

CONTENTS

English Section

1. Mātri Vāni	103
2. About Sri Anandamayi Ma			
—Dr. Bithika Mukerji, M.A., D.Phil.		...	105
3. Man and His Goal—The Light of Viveka		...	116
4. In Search of the Mother			
—Swami Bhagavatanand Giri		...	123
5. Nada Yogi Swami Haridas—Saroj		...	130
6. Sacred Places of Kashmir, Jammu			
and Ladhak—A Devotee			135
7. Matri Lila	144



*Just as there is a veil of ignorance for the individual,
So there is also a door to Knowledge.*

Mātri Vāni

God is complete. Thus for full revelation one has to go to Him. Only because of the notion of God's absence is there sorrow in the world. Where God is manifest there are no 'two'—sorrow has no place.

* * *

Go forth to realize God—try at least. This is the genuine madman.† Madman (*pāgol*) means *pawa gol, peye gele*†† achieved; signifying unlimited enlightenment. When one becomes obsessed by this madness, the madness after the world of duality takes flight. Some people are crazy over another's body. By this sort of insanity, falling a prey to infatuation (*moha*) and delusion (*māyā*), one ruins one's body. Turning into a maniac after God will not spoil one's body.

* * *

If, instead of being consecrated to God's work, divine power is employed for worldly ends, it is wasted. By using spiritual energy for worldly pursuits, the current of this energy will be broken. When by sustained *sādhana* one has been blessed with power, it is not right to squander it.

* * *

† Madman in the sense of otherworldly, visionary, seer. Siva for instance is also called "*Pagla*" (madman).

†† A play upon words that cannot be translated. Being mad after something implies intense concentration and one-pointedness and therefore achievement is bound to follow.

Everything is God's *vibhūti*,† His *māyā*,†† His *līlā*, His very own play. To spend for worldly purposes what one has received spiritually in the course of that play is not correct.

* * *

Mahāmāyā is one thing and *viśaya māyā*, the delusion of sense objects—sense enjoyment—quite another. For you, a pilgrim to the Eternal, it is detrimental not to tread the path to Him. Having left aside sense objects, do not remain entangled in supernormal powers. Supernormal powers are but a stage. They may be beneficial, they may also be harmful. But through them you will not attain to the Supreme, the Ultimate. Having obtained power it must not be dissipated. Aspire to Self-realization. Otherwise there will be obstacles—decline.

* * *

Using power is a very different matter from coming about spontaneously, of its own. If power is used deliberately, the 'I' remains and consequently a downfall may result from it. Whereas in the case of a spontaneous occurrence this is not so.

* * *

Infatuation (*moha*) causes entanglement while the love of God (*prema*) leads to Self-revelation. Having become involved in *moha*, weeping and regret is bound to follow.

* * *

He who is the Supreme Friend never deceives. From the worldly point of view, a son may be disowned, but that Friend can never be given up.

† *Vibhūti* The one Supreme Form revealed in all objects of the senses.

†† The Supreme Divine Power by which the One conceals. Itself and appears as the many.

About Sri Anandamayi Ma*

DR. BITHIKA MUKERJI, M.A., D. PHIL.

June 1966. Satsang Hall of the Sri Anandamayi Ashram in Kishenpur, Dehradun. Kirtan is just over. It is the time for conversation with Mataji. The hall is quite crowded with the inmates of the Ashram, guests from outside who have come to spend some time with Mataji, and visitors from the town. An old gentleman who is occupying a front seat asks permission to put a question to Mataji. She smilingly nods assent.

“What have you achieved by your *sādhana* ?” he asks.

“Here the question of achievement or *sādhana* does not arise. I am what I have always been.”

The gentleman consults a paper and then says :

“What is your message to the world ?”

“What message can one give who has not achieved or learnt anything ?”

The gentleman does not share the general appreciation of this prompt rejoinder. He is in earnest.

“Ma, I have travelled a long distance to see you. When I go back, my friends will ask : ‘What is she like ? What did she say ?’ and then what am I to tell them ? I want to understand your message !”

“Very well, tell them ‘I have a small daughter ; she prattles of whatever occurs to her.’ You said, ‘When others ask’, therefore, I said ‘I am your child’, but actually you and I are one, aren’t we ? There is only one all-pervading *Ātmā*, naught else except the ONE. You yourself are a barrier unto yourself in the form of *samskāras*. The destiny of

* Reprinted from “The Mountain Path,” vol. XI 3, July 1968.

every human being is to destroy the veil that hides his own Self. To realize the Self means to realize God and to realize God is to realize one's Self."

"There are good as well as bad *samskāras*. Do good *samskāras* also act as barriers?"

"The bad-ones do not allow the good-ones to be effective. However, from the ultimate point of view there is no such thing as good and evil."

The gentleman professes himself pleased and satisfied with this answer.

He no doubt would have been extremely surprised to hear Mataji on other occasions advocate the ritualistic worship of deities. She also countenances forms of worship which relegate ritualism to a bare minimum. It cannot be said that Mataji has any religion, doctrine or method of her own because she accepts and approves of all of them. She would in effect say: "How can you impose limitations on the Infinite by declaring: 'This is the only true way'?"

* "Why should there be so many different religions and sects? Because through every one of them He gives Himself to Himself, so that each person may advance according to his individual uniqueness..."

Mataji's teachings are mainly for the individual and as such it would be as futile to enumerate her words of guidance as to pinpoint the radiating flashes of a diamond. To each questioning person she generally replies according to his cultural background, his capacity to understand and also the degree of his conviction. However, some generalizations may be attempted without fear of misrepresentation.

Mataji has been guiding people away from the ways which lead to religious frenzy or extreme rigorisms. Mataji

* "Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma" (Published in 1961 by the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Varanasi).

never delivers a talk. Neither does she herself perform any ritual whatever. She usually encourages the singing of *Nāma Kirtana* and sometimes takes active part in it. Mataji is easily able to establish rapport between herself and people of all countries, age groups and coming from various walks of life.

