had attracted him so irresistibly that he was unable to stop visiting Her inspite of the protest of his wife and children, who had put him in the category of Kafirs, as he used to take *prasāda* from Mataji's *bhoga*. Talattuf that day, in the presence of his family, took off his upper robe and I was greatly surprised to see that within his dress he was wearing a saffron cloak. Talattuf also narrated to me how during his prayers he used to see Mataji sitting in front of him in the form of Mohammed, the Great Prophet. He then told me that we should not feel worried if we got no news about Mataji's movements during Her incognito travels. He further assured me that Mataji would soon come back to us. This actually happened a few months later.

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Mataji said that sometimes even dead persons in their subtle bodies appeared before Her just as we went to Her for *darśana*. She also has said that these souls sometimes came to Her in the guise of even snakes. At times the devotees felt that they should leave Mataji alone in Her room so that She may have the chance to rest. But Mataji has stated so often that even though She might be left alone in the room, souls not visible to ordinary human beings appeared before Her and talked to Her in their own languages. She said that Her body might seem to be sleeping but actually

She did not sleep in as much as She was never unconscious. In Her *kheyāla* or *bhāva* She knew what was happening all around. The reader therefore might draw his own conclusions about the Divine Nature of Mataji and Her equal love for all individuals, high or low, irrespective of caste, creed or nationality. It is really surprising that, when we are blessed with the presence of such a great Divine Being in our midst, only a few of our leaders, educationists, reformers and well-wishers of the oppressed and down-trodden take advantage of Her guidance to solve the many intricate and complex problems facing the world.

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In early 1937, one Mrs. Jennings, who belonged to a wealthy family of California and was working in London for international peace, learning about Mataji during her stay in Pondicherry, went in search of Mataji to Calcutta, where she got information about the movements of Mataji in Uttar Pradesh. When she succeeded in contacting Mataji she was greatly attracted by Her Divine Personality.

I was directed by Mataji to take Mrs. Jennings to the Kishenpur Ashram and to allow her to enter the *Mauna Mandir* (silence room), on the first floor of the Ashram building, in which only one person at a time was permitted to enter, as it was reserved for strict silence and meditation. Mrs. Jennings expressed the desire to meditate in that room and asked me to knock at the door after one hour. She entered the *Mauna Mandir* wearing a beautiful silk sari presented to her by Mataji. The door was closed by me from outside. On the expiry of the hour, I knocked. When Mrs. Jennings came outside, her face was flushed and she appeared as if in a deep meditative mood. She gave me some idea of the *ānanda* she had experienced during her meditation. She told me that had I not knocked at the door but allowed her to stay in the room for longer, she probably might have been absorbed in a deep trance. She also stated that even during the short hour in the *Māuna Mandir* she had practically lost body consciousness and felt that her *Ātmā* was floating in a sort of *śunya* (void).

After her visit to Dehradun, Mrs. Jennings left for California via Bombay and London. On her way she visited Jaipur and from there sent a beautifully engraved brass globe as a symbol of Universal Brotherhood to be hung in the Kirtan Hall of the Kishenpur Ashram.

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Early in August, 1937, Mataji, Pitājī, Bhaiji and the rest of the party returned to Almora from Kailash. Just a few days before reaching Almora, Bhaiji got indisposed and his condition soon started deteriorating. On their arrival at Almora, Swami Akhandanandaji informed me telegraphically about Bhaiji's serious illness. I

left Dehradun immediately for Almora. Dr. Khajan Chand, the leading private medical practitioner of Almora, was engaged as attending physician for Bhaiji's treatment. Although in consultation with the Civil Surgeon he gave him the best treatment available, Bhaiji's condition showed no sign of improvement and on August 17th, 1937 on *Śrāvan Śuklā Dvadaśī* at about 3 P. M. he breathed his last smilingly, in the presence of Mataji.

Just a short time before his passing away I entreated that before proceeding on his pilgrimage to Kailash he had promised that after due consultation with Mataji he would on his return from Kailash give me detailed instructions for establishing and organising the "Mission of Universal Brotherhood, Peace and Love" in the Kishenpur Ashram, as had been conceived by him. Bhaiji replied that if I was unable to organise the Mission, it would look after itself. Then, just a few minutes prior to his death, he said in very clear voice: "Mataji and I are one, Pitāji and I are one, we are all one." He thereafter recited *Mā Nāma* in a sweet, melodious voice and at that moment we were directed by Mataji to place his body on a mat spread on the floor. Bhaiji repeated *Saṁnyāsa Mahāvākya* and soon breathed his last.

At about 2 A. M. that very night, Mataji called me to the room where Bhaiji had died and I was closeted with her for about an hour. I asked Mataji who would now give directions for organizing the "Mission of Universal Brotherhood, Peace and Love" as conceived by Bhaiji. Mataji reminded me of what Bhaiji had told me just before he passed away.

I humbly requested Her to stay in the Kishenpur Ashram and make it a center of Her activities as had been Bhaiji's earnest desire. I also communicated to Her that Bhaiji had told me that Dehradun was the place from where She had assumed a universal character during the short period of four years after leaving Dhaka in June, 1932. Therefore, Dehradun might be looked upon as the centre of the Mission. Mataji agreed to go down to Dehradun and also gave me detailed instructions about the arrangements to be made for maintaining a proper spiritual atmosphere in the Kishenpur Ashram. I promised that I would try my best to mould my life according to Her directions.

Mataji remained in deep *samādhi* the whole of that night. In the meantime Bholanathji also decided to take Mataji to Dehradun the following morning. A motor-bus was hired for going down to Kathgodam. With great difficulty Mataji was carried to the bus in an arm-chair and made to lie down on the berth behind the driver's seat.

We left Almora at about 10 A. M. On reaching Bhowali at 5 P. M. Mataji said a few words to me in a very low voice and then again resumed Her *samādhi*. At

Kathgodam we had to use a stretcher to take Her to the railway compartment reserved for our journey to Bareilly. From there we caught the train to Dehradun.

At Dehradun also we had to take Mataji to the Kishenpur Ashram on a stretcher as she continued to be in deep *samādhi* throughout the whole journey. At the Kishenpur Ashram She was first taken to the main Kirtan hall and then to Her room. When Mataji was in the Kirtan hall She talked a little to the devotees who had assembled there to receive Her and have Her *darśana*.

In Dehradun Mataji did not eat anything and subsisted only on a small quantity of water for a whole fortnight. On the sixteenth day of Bhaiji's *samādhi* Mataji's devotees arranged for a *bhandārā* (feast) in memory of the late Swami Maunananda Parvat (Bhaiji), and on this occasion Mataji also tasted everything that had been prepared— i. e., *puries*, rice, dal, vegetables, sweets, etc. A good number of *sannyāsis* from the adjoining Ramakrishna Mission were also invited.

As already stated, Mataji had in the night after Bhaiji's death given me some detailed directions for fixing up a regular daily routine of morning and evening *kīrtan*, *bhajan*, *pūjā* and recitation of holy scriptures like *Bhagavad Gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* so that the sanctity of the Ashram might be well preserved, as desired by Bhaiji. Mataji had also told me very clearly not to disclose to anyone that the programme had been suggested by Her.

Two days after her arrival at Kishenpur, Mataji asked me in the presence of *Bholanathji*, *Gurupriya Devi* and others, to show Her all the articles that Bhaiji had left with me before his departure for Kailash. A small attache case, a fountain pen and a few other articles of his use were brought there by me and shown to Mataji. Bhaiji had also given me a sealed packet, which contained a manuscript in Bengali—'Early Life Story of Mataji'—right from Her first appearance in this world on April 30th, 1896, till June 2nd, 1932, when She left Dhaka for Dehradun. This life story had been narrated to Bhaiji by Mataji Herself. During the years 1933 to 1936, when Mataji was mostly living in Dehradun, Bhaiji had requested Her to give him some detailed informations about Her *lilā* for the period from 1896 to 1932, which facts were unknown to devotees. This book was compiled by Bhaiji on the basis of what he had heard from Mataji. Bhaiji had given me positive instructions that the sealed packet should be delivered by me to Mataji in private.

I have been informed that this manuscript was being revised after being read out to Mataji. My personal feeling is that this book is not being published as yet as Mataji does not want to disclose her divine supernatural powers to the general public for the present.