Now that she is quite well known, many foreign seekers after Truth, artists, journalists and tourists visiting India make it a point to meet her. Mataji receives them as she receives thousands of others. The writer of this article, as one of the interpreters has had numerous opportunities to watch Mataji with foreigners. She gives them the same individual treatment as to persons well known to her. To superficial questions her answers consist of two or three words and the interview is terminated before it has well begun. To a few she gives detailed instructions about many things.

In a particular case the interpreter had a strong feeling that the translation was superfluous. Mataji hardly waited for it to be over before she would start speaking again. The man, looking at her face, would nod understandingly, as if the meaning, which was already clear to him, was being confirmed by the translator. Indeed, many foreigners have experienced no difficulty in communicating with Mataji although she speaks only Bengali and Hindi.

The variety of the advice she gives would explain to a large extent the difference of opinion amongs her devotees about Mataji's teachings. Some will claim that she upholds orthodoxy: "She told me not to eat food cooked by a non-brahmin." Another will say: "Mataji never believed in the caste system. Did she not have the temple doors in the Ashram at Dacca opened for all, many years before such a movement started elsewhere in India?"

We may hear such contradictory statements as: "She believes in education. She has asked me to study hard and

finish my educational career before I think of doing anything else," and : "Education is not important. She told me : 'This education will help you to earn material wealth only. You must strive for spiritual wealth.'" Or : "Mataji so strongly advises against the breaking up of a home : it is no use arguing that my difficulties can be solved only by going away. She always exhorts me to have patience and forgive again and again." And "She has told me that no duty is binding for one who goes forth in quest of God."

Some will assert that she upholds the ideal of social service, others that she advocates renunciation of the world for the sake of God, and each person will be correct.

It must be understood that all these teachings are the variations of just one theme : The supreme duty of every human being is to strive for the realization of THAT WHICH IS. She knows no compromise in this. All other obligations, namely towards family, country, humanity have their places in the hierarchy of human values but they are all subsumed under the supreme duty towards God :* "To aspire for the realization of Truth is alone worthy of man." "It is man's duty to bear in mind that he exists for God alone—for His service and for the realization of Him."

But it cannot be said that Mataji recommends renunciation of the world. To the oft-repeated question : "Should I renounce the world because this would be helpful to a life of *sādhana*," she has variously replied : "The time has not come for you to do so since the question arises in your mind whether you should or not."

"The call of the Divine must be felt as a compulsion. A man who hears this call leaves all behind even as a dry leaf falls from its branch."

* Quoted from "Matri Vani", a collection of Mataji's replies to letters.

"If renunciation does not purge one clean of every sense of duty and obligation it is merely of a flight into another world."

"A man does not debate whether he should escape from a holocaust."

Mataji generally maintains that so long as duties are meaningful they should be carried out meticulously and as a service to God.

She repeats this again and again to statesmen, businessmen, intellectuals, ignorant, rich, poor, old and young. "The Ashram of the householder is a field of service and every service should be performed as a worship of God".

*"Abide by your duty. To live in the home that he has created for himself is surely fitting for a householder. Do not, however, neglect the search for your real Home. Only when this has been found has one truly come home."

"There are various modes of living : one is the Ashram of the householder; another to do service, regarding whom-ever one serves as a manifestation of the Supreme Being; a third way is to fix Self-realization as the one and only goal and advance towards it with uninterrupted speed and determination. In keeping with his inclination and bent of mind everyone chooses one of these modes of living. God Himself will take care of everything that concerns a man who puts his whole trust in Him."

To children Mataji sometimes says something like this : "You are my friends, aren't you ? Will you do something for this friend of yours ? (1) As soon as you wake up in the morning bow down to God and pray to Him to make you a good boy or girl. Say : 'Lord, I don't know where you are. Grant that I may find you.' At night, do *pranāma* again and if you have done anything wrong, ask God to let you do

better the next day. (2) Try to obey your parents and elders. (3) Study well. (4) Always speak the truth. (5) Laugh and play, run and jump to your heart's content and if you can do the first four things you may be naughty and mischievous as well."

To a busy housewife she said: "You have no time during the day but the nights are your own. It does not matter when or how you remember God. Divine Grace is all-pervasive. Everyone should constantly endeavour to be in readiness to receive this ever-present Grace."

A religious life does not mean a life of idleness. What is required is to live constantly in the presence of God. Nobody need neglect any duty to practise *sādhana*. Admittedly, there are conditions that are not conducive to a religious atmosphere. But Mataji's counsel in general would be to make the best of the existing circumstances. It is only she who can devise ways and means out of seemingly unsurmountable difficulties.

Mataji is rather strict about the quality and purity of food for persons engaged in spiritual discipline. The general rules of orthodoxy are maintained in her ashrams because this seems a desirable arrangement for all concerned. She sometimes says: "You have come here for the purpose of serious *sādhana*. Everyone lives within an aura of his own creation. The comingling of natures is not conducive to progress on this path." Such advice is for the inmates of the ashrams and for other serious minded devotees. She does not seek to change the customs ordinarily followed by people.

*

*

*

*

Mataji was born in 1896 in the village of Kheora, now in East Pakistan. Her parents, devout Brahmins, named her Nirmala Sundari.

By all accounts she was an extremely obedient, helpful and radiantly happy child. Her mother does not recall that Nirmala Sundari ever expressed a wish of her own. From her infancy she exercised unusual attraction on all who met her. For a short time only she was a pupil of the local village school. She was ever ready to help with the chores, not only at home but at all the neighbouring houses. Mataji has always approved of physical work. She herself was untiringly engaged in household work till the years 1923-24. She was able even to combine the life of a hard-working housewife with that of the ascetic engaged in rigorous *sādhana*.

Before completing her thirteenth year, Mataji was married to Ramani Mohan Chakravarti, known as 'Bholanath'. In accordance with village customs, she stayed with husband's family for the first few years after marriage. When she was about 18 years old, she went to keep house for Bholanath at his place of employment.

The question of leading a conventional married life just did not arise for this unusual couple. Mataji has said : "My parents told me that I should respect and obey Bholanath and look upon him as my guardian. Consequently I gave him the respect and obedience due to my father. He was always like a father to me." Bholanath, by all accounts, was a remarkable man himself. When the time came for them to stay together, the young husband found that he had a most extraordinary wife to look after. She was gentle, hard-working and of a joyous nature, but without a trace of worldly feelings and desires. Her innocence and unquestioning trust in him made him the devoted guardian he was to her throughout his life. Mataji has a delightful sense of humour. The anecdotes of her life with her relatives by marriage and also with Bholanath are full of penetrating observations. About her marriage Mataji has once said : "In the beginning Bholanath used to say : 'You are very immature and childlike..... It will be all right when you

grow up.....,' but it seems I never grew up!" More seriously: "Bholanath's restraint and sense of dignity were always exemplary. All the years I was with him I did not have even an inkling of the desires which assail mankind. It is now that I hear unending tales of troubles and transgressions."

Mataji was never taught any spiritual practices, neither did she engage in the accepted sense of the term. However, during the years she spent in Bajitpur and Dacca (roughly from 1918-1926), she spontaneously went not only through the variegated *sādhana*s indicated in the Hindu Scriptures but also those of other faiths. The effects of these practices manifested on her body. She would be in exalted states of *bhāva* or *samādhi* or her body would assume various yogic postures. She has no previous knowledge of such matters. She watched herself go through the innumerable paths of *sādhana* as she watched herself performing household work. She refers to this period as "The play of *sādhana*". She has said....."As a rule there is a veil that separates man from his own self. This veil has to be worn of by practising *sādhana*. But here, there was no veil, it was drawn only in order to be removed again. Therefore, what else should this be called but play?" What she has related about this phase of her life would fill a volume, yet she says that she has not disclosed even one hundredth part of the entire experience. The minutest details of each line of approach were revealed to her in their true significance.

Mataji did not need or ask for publicity. In fact, she tried her best to avoid it. In the beginning a few of Bholanath's friends would come and talk to her about religious topics. All knowledge of rituals, spiritual exercises and also philosophical evaluations of such matters came unhesitatingly, clearly and convincingly from this untutored village maiden. These friends brought others and gradually crowds began to assemble round Mataji's radiant personality,

seeking advice on spiritual things as well as on their own problems.

Mataji herself did not go out of her way to talk to anyone. If Bholanath asked her to speak to people she would do so, not otherwise. Throughout his lifetime Mataji never did anything without his consent. Bholanath occupied a peculiar position. He looked upon Mataji as his guru and spiritual preceptor and also received from her the untiring service of which she alone is capable. After his death in 1938 at the age of 56, other devotees have tried to serve Mataji and make all arrangements for her.

*

*

*

It is difficult, indeed impossible to understand Mataji because her actions and words reveal nothing about her. Usually action gives a clue to the mental make-up of a human being. Mataji's actions arise out of the people around her. For herself no action whatever is necessary. Even bodily requirements such as food, rest, sleep and so forth do not influence her behaviour and may remain suspended for any length of time. During earlier days this was a more frequent phenomenon. Once she did not eat or even drink water for 13 days. On the 14th day, she broke this remarkable spell of abstinence with the remark: "I just wanted to see how it would be to remain without water. I find that even the need for water is becoming extinct. But for the comfort and convenience of people a semblance of normal behaviour must be kept up."

Other similar features make it impossible for ordinary judgement to be meaningful in her case. To the question: "If you have no mission to fulfil or message to give, why do you tell us to worship God?"; Mataji replied: "If you do not ask, I have nothing to say. But if you ask and it is my '*kheyāla*' then I shall certainly tell you about the better way of life."

Mataji herself has had no Guru and she does not give formal initiation to anyone. The hundreds of people flocking round her are not bound to her even by this intangible tie. The secret of her attraction she sometimes explains in this way : "It is natural for people's hearts to go out to a child. My body is aged but actually I am a small child and as such receive affection from all. Although this little girl cannot do anything for anybody, people out of the goodness of their hearts love her nevertheless." or alternatively : "All children and unmarried people are my friends, and married people are my fathers and mothers and so I am dear to all. Is it not natural to love one's friend and child ?"

Mataji has no chosen attendants. Her companions, travels, places of residence are fortuitous. One is as good as the other. One of Mataji's favourite expressions, repeated by her again and again is : "जो हो जाय" (*jo ho jay*) : "Whatever comes to pass is equally welcome". Nobody can presume to say that he or she is indispensable to Mataji or specially favoured by her. Out of the throng that surrounds her, there may be one or two who understand the immeasurability of the personality that gives of herself freely and unstintingly to all who have need of her and yet remains so remote. Her compassion for suffering humanity is unbounded. Her days are more than full with assuaging the sorrows of the bereft, unlucky and afflicted. Mataji has no mission to fulfil in the world because no lack in her requires fulfilment. This self-sufficiency makes her personality absolutely enigmatic. From this point of view her closest companion of over 40 years' standing is as distantly placed as the stranger at the fringe of the crowd. She passes through the multitudes mostly as an on-looker. She has no fault to find with anything or anybody but if approached in perplexity she will give guidance and hope and advice as only she can.

All those who have seen Mataji will however subscribe to one general opinion about her : In Mataji's proximity there is no room for pessimism, despair or depression. The divine presence seem to permeate the atmosphere. The razor's edge path appears easy to traverse. The heart is buoyed on a wave of joyousness unimaginable before. It seems a miracle to be born a human being to whom the Kingdom of Heaven has been promised. Mataji's mere presence awakens in every man, woman and child a sense of destiny which is ANANDA.

"He who makes you turn towards the One Beloved, he, verily, is a real and true friend."

—Mata Anandamayi.

Man and His Goal—The Light of Viveka*

The first question which the seeker must inquire into is what is his ultimate destination, his hidden want; for no traveller can chalk out a plan for his journey unless he knows or believes where he is to go.