MATAJI'S FIRST VISIT TO GUJARAT

—Bithika Mukerji

October, 1937

After attending the annual Durga Puja festival of the Bengali community in Dehradun Mataji went to Hardwar. But she stayed in Hardwar on this occasion for three days only. She visited the ashram of Swami Mangal Giri Maharaj and also went to see Swami Asimanandaji. She reminded Swami Asimanandaji that he had once offered to escort her to the holy sites on the banks of the river Narmada in Gujarat. He expressed his readiness to do so at any time convenient to her. He had reckoned without his guess, because Mataji immediately said, "Let us then start today, by the first available train !"

Initially thrown into considerable disorder by her suggestion, everybody got used to the idea very quickly, and when they steamed out of Hardwar that evening, it was realised that it was not such an impossible scheme after all. Didi and Swami Akhandananda had joined Mataji's party at Hardwar in response to her invitation.

Mataji accompanied by a comparatively smaller party came to Chandod, a small town near the river Narmada on October 18. Swami Asimananda was quite well known in this part of the country. He made arrangements for their stay at the Vishundas Temple.

The visitors found the local people very hospitable and courteous. The temple catered to people of all denominations and welcomed all travellers who were desirous of visiting the famous sites for *sādhanā* near the shores of the holy Narmada. Down the centuries ascetics of great repute had practised austerities in these places. The entire region is sprinkled with temples, shrines, ashramas and also less frequented huts and caves where one may spend years in absolute solitude. In one of these caves Sri Balananda Brahmachariji of Deoghar had spent several years. Mataji visited the ashram of the Guru of Sri Balananda Brahmachariji, where she was made welcome by Sri Kailashanandaji.

Mataji also went to other places of interest, travelling by boat after sunset. This seemed to be the usual mode of procedure because the sun made the open boats very uncomfortable during the day. The local people could not speak Hindi and nobody in Mataji's party (excepting Swami Asimanandaji) knew any Gujarati. Conversations therefore were limited. This however did not prevent Mataji from

exercising her ineffable attraction on men, women and children. Slowly but steadily the number of people visiting Mataji's camp site increased.

Mataji's party included Sri Naresh Chakravarty, a professor from Calcutta, and Sachi Babu, both very quiet and serious-minded men. On their way to Chandod, Mataji remarking jokingly on the grave aspect of Sachi Babu, had said, "You seem to have become quite a *Gambhīrnath babaji*."¹ Mataji's use of the word "*gambhīrnath*" stirred the memory of Sachi Babu who recalled with some surprise and a great deal of excitement that long ago while reading a biography of the saint so named, he had experienced a great longing for visiting the sites of the saint's *tapasyā*. He now realized that he had come to the Narmada, but had quite forgotten that he had once been very keen to do so. His wishes were fulfilled in a manner quite beyond his expectations.

Mataji went to Ahmedabad and to Baroda for a few days, then returned to Vyasa and Karnali on the Narmada in the first week of November. She gradually became known to people from all strata of society, business magnates from Ahmedabad, professional men and women, and also the villagers from along the banks of the river. The towns' people could talk to her a little in Hindi and spent as much time with all those who came to seek her advice as she always did wherever she might be.

One educated young lady asked Mataji, "Is there need for a Guru in one's life?"

Mataji replied, "Consider the fact that all one's life one is subject to the influences of people around one. To begin with, the parents, then the teachers, in fact there is no end to the number of persons from whom we require to learn something or other. So a teacher is always necessary, a teacher who will direct one's effort in the right direction. You may look at it from another angle too. Supposing you wish to undo a difficult knot. You have to bring it under focus and study the twist of the chords so that you may unravel it. Similarly, in order to achieve freedom, one must bind oneself down (under the supervision of the Guru), in other words, one must accept discipline."

Another young girl said, "Mataji, I cannot meditate on any form of God. As a matter of fact I do not care for any symbol whatsoever. How can I get control over my mind?"

Mataji answered, "In that case, you may just sit still and concentrate on the natural process of breathing. If you train yourself to do that, this itself will act as a symbol for you." The girl professed herself very pleased with this answer.

One gentleman asked Mataji one day, "Is transmigration of souls a fact or not?"

1. The word "*gambhir*" means serious or profound, in other words, Mataji's statement meant "Why are you looking so serious?"

Ma—"Yes, but only for those who have such a *sam̐skāra*; those who are not determined by their belief in this matter are not re-incarnated in other bodies."

Q : "In that case it would perhaps be better to be born as a Christian or Muslim, who do not believe in re-incarnation and for them all is over in just one life-time."

Mataji smiled and said, "I did not mean the *sam̐skāras* are engendered by one's religion. Predilections may cut across religious faith. It all depends upon the status achieved by the individual soul. What is thought to be true is that all souls are not necessarily reincarnated."

One day Mataji out of her own *kheyāla* explained at some length the Vrindaban life of Sri Krishna. She said, "Unless the mind has attained a level of being in rapport with the Divine, one cannot hope to understand the *līlā* of Sri Krishna. In the state of union or *samādhi*, the senses are transcended and then only one may experience the bliss which is sublime. Some people, unable to grasp the nature of this spiritual experience, try to impose upon it their own understanding of such matters and thus reduce it to their own level. This is why we hear so often people voicing their reservations regarding the *līlā* of Krishna. The fact of the matter is that unless one transcends totally the mundane sphere one cannot step on to the divine ground of Vrindavan."

Naresh Chakravarty, the professor from Calcutta, found himself very much at home with this discourse. Perhaps, Mataji had spoken for him alone, because he agreed enthusiastically and said, "It is my conviction that the *achintyabhedābhedavādā* of Sri Chaitanya has touched the ultimate heights of human yearning for God. Whatever one may say, the Advaita of Sankara leaves one with a feeling of dissatisfaction because the heart plays a very small role in It."

Mataji, however, did not agree and said rather forcefully, "Only those who do not have a proper understanding of these matters, will hold such opinions. There is no contradiction involved." Naresh Chakravarty was very pleased with himself for having elicited from Mataji her definitive preference (as he saw it) for the Advaita Vedanta. He said, "I feel Ma prefers the Advaita point of view. But how can that be when she has just now given such a heart-warming discourse on the Krishna-līlā !" Then a little ruefully he added, "I see that I am only beginning to get a glimmering of the scope and range of Ma's understanding." Mataji said with a smile, "Do you know what *māyā* is ? "*Mai āyā*" (मैं आया)* that is, "I have come." *Māyā* is conterminous with the experience, "I am." If there is no "I" there is no *māyā*."

During this visit to Gujrat the foundations for future contacts were laid. Mataji moved amongst the people as if she had known them for a long time. She seemed at home in all these new places and the local people came to look upon her as the

* In Hindi "मैं आया" sounds somewhat like *māyā*.

personification of their most cherished object of worship. Their total acceptance of her was matched by Mataji's attitude of being completely at ease with them, as if with friends of long standing.

During her travels in Gujarat Mataji spent a lot of time with her own father and mother also. Dādāmaśai (Mataji's father) was a music lover and a singer of some considerable ability. On many evenings, he filled the hearts of the congregation by his rendering of beautiful devotional songs. Sometimes Mataji would join in, as she had done in childhood. One of the songs which many people have heard from Mataji herself is as follows :

"Can I ever abandon that one, who desperately calls
 'Mother where are you, where are you'?
 The one who remembers (Me) in his heart
 and fills his life with the Name,
 sees nothing in the universe excepting the form of My image.
 One who does not speak of any other (than of Myself)
 and is pained to see the sorrows of others,
 when a child cries for his mother and his tears flow,
 can I then stay away ?
 Immediately I give him the shelter of my arms."

At this time Mataji inaugurated a new *nāma-sankīrtana* amongst her companions, adding a line of her own to the line which was more familiar to the ears of the northerners, namely : "*Raghupati Rāghava Rājārām, jayatu Śiva Śiva Jānaki Rām, patita pāvana, jay Sīyarām.*"

This period of quiet life on the banks of the holy Narmada, spent sometimes on temple verandas, sometimes in dharamśālās, was made specially memorable by the devotional musics sung by Dādāmaśai. These were his last days with Mataji, because after a few weeks of his leaving her, he was taken ill. Mataji at that time was in Tarapeeth. About three days before his death Bholanath brought her to Calcutta for a day to see Dādāmaśai. This proved to be their last meeting. While Mataji stood at his bedside, he looked at her with great concentration, calling out, 'Ma, Ma, Ma'. To many it seemed that he had at that moment changed from being an affectionate father to a child seeking shelter with his mother. Perhaps he experienced the meaning of the songs he had sung to her many times. After a while, on Mataji's seeking his permission to go, he readily bade her farewell with a tranquil mind. Thus ended a life of great dedication towards the One Goal, so constantly on the lips of Mataji. He died on December 16th, 1937, at the age of 71.