Attachment to the changeful objects of desire and yearning for Reality are the two opposite components of a man's being.

As no massing of clouds can obliterate the sun, but can only hide the sun from our eyes for a while, even so no motley of fleeting desires can kill our inherent and real want—they can only cover it up temporarily. Just as the dawn of the sun dissipates the clouds in no time, so does the awakening of the inner want and aspiration of man free him from all fleeting desires.

Man's innermost thirst for Truth or God can never be satisfied with any compound beings, objects or circumstances. The most pleasing set of objects or circumstances by themselves are like a well-decorated house where you may be without a friend, a lonely soul. Devoid of faith in the Divine, man is like a body without soul; an ornamented body a well-decorated house, a beautiful garden, but a lone resident therein.

The Infinite, which is our goal, is the Eternal whose Light and Love give light and life to all passing things.

The very fact that nothing is able to destroy the natural yearning of man for love and joy shows that the Lord of Love and Joy is ever calling man to his hidden heritage.

Before the fulfilment of our inner want, we run after the world but the world eludes us. On the fulfilment of our

* Reprinted from the book : "A Saint's call to Mankind", Published by the Manav Sewa Sangh, Vrindaban.

inner want, the world will run after us but not we after the world.

The realization of one's want enables one to set up one's goal. Thereafter a divine discontent carries one forward.

Man must carefully think over and determine what is his goal. The goal can only be that which is of his inmost nature, and therefore attainable. When the goal is set up the means come of themselves.

Our daily affairs and necessities do not constitute our life; they are merely bubbles in the sea of life. The secret of rising above objects and circumstances is to regard them all as the means to an end and never the end. If our gaze is fixed on the goal, we will make the best use of all these, which will only help us in attaining the goal. We should remember that no one, no object and no circumstance is to be blamed for our helpless state, but that imperfection is the very nature of transitory life, which includes our body and the world. Yearning or our real want is for that which is immutable ; the Divine Eternal.

As the thirsty man drinks water eagerly, so *sādhana* comes naturally to one whose goal is established. When the *sādhaka* has set up his goal once for all and does all work for the sake of the goal, all his work becomes worship. The light of *viveka* (discrimination) illumines his path and indeed *viveka* becomes the captain of his soul until the goal is reached.

Viveka is the light of Wisdom that is rooted in man and marks him out from the sub-human creation. It is not the same thing as the intellect, but is that from which the intellect derives its force. The intellect is a mechanism of nature, whereas *viveka* is the supra-mental light illuminating it. As the sun is the source of the electric or the candle light so is *viveka* the source from which the intellect and the senses derive their light and power. *Viveka* is the light of

Truth whose ray is imbedded in the innermost shrine of the heart of man and which leads pilgrim man to the realization of his being an image of the Divine.

Viveka enlightens us that man is not the human skeleton, but consciousness focussed in the human body. What he is—Consciousness—is the hidden target of discovery for the individual. But it should be discernible to each thinking man that he is not the body, even though normally he may be all too body-conscious. Each man calls the body *his* body, not himself; and there are many men who are ready to lay down their bodies to protect something they value higher—honour of self, family, country, etc.—or who would rather be released from their body if faced with an incurable and agonizing malady in the body. What, then, does man find himself to be? A being or consciousness who is discontented with his incompleteness—reflected in his unceasing desires—and is impelled by an urge for fulfilment, perfection or liberation, being endowed with *viveka* which guides him onward all along, this is what man actually finds himself to be. It follows therefore, that man's life must be a process of *sādhana*: a conscious aspiration and ceaseless effort to emerge from want to fulfilment, from imperfection to perfection, from bondage to liberation. *Sādhana*-less living is living by instinct, the life of the sub-human; or it is the life of the liberated man who has fulfilled himself through the school of human life—not of the normal man. Man as he is, is an entity of conscious *sādhana*. Unconscious gifts one finds even in many trees, but they do not equate with man for they lack the self-awareness of *viveka*. Non-possession is the attribute of many animals, but none calls them *sannyāsis*. So, it is *viveka* or self-awareness which marks out man as the highest of God's creation, verily made in the image of God.

Mystics, saints and sages of all lands and ages have offered their testimony that, eventually, man must inevitably

realize his kinship or unity with the True, the Good and the Beautiful—the Divine, or by whatever name we may call the ultimate Reality. His transitional identification with the outer appearances imposed upon him by age-long habit then disappears. In other words, the manhood of man consists in a process of his integration into completeness which is a mark of divinity.

True integration of man's personality is not possible without control of the senses, transmutation of selfishness into selfless service and of fissiparous thoughts into contemplation of God or yearning for Truth. These are labeled as the paths of *yoga - karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna* respectively.

The part enacted by an actor on the stage is not his own true nature. The states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep are the state of the physical, the subtle and the causal bodies of man. The true man is beyond these three states of the object world.

Knowledge is one; but we experience it at different levels—one through the senses, a second through the mind and a third direct by oneself. This threefold knowledge may be considered relatively progressive knowledge. But all these three states of knowledge are illumined by one Supreme Consciousness. As the sun is the sole source of light to the eye and of electricity, so is the Divine the sole repository of all knowledge and consciousness. *Viveka* is the light of the Divine.

As the clouds born of the heat of the sun itself hide the sun for a while, even so the knowledge at the level of the senses beclouds the intellect and the knowledge at the level of the intellect hides true supramental knowledge. *Viveka* pertains to that level of man's consciousness whose light enables him to see the fleeting phenomena of the body, the mind and all things and states as on the screen: the non-Self.

Truth, being self-aware and sure of itself, is infinitely patient. Just as salt does not beat the drum of its own

flavour but brings out goodness in everything that it contacts, so does Truth impart light and life to everything. *Viveka* is the light of Truth.

Man rightly calls his body his body, his mind his mind, and so on. But he does not pause to inquire who *he* is. As soon as he dissociates himself from the body, the mind and their environment, he will stand by himself and know himself. Ask any man if he is the same person who was studying at the same school with another who is now in entirely different circumstances. One might be highly placed, while another might be a beggar. The circumstances of the two are now widely different, but both know themselves to be the same as they were as school-mates. Thus any change in their bodily circumstances and environment does not affect their awareness of what they are. This shows that man by himself is distinct from his surroundings.