OUR FIFTH TRIP TO INDIA

—Shraddha Davenport

On November 27, 1976, we joyfully returned to Delhi. This was the beginning of our fifth pilgrimage.

Mother said that we could meet Her in Patna and gave us permission to follow wherever She might travel during our stay. There was to be a great Kumbha Mela at Allahabad in January, but Mother's program for that was not yet set. Our only purpose was to stay near Mother, so it mattered little to us where She might go as long as we could go with Her.

From Delhi we took our morning flight to Patna, arriving there at 8:30 a.m. on November twenty-eighth. Mother was staying in a beautiful new mansion under construction by her devotee, Maharani of Hathwa. She never entered the home of a householder once it had been occupied, but sometimes She would bless devotees by staying in their new residence before anyone had moved in, such as on this occasion. A Bhagavat Saptaha was being conducted daily in a pandal set just in front of the entrance to "Hathwa House," as the new home was called.

When we arrived by taxi, there was little activity on the grounds. I walked to the rear of the pandal and found Chitra there. What a joy to see her beautiful face after four years. She advised us to get a room in the hotel just next door, shower, and hurry back as Mother would be coming to the pandal about 10:00 a.m. Brahmachari Ram of Mother's Kankhal ashram, kindly accompanied us to the hotel where we were given very nice accommodation.

We were happy to see our friend Binu Niyogi who had also come to see Mother. Swami Akhandanandaji was giving the Srimat Bhagavat discourse. He was seated in the center of a platform which dominated the end of pandal nearest to the house. Our Divine Mother sat just to his right.

There we saw Her after our eternal two-year exile, looking radiant in Her immaculate white cloth. Within Her aura the unreality of our existence in the west melted away and I was alive again. Always it was like that—a metamorphosis.

Garlands were available beside the pandal. We purchased two and went to the steps where Mother would come out. Chitra, Pushpa, Bishuddha, and Maitreyi greeted us with warm smiles, all telling Mother that we had arrived.

Mother allowed us to place our garlands gently upon Her shoulders and stood with folded palms as we bowed at Her feet. I lightly touched Her right foot with my

fingertips. We followed as She walked toward the door of Hathwa House where She turned and stood facing us for a few minutes.

That evening we enjoyed watching as Mother responded to questions asked by devotees in the pandal. She was delightfully animated and playful. I sat near Lakshmi and Gopalpriya who were staying in the hotel room right next to ours. At 8:45 p.m. there was the usual period of *mauna*. I was always sorry that the lights were turned out for *mauna* as then I could not see Mother.

The next morning there was a knock at our hotel room door. I was so surprised when I opened it to find our smiling friend Krishnapriya. She had just come from Calcutta and looked wonderful. What an amazing thing, to find so many friends here at this relatively small function.

The next day, November thirtieth, was my birthday, so when I got the opportunity I told Chitra that I would very much like to ask for Mother's blessing on that day. Chitra said that it would be most difficult for me to get any time with Mother and that it might be a week or two before I could get a private with Her.

At 7:30 a.m. I awoke and wondered what this forty-seventh birthday would hold for me. I bathed, washed my hair, and dressed. Satya was taking his shower when I heard someone at our door. I opened it to find Chitra who rushed in and said that I should come right then to have Mother's darshan for my birthday. She said to bring Gopalji and my mala. I almost forgot my glasses. Sprinkling some Ganga jal on myself and Gopal, who was not yet dressed, I quickly gathered His clothes, jewels, and my mala, putting them and Him in His basket, forgot my purse and ran out leaving poor Satya in the shower with the door of our room open.

Chitra led me hurriedly down the path to Mother's quarters. I told her I had no money to purchase a garland for Mother. Stopping for a second by the flower vendor, Chitra told him to give me a garland and that I would pay him later. Garland and basket in hand, I breathlessly stumbled after Chitra. Krishnapriya was standing near the pandal and Chitra told her to come too. We all went inside the house to an enclosed courtyard which was open to the sky. A carpet was spread upon the recessed square of earth. Chitra left. Krishnapriya and me alone there for a short time. We took our seats before the asana which had been prepared for Mother.