The enquiry 'Who am I?' arises in the mind of a man when he finds himself bound in limitations but swelling with an inner urge to cut asunder the bonds of environment and states of mind. The false 'I' is but a yearning for its real content. Put otherwise, it is like a thief who elopes the moment the master 'I' dawns on man's consciousness.

Aham-vritti (false I, egoism) is the disease, while *Aham-sphurati* (emergence of the true I) is its cure. The latter consumes the former and what remains then is effortless awareness, which is Self-realization.

An investigation into the contents of the false 'I' will reveal that the *swarūpa* (real nature) of the real 'I' is the hidden want and aspiration of the ego, even though dissipated in numerous reflections of desire.

The enquiry 'Who am I?' or yearning after God arises in a man only after he has repaid the debts of society by selfless service. Man identified with the body is an embodiment of the calls of society. Deeper down he is a longing for the Divine.

Desire is born in man because he identifies himself with the body. The cessation of desire for the fleeting robs the passing I-sense of its main prop. It then survives for a time on the desire for the Eternal which consumes what remains of him till he resurrects into divinity. As the concept 'I am His devotee' or 'I am a seeker after Truth'—i. e. *one* all-consuming aspiration—replaces a medley of desires, God or Truth does not take long to own the aspiring soul. Aspiration is directed to one, desire to a multitude of objects.

All the various rules of conduct prescribed by different religions are meant only to rid man of his body-consciousness through right action, of the subtle body by right thinking, of the causal body by detachment, etc. With the dissolution of body-consciousness, Self-realization dawns by itself. It is only until man has not realized his true Self that the aspirant engages in various efforts to unwind the false identification with which he has bound himself. The dawn of *viveka* and the ending of body-consciousness constitute a simultaneous process. The elimination of 'I am the body' concept is the gift of *viveka*; the false belief. 'I am the body' is created by the lack of discrimination (*aviveka*). The sunrise of true knowledge (*jñāna*) dispels in a flash the age-long nightmare of darkness. *Viveka* is not a matter of practice, it is the fruit of all practices.

As the eye can see every object but no one can see his own eye, so One who knows everything and is self-luminous is the Self or Divine—who cannot be perceived by the intellect or seen by the eye. Even as the light of the candle merges in the light of the sun, so does the knowledge of the senses merge in the knowledge of the Self.

Viveka is the self-sufficient torch-bearer of truth; for it is the light of Truth itself. Thus, when *viveka* is ablaze there is effortless awareness, supreme *jñāna*. Effort pertains to the 'I' and lasts only as long as it has not consumed the

'I' itself. All *sādhana* is meant to lead to *sādhana*-lessness. Realization dawns when the 'I' has set. The 'I' is motion; *jñāna* is the stillness of the Self. Just as where light is, darkness is not, so in stillness there is no motion and no effort.

Viveka is the true *guru*. Just as the fragrance emitted by the flower is in fact latent in the seed as well as in the tree, but it is given to the flower to emanate it by virtue of its perfection, so is Truth or God, though omnipresent, revealed to man by Flowers of the race: saints and sages. The *guru*—saint or sage—accordingly is *viveka* itself personified. The person who remains indifferent to his *viveka* remains indifferent to the *guru* and the scriptures as well, just as one who closes his eyes to the light cannot derive light even from the sun. Man can escape the *guru*, the leaders and laws of society or government; but he cannot escape his own *viveka*.

In fact, as in all sweetmeats the sweetness is of the sugar, so is all that appears true and beautiful a reflection of *viveka*.

As the pure water of a flowing river, enclosed in a pit, breeds various germs, so does universal love, encased in a body, object or environment degenerate into *moha*. The ego is the limiting agency.

Viveka is the splitter of the ego, which is the atom of the spiritual world. The splitting of the ego is the key to *moksha* and the realization of Truth. Truth is the substratum that is eternal and knows no change; untruth is that which floats on the screen, an influx of ever-changing appearances. The latter feeds on desires; the former is what remains on the cessation of desires.

In Search of the Mother

SWAMI BHAGAVATANANDA GIRI

(Translated from Hindi)

For the first time I was blessed by Mataji's *daršana* on January 6th, 1942. Mataji was then staying in Gujerat, on the banks of the holy river Narmada in Yogashram at the so called 'Vyasa Kshetra'. My good luck brought me there. I feel that gracious Ma attracted me by her divine power to give shelter at her lotus feet to this erring individual.

From the very first moment I felt great love and veneration for Mataji. Two months later I left home, family, friends and society to seek refuge at her feet for the rest of my life. While staying with Mataji, I was vouchsafed many beautiful inner experiences. In her presence I felt an abiding deep peace and overwhelming bliss. In spite of this there was some uneasiness in my mind. I was perplexed as to who or what Mataji actually was. Some people said she was God Himself, others that she was Devi, yet others that she was Krishna, and so forth. Unable to solve the riddle, I once took heart and asked Mataji in private: 'Ma, who actually are you? People have varying opinions about this, but unless I have first-hand experience, I am not ready to accept any of them.' Mataji gave me a beautiful reply—"Whatever you think me to be that I am." This however did not allay my doubts. Therefore, in November 1942, I once said to Ma: "Before deciding finally to remain with you for good, I should like to go on a pilgrimage through the length and breadth of India and get acquainted with the greatest saints and sages, so that later I should not be able to feel I might have made better spiritual progress elsewhere. If you grant me permission I want to try and fulfil this wish of mine."

Mataji said : "Most gladly. And if you find a place that seems congenial to you, remain there; if you feel inclined to take initiation from a competent Guru, you may do so."

Thus, after several conversations of this kind with Mataji, I set out on my pilgrimage. Apart from visiting many holy places, I spent about three weeks at the Ashram of Swami Ramdas at Kerala, another three weeks at the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi and had *deršana* of Sri Aurobindo in February 1943 at Pondicherry. Proceeding from there to Jaganath Puri and Calcutta, I reached Sri Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan in March 1943. From Puri I had written a letter to Mataji and her reply came to me at Santiniketan. At that time Mataji was in retreat in a place which was kept secret. Only one or two devotees knew where she was. Sri Hariram Joshi would redirect Ma's correspondance from Lucknow. Thus the letter I received from her bore a date but no address. It contained nothing of special importance. After replying to it I went to sleep. Suddenly I felt a powerful urge to go to Mataji. It was as if she were calling me to her. I got up at once and decided to leave by the next train. But oh ! What hard luck ! Where was I to find her ? I had not the faintest idea where Mataji was hiding. There was no indication in her letter. My mind was in great agitation. I felt I must go to Mataji without delay, but how, and in which direction was I to start ? At last I had a brilliant idea. I looked at the post mark and found 'Sagar City' stamped on the letter. I immediately went to the Post Office to consult the 'Postal Guide'. To my dismay I found that there were five or six places in India that were called "Sagar City." In which of them was Mataji ? How could I possibly come to know this ? In my despair I sought advice from the students of Santiniketan. One of them, who was a friend of mine, said : "Go to Sagar City in the Central Provinces, Ma may possibly be there." Of course, nothing could be said for certain. At any rate, I

decided to leave at once. My hosts were rather taken aback at my running away without even spending a night, while I had come with the intention of staying for a whole week. However, nothing could keep me and after taking leave from them, I proceeded on my search. On the way it occurred to me that since I had to pass through Varanasi, it might be wise to stop there and try to collect some information from Ma's devotees. At that time the Varanasi Ashram did not exist as yet. Whenever she came to Varanasi in those days, Mataji would stay in a hut in the garden of the late Sri Nirmal Kumar Chatterji's residence. I therefore paid him a visit but could not get any information as to Mataji's whereabouts. Mataji changes her programme so suddenly, there is no knowing where she may go within an hour. Consequently one can never be sure where one may find Mataji and when. I met some other devotees at Varanasi as well—in vain. Someone said that Sagar City in the Central Provinces might be the right one. So I continued my journey to that place. In the meantime I was getting more and more impatient to be with Mataji at long last. I reached Sagar City at 2 A.M. and went to a *dharma-sāla* near the station for the night. My mind was busy devising ways and means how to find Mataji. After completing my morning prayers, I started out on my quest. I had brought a photo of Mataji with me, as it might possibly help to get a clue of where she was hiding. I knew that only Gurupriya Devi and Abhaya were with her. I thought Abhaya would most probably go to the market in the morning to buy vegetables. So I went there first of all looking for him everywhere—without any result. Walking on, I came to the Post Office. "Let me at least make sure whether the postmark on my letter is from here", I thought. When the postmaster had confirmed this, I asked him whether any letters were arriving addressed to Sri Anandamayī Ma. But he said: "This is a branch post office, you will have to go to the main P. O. to find out." Near the post

office there was a pharmacy. I went in and inquired whether they had seen a young man called Abhaya, giving a detailed description of his looks. However, the shopkeeper was unable to help me. The idea came to me to look for a Bengali family, they might possibly know where Mataji was staying. In my eagerness I entered a Bengali home without even asking permission. As a result the master of the house gave me a good scolding. I felt ashamed of my rude behaviour. Those people knew nothing about Mataji. I became more and more worried. How was I to get to my destination? As I strolled on, I discovered the name of a Bengali lawyer written on a board. I stepped into his office and asked him, whether by any chance he knew anything about Anandamayi Ma, "I have heard her name many times but I have never had the good fortune of her *darśana* so far," he said. "Do you mean to say that she has come to Sagar City?" I replied, "she must be staying somewhere here, but I do not know her address". I then requested the lawyer to introduce me to the Post Master of the main post office so that I might possibly get her address from him. The lawyer very kindly guided me to the Post Master who took pity on me and looked through the whole mail, but could not find a single letter addressed to Mataji. All my efforts had thus proved fruitless. I thought: "Whatever I have tried has been in vain. Now only one thing remains: to pray to Ma to let me find her." So I trudged on, praying fervently: "Merciful Mother, compassionate Mother, let me find you, let me reach your holy feet." I became to absorbed and one-pointed that the difference between trees and stones, between living beings and lifeless things vanished. Everything had become alive for me. I began to talk to the trees and stones: "Dear tree, have you not seen Ma walk on this road? And you stone, surely you have seen her, do tell me where she is!" In this manner I took a solitary path, crying for Ma at every step. Later I learnt that at that very time

Mataji had called my name : "Kanti, Kanti !" two or three times and had been laughing. Gurupriya Didi had asked : "Do you mean the Gujerati Kanti ?" and Mataji had affirmed this. This is how Mataji's strange *līlā* was being enacted.

Walking on and on in deep despair, I came to a temple of Rama at about midday. I approached the priest, showed him Mataji's photo and asked him whether she had not by any chance visited this temple. "Yes," he said, "about a fortnight ago this Mataji came here with another woman and a young man with long hair. She stayed for a little while, but where she went from here I do not know." Hearing this, I was thrilled—at least I knew now that this Sagar City was the right one. Yet a fortnight was a long time for Mataji who changes her programme from moment to moment. So, after all, it seemed to me that I had not come any nearer to my destination. What was I to do next ? It now occurred to me to inquire at the Railway Station. For if Mataji had left for some other place she must have left from there. And her personality is such that she is bound to attract attention wherever she goes. I therefore went to the Station Master and showed him Mataji's picture. However, he said he had not seen her. All I could do was to request him to send word to me at the *dharmasāla* in case he should come across Mataji. He promised to do so.