I tried to straighten my sari and dress Gopalji before Mother came. Satya had not arrived and I felt very bad because I did not know how he could find me. To think that he would miss this special darshan had me on the verge of tears. When Chitra returned I pleaded with her to send someone to get him. As always, she found a way, sending a young man to locate Satya and bring him to the courtyard.

Krishnapriya and I stood as Mother entered. She smiled so sweetly at Gopal and me as She moved to Her seat. Then She took Gopal, touching my hand as She did so. She allowed me to put my garland gently over Her head. As I bowed at Her feet, She placed the garland upon my shoulders. Mother also put a garland on Gopalji as He sat next to Her. She held my japa mala, touching it to Her heart and head before returning it to me.

Udasji brought a yellow towel and placed it in Mother's lap. Mother looked at one corner and commented that the towel was new. Then she laid it across Her lap, tucking it snugly around her legs, and said, "Now I have used it." She was smiling and I bowed before Her as She placed the towel over my back and shoulders. There was no one translating, but somehow I understood Mother. This happened on rare occasions, and it seemed so normal that I never questioned it.

Another woman had come for a private with Mother, so Chitra said I should go and check on Satya to be sure that he got the message. She said that we could again join Mother after the private. As I was hurrying out the door I saw Satya coming up the walk with a garland in his hand. We went inside and stood at a place where we could see Mother without intruding. After the private we were allowed to go to Mother and pronam. Gopalji was still at Her side, but His garland must have been given as prasad during the private.

Satya placed his garland over Mother's head and pronamed as She then put it upon his bowed head. We sat with Her for some time as She talked with the few people who were there. It was a lovely relaxed atmosphere. When Mother started to get up, I asked in my best Hindi, "Ma, ashish di gia"? and She touched the top of my head. Then I motioned toward Satya and said " Mere Swami?" requesting that She bless him in the same way. Mother touched the top of his head too.

After that we stood to the side and watched as Mother walked around the courtyard and discussed the upcoming Gita Path to be held there in a day or so. Mother went to Her room and we spoke with Chitra briefly. Mother came back for a few minutes. Then She was gone again, leaving us standing intoxicated in the wake of Her enchantment and love. I floated out with Mother's towel and the garland still upon my shoulders as She had placed them. Gopal's basket was full of prasad and Gopal was in my hand. When we returned to our room it was just as we had left it, unlocked and in disarray, but completely undisturbed.

After breakfast we went again for Mother's darshan in the pandal then visited with Chitra, Bhaskarananda, and Tanmayananda.

In the evening we again sat with Mother for **two hours**, culminating in the maun period from 8:45 to 9:00 p.m. . Those few minutes **were very powerful** that night.

[To be continued]

SAMARTH RAMDAS

—Jaya D. Kania

Samarth Ramdas was a great saint of Maharashtra. His father was Suryaji Pant and mother Renuka Bai. Ramdas was born in the year 1608 AD. His original name was Narayana.

Even when he was still a child he acquired some knowledge of the Hindi scriptures. He had fascination for meditation also. At the age of twelve his parents arranged his marriage as per custom in those days. Narayan was sitting opposite to his bride during the marriage ceremony. When the priests were uttering the word 'Swadhan' he suddenly got up and ran away from his seat.

Thereafter he remained in Nasik on the bank of the sacred river Godavari for twelve years. Early in the morning he used to stand in the river and recite *Gayatri mantra* till noon and then go begging for alms. He was a staunch devotee of Sri Rama & Hanumana. First he offered the food to Sri Rama and then partook of it himself. He also attended regularly religious discourses in temples of Nasik, studied Sanskrit and copied the Valmiki Ramayana himself with his own hand. This manuscript is still being preserved. At Tafali near Nasik, he did the *Purascharan* of the Rama Mantra—*Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* and the Lord gave darshan to Ramdas. He was an *advaitin* as well as a *bhakta* both. He considered it as his main aim in life to spread the Hindu religion.

Ramdas had so far not visited Pandharpur. It is said that Lord Panduranga appeared before him in the guise of a brahmin and took him to Pandharpur.