It was about 1 p.m. now. I had not eaten anything that day, neither did I feel like eating. Would I be able to trace Mataji ? I felt dejected and was wondering whether Mataji was in Sagar at all and whether it was not futile to continue my search. The money I had brought with me was also getting exhausted. How much longer could I go on in this manner ? My thoughts were all in a turmoil. Once again I was moving towards the bazar. Full of despair I sat down in a tea shop and had a glass of milk. My eyes fell on the board of a motor company just opposite. It suddenly struck me that Mataji might perhaps be in a village

in the neighbourhood rather than in Sagar itself. The buses of this Company were running up to a distance of hundred miles. It might be possible to get some information from the bus drivers. I thus saw the manager of the Company and related my pitiful tale to him. I also showed him Mataji's photo and requested him to ask his drivers to send word to me immediately in case they came to know that Mataji was in a village or any other place. He agreed to talk to his drivers and to do whatever was in his power to help me. I now reflected that I had tried every possible means to locate Mataji and that nothing further could be done. So I went back to the *dharmasāla* to have a rest. How extraordinary Ma's *līlā* is! At about 4 p.m. someone came and called my name. He said: "A Mataji of your description in the company of another woman and a young boy is staying in a forest called Chitora about 9 miles from here. Of course I cannot be absolutely sure that she is the Mataji you are looking for." I thanked him and asked him to arrange for a conveyance to take me there. As soon as I heard of the forest I at once felt it must be Mataji and none else who was staying there. I was beside myself with joy at the prospect of being with her soon. How merciful, how compassionate Ma was! With "Jai Ma!" on my lips I picked up my luggage and hastened to the bus stand. The bus did not start at once. I was so impatient I could hardly bear to wait any longer. Every minute seemed an eternity to me. I wished I could fly instead of riding in a bus. At last the bus started. Stopping after about nine miles' run in a forest, the driver said to me: "Your Mataji lives in the house that is visible over there. You have to get down here." I jumped on to the road. There was jungle all round. Only one small cottage could be seen. No village nearby. By the side of a small rivulet in the shade of trees a single, solitary house. I felt as if submerged in happiness—now I was going to find Mataji. In

a few minutes I would reach her lotus feet. The place was completely calm and quiet. Not a sound could be heard from anywhere. Peace and stillness. I slowly approached the house and entered. There was no one in the room. At once my heart fell. However, I continued to explore and found Abhaya sleeping in the next room. My hopes rose again. Not finding Mataji inside the cottage, I began to look for her outside. At some distance I saw Mataji walking towards the house with Didi. When my eyes discovered Mataji, I became entirely drowned in an ocean of bliss. At once I fell at her feet. Didi was amazed to see me. "How did you manage to come here?" She asked. "Only today Mataji was calling your name three times. And now you have actually turned up yourself!" Mataji laughed heartily. Then she sat down and I buried my head in her lap and shed profuse tears of joy. Didi and Abhaya were curious to know how I could have come without knowing Mataji's address. But I was speechless with happiness. Seeing my condition, Mataji put her hand on my head to calm me and said: "He who seeks, finds."

"To know the Mother means to find the Mother, to become the Mother."

—Mata Anandamayee

Nāda Yogi Śwami Haridas

'SAROJ'

“न नादेन बिना गीतं, न नादेन बिना स्वरः ।
न नादेन बिना नृतं, तस्मान्नादात्मरं जगत ।
न नादेन बिना ज्ञानं, न नादेन बिना शिवः ।
नादरूपपरं ज्योतिः, नादरूपं स्वयं हरिः ॥”

“There is no song without *nāda*, no melody and no dance movement without *nāda*, hence the universe is replete with *nāda*. There is no knowledge without *nāda*; even Siva is not without *nāda*. *Nāda* is the final beatitude of the Supreme Light, the Lord Himself is *nāda*.”

Such was the *nāda* worship of Swami Haridas. Being permeated by *nāda*, he accomplished his *sangīta sādhanā* (worship by music) at the feet of his chosen deity Radha Krishna in Nidhiban, Vrindaban. Consumed by exclusive devotion for Sri Krishna and Radha, Haridas took to music for the pleasure of his Lord Kunjbehari (Krishna). Music to him was simply an expression of Krishna *bhakti* and applicable to life merely for the adoration of Beharilalji (Krishna) whose love lures made Haridas drunk with ecstasy.

Swami Haridas was a sole adorer of Sri Krishna who for him was the only *Purūṣa*, while all other men and women were His *gopis*, the humble attendants of the Lord Ghanashyāma. Filled with the *rasāswāda* (delight) of divine love for Radha Krishna, Haridas would sing out his heart for the attainment of ecstatic heights in classical melody. Music was to him a sublime means for his identification with the celestial couple Shyāmā-Shyāma (Radha Krishna).

Swami Haridas was born on *Bhadrapada Shukla Ashtami* in 1537, in a small village known as Rajpur near Vrindaban, the place where Sri Krishna's *rāsa līlā* had been

enacted. Haridas' father, Sri Gangadhara and his mother Smt. Chitra Devi, Brahmins by caste, were rich in religious experience. Haridas, in the prime of his youth, felt inspired to take to renunciation. The germs of *vairāgya* (dispassion) had already been in him right from his infancy. His urge to give up worldly life was so vital that no earthly allurements could stop him from adopting *sannyāsa* in the year 1562, at the age of twenty-five. Swami Asudhirdeva, his religious preceptor, enunciated him in Krishnabhakti of *Nimbārka Sampradāya* that led to his life-long dedication at Lord Krishna's feet amidst the groves of Vrinda plants in Nidhiban, Vrindaban.

Swami Haridas, an ascetic of the highest order, was consecrated to *sātvik sangīt* in the theory of Indian music. He adopted *Dhrupada* and *Dhamar gayaki* to this effect and championed the spread of the *sātvika* element in music. The concept of *sātvika sangīta* as opposed to *rajasika* music was innovated by Haridas to derive devotional delight of intense sublimity. His spiritual practices of music gradually elevated him to the level of Oneness with the whole of creation. This sort of empathetic state enabled Haridas to see and feel in living beings and in insensate things an over-seeing power of *Brahma*, the supreme Spirit permeating the whole universe. This experience of oneness made Swamiji's tunes so captivating that all people around him would feel bewitched for long. Such was the overwhelming and enthralling effect of his waves of melody both on animate and inanimate beings.