As soon as they reached the temple the brahmin suddenly disappeared. Ramdas then realized that Lord Himself had brought him to the temple. When he went inside he found Sri Rama in place of Lord Vishnu standing there on the altar. Being very much surprised he bowed down with reverence and realized that the various forms of the Lord were essentially one. He worshipped the deity and visited Pandharpur again and again. Here he also met Sri Tukaram and other saints of those days.

It is understood that Sri Rama himself told Ramdas to go and help the Maratha ruler Shivaji in his tremendous efforts against the Mughals. Ramdas then came to the bank of the river Krishna. Ramdas also established eleven seats of Maruti (Hanumana), thereby emphasising the usefulness of physical strength and development. He went about preaching and established Rama temples also.

Ruler Shivaji became his staunch disciple and became so much impressed by Ramdas that he placed his Guru's wooden sandals (*Pādukās*) on the royal throne and turned himself into his Guru's regent. In fact Shivaji even desired to renounce the throne and Maratha kingdom and live all his life with Guru Ramdas. The Guru would however not allow him to do so. He tried to impress upon Shivaji that his main purpose in life was the liberation of his people from the tyranny of the Mughal emperor and establish a Hindu kingdom. Ramdas advised Shivaji to rule in his (Ramdas's) name and hold the ochre (*Gerua*) banner and try to rule justly and truthfully on behalf of God.

To all those who seemed to be interested in God's Name Ramdas gave the "Rama mantra" and also spread God's Name wandering all over Maharashtra.

During his later years he felt that living in the forest meditation could be better practised. He also devoted much of his time in writing several works. Also it was his conviction that only a physically strong nation was capable of freeing itself from foreign domination. Therefore he advised all his disciples to build up their bodies and established for that purpose several institutions as well. He indeed deserved the title of "Samarth" (Competent).

Repeating the "Rama mantra" he left his body at Sajjangad near Satara in the year 1682 at the age of seventy four.

He always directed his disciples to repeat "Rama Nam" and serve Rama, love all and live for Him alone.

Not only was Ramdas a great saint, but also an astute politician. When even Shivaji was troubled by any political problem he always sought the advice of his own mother Jijabai and of his guru. Such a great man was Ramdas, whose name has been made immortal in the annals of this country.

FROM NOTES TAKEN IN SRI MA'S PRESENCE

—'Kirpal'

A lady was talking to Sri Ma. She was telling that there was no satisfaction in the world— If one has a car, a house, jewellery, still keeps on saying, more, more, more.....

Sri Ma was also found counting on her fingers and uttering— "Car—house—jewellery....."

Question — What should a woman do ?

Sri Ma— A woman is an *ardhāngini* and also *sahadharmini*, meaning a partner in her husband's spiritual pursuits. If both are of similar beliefs it is helpful, otherwise there is a friction. It is good if both agree.

Ma then began to talk about a certain Swami, whom she had met at Lakshman Jhula (Rishi Kesh). Immediately on seeing him Ma also found a lady standing by his side wearing a red-bordered *sari*, meaning that the Swami was a married person, although Sri Ma had not been told so. Later on it was found out that when the person became an ascetic his wife committed suicide and Ma saw her in her astral body.

Question — Was it good for her ?

Sri Ma — There is no question of good or bad.

Question — Then why was it so, that after so long Ma still saw her ?

Sri Ma — It could be that she could not remain without her husband and alternatively the lady was very much attached to the physical body. That is more probable.

Sri Ma continued — "When the time comes for one's approaching God one cannot remain without Him. That which is movement (*gati*) is universe (*jagat*)."

She further continued— "The sadhu had first sent his disciple to this body and asked for a strictly private interview. Bhajji, who was there, was also asked to leave. Then the disciple said to this body — 'My *Guru* has asked me to enquire what kind of dreams do you experience ?' He told this with great politeness. This

body answered — 'When the state of *Brahma* exists there are no dreams. Where the question of sleep does not arise there are no dreams and thirdly, the whole world is a dream.

"Hearing these words the sadhu became very happy and also invited this body.

Sri Ma— To be attached to the body is like an animal. As an animal is attracted to raw meat, similarly by being attracted to the physical body, one's own body gets destroyed.

Question — Are all dreams only imagination ?

Sri Ma — As like visualising a horse fly. In the dream even the horse has wings. It is not entirely imagination. Like while seeing a flower or listening to a story, an impression is left behind.

"To be a human being entails bondage. The entire universe is that which is subject to change and destruction *which means not God*. That which is God means that which is eternal, not subject to change.

"If you filter some water it becomes purified and does not get spoilt—the dirt is removed. Just so the *atma* that is pure, does not get spoilt. The water that is confined gets impure."

Sri Ma then spoke about a child and its shadow. The child saw its own reflection in a mirror in Ma's room and got upset the whole night. On waking up the child came to Ma and on understanding that "I am that" all the grief was removed and the child became again happy.

Sri Ma — Sorrow is caused through the sense of duality. The ultimate of Vedanta is the removal of duality.

Question — Each one understands in a different manner.....,

Sri Ma — As much as the mind can grasp. For this reason one has to practise *sadhana*.

Question — Can one then turn sorrow into happiness ?

Sri Ma — For one reputation and dignity is happiness. For another wealth is happiness. Happiness that is dependent on something is not lasting and sorrow that is also dependent on something is not lasting.

SWAMI BHAJANANANDA

The Last Journey

She took refuge at Mother's lotus feet. She was a chosen devotee of Ma. She is Swami Bhajananda. It was the evening of the 15th February this year, when at the age of 80 Swami Bhajananda shed her earthly frame and set forth for the Deathless Abode.

She was popularly called "Pushpadi" in the ashrams, since Ma gave her the name of "Pushpa" when She accepted her into the ashram as a Brahmacharini. Before this, she was "Savitri", since she was born on the Savitri Chaturdashi Tithi. And after a very long time when she emerged into an ascetic life, initiated by His Holiness Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, she became Swami Bhajananda.

She was born on 14th May, 1923 in an eminent Vaidya family of Mymensingh, presently in Bangladesh. Her father, Umesh Chandra Sen was a legend himself as a Headmaster in the both sides of Bengal. At 90 he embraced Sanyas, became Swami Krishnananda Giri, and lived upto 99 years, teaching English to the girls of Kanyapeeth at Varanasi Ashram. Pushpadi's mother, Kshirode Basini Devi, the eldest child in the family, was born to the great Dastidar family of Sylhet. Herself an all rounder by any standard, she was highly educated at home, since in those days women of aristocratic families used to be educated only at home. She was a prolific writer of poems, texts on pujas and folk vratas and history of the Rajputs.

Bhajananda had her schooling in Kolkata, at Mymensingh and Dhaka. It was just when preparations for University education was underway, after her education at Kamarunnessa Girls' College was over, the communal riot at Dhaka assumed serious dimension, the second world war was knocking at the Eastern Front and the curse of the 'Great Famine of Bengal' shattered the hopes. But from the early childhood she was a singer, having taken lessons from her mother, from the illustrious grandfather, and when she was just a student of Class VIII, she became a regular performer on the All India Radio at Dhaka. Later in the forties in Calcutta she became a student of the famous Kanak Das in Rabindra Sangeet at "Geeta Bitan" and of Sri Sukhendu Goswami in classical Hindustani music at "Sangeet Bhavan". For sometime she was a teacher in her own school in Dhaka, when she came in touch with Lila Ray, a close associate of Netaji, and played in the role of

"*Saudagar-Putra*" in Tagore's "*Tasher Desh*". She learnt also violin from Jamini Kanta Rai Dastidar, one of the eminent Dastidars.

Endowed with all the great virtues, a divinity in human form. Swami Bhajanananda, a close follower of Ma, left the marks of her contribution at most of the ashrams of Ma, namely, Agartala, Agarpara, Baroda, Vindiyachal, Tarapeeth, Delhi, Pune, Varanasi, Ranchi, Dehra Dun and Kankhal, to name at random. She was Mother's constant companion from wherever to wherever She moved.

The end came on the evening of 15th February at Pune, when she was returning to the Pune ashram in a motorcar, lying in the backseat, anxiously attended by Brahmacharini Kirti. Pushpadi, with a heavenly glow on her face, uttered "Ma. Ma. Ma," and breathed her last.

Then the herculean task of arranging to transport the body to Kankhal in accordance with the wishes of Bhajanananda was upon her admirers. On the morning of 17th February, amidst the spontaneous assembly of sadhus, brahmacharis and brahmacharinis, the body was lowered to rest in the depth of the Holy Ganga at Hardwar.