The *Dhrupad* style requires high concentration in music; *swara sādhana* (song as *sādhana*) comes to the fore in this mode of music. Actually, *prāṇayama*, one of the exercises in yoga, furnishes the basis for *Dhrupad* style. Haridas was an exalted maestro of *Dhrupad* who had passed long days and nights in the endeavour to achieve proficiency in it. It is said that Lord Krishna had appeared in person

to His dedicated disciple Haridas to grant him perfection in *Dhrupad* style, since it is pledged by the Lord to incarnate Himself where His devotees sing His glories :

नाहं वसामि बैकुंठे योगिनां हृदयेन च ।

मद्भक्ता यत्र गायन्ति तत्र तिष्ठामि नारद ॥

In this way Swami Haridas sang the glories of the celestial couple Radha Krishna from the core of his heart, touching divine dimensions in the musical firmament.

The music-sage Swami Haridas treated music as the basis of the fundamental unity of sound and light. He conceived of music as an entity of two different aspects, namely the sound form and the visual form, as he made out fully well the fundamental psychic values of all the chief *rāgas*, such as Bhairava, Hindol, etc., and to apply them to the requirements of a particular emotional situation or interpretation.

It goes without saying that each *rāga* has its peculiar psychic form corresponding to its sonant body over which the presiding deity rules. This *arādhyā devatā* (image form) dwells in the super-consciousness of the elevated singer and can be invoked to descend on earth through the genuine prayers of a singer who is aided by a definite symphonic formula peculiar to such melody.

Swami Haridas was well versed in spiritual exercises through music; besides this, he was blessed by the Lord Himself. He had, therefore, the insight of seeing a particular *rāga-svarūpa* (sound form) face to face. For example, his song :

जुगल नाम सौ नमै, जपत कुंज बिहारी ।

ग्रवलोकत रहै केलि, सखी सुख के अधिकारी ॥

made him see in visible form the divine couple Radha Krishna, making fretful attempts amidst *gopis*. In a similar manner he was endowed with the power of invoking

Varuna Devata (the god of water) at the performance of *megha rāga* (cloud *rāga*) and *Agni*, the god of fire, by *dipak* (light) *rāga*. To cap it all, *rāgas* used to play and trip about him full of grace and charm, affording inward calm to this unassuming singer saint.

This concept of invoking the presiding deity or the spirit of divinity by means of a *dhyāna* formula accounts for Haridasji's saintliness and *nāda* worship. It is an evocative scheme of incessant concentrated prayer that led to the birth of his divine music.

Among Haridasji's disciples are the names of such noted singers as Tansen, Baiju Bawara and Gopala Nayaka. It is said that Akbar had expressed the desire to hear Tansen's Guru. At his disciple's request Swami Haridas sang and made Akbar spell-bound by his unique performance of music and his mystical achievements.

The fifth day of *Margashirsha Shukla* is sacred to the followers of Swami Haridas and to numerous devotees of Lord Krishna, as on this day Haridasji achieved self-realization and got the *Sri vigraha*, the supreme image of Banke Beharilalji that is installed in the famous Behariji temple of Vrindaban at present.

Swami Haridas started a music tradition of his own. Some of his followers are well-known *achāryas* (instructors), such as Sri Vitthala Vipul Devaji, Swami Rasikadevaji, Swami Lalita Krishoredevaji and Swami Lalita Mohinidevaji whose compositions have copiously contributed to and enriched the *Braja Sahitya* and classical music tradition of India. Those singers have, like Swami Haridas, mostly concentrated on the eternal *līlā* of Radha Krishna.

Swami Haridas entered the all-pervading spirit of the celestial couple Radha Krishna finally on the eve of *Sharad Purnima* in the year 1632 at the ripe age of ninety-five.

Each year, the sacred earth of Vrindāban and Mathura, which is called '*Brajabhumi*', becomes resonant with the

breath-taking performances of artistes of national fame. These musicians experience an inward gratification after paying their homage to Swami Haridas in musical language.

Thousand of salutations to this sage singer of Braja bhumi who embodied the essence of Indian classical music and represented a rich tradition in devotional songs.



"Who is the Kriya Shakti? Thou thyself. And who is the Shakti? He, the One."

—Mata Anandamayee

Sacred Places of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladhak

A DEVOTEE

(Continued from the April issue.)

KSHIR BHAWANI

The ancient shrine of Kshir Bhawāni or Rājnia Devī, as the local people call the goddess, is situated near a sacred spring at Tulmūl, which is two kilometers north of Srinagar. The spring itself is regarded as an emblem of the goddess. It is called Kshir Bhawāni because she is as sweet and tasty as 'Kshir' (a delicious preparation of milk). The goddess and her shrine are mentioned in Kalhana's Rājatarangini. The Rajniā Kavacha (the holy psalm in praise of the goddess) is found in the Sanskrit scripture called Rudrayāmala Tantra, which also proves the antiquity of the sacred shrine.

A big religious fair is held before the shrine of Kshir Bhawāni on the eighth and the fifteenth day of the bright half of Jyāishtha which corresponds with May-June of the English Calendar. The pilgrims offer milk, rice, sugar, honey etc. to the goddess by throwing these into the water of the sacred spring. The colour of the water changes several times during the day.

There is a legend that the image of the goddess which existed at that place was originally worshipped by Rāvana in Ceylon (Lankā). The image was brought to this place in Kashmir by Hanumān after Rāvana was killed by Sri Rāma.

* The Nilamata, verse 1302.

** Rajni in Sanskrit means queen. The goddess is also called Maharajni which means 'the great empress.'

We are told that when Swāmi Vivekānanda visited the sacred shrine of Kshir Bhawāni during his stay in Kashmir, his heart became full of sorrow at the sight of the broken temples and images all around the place. He thought within himself; "Had I been living at that time, I would have never allowed the ruffians to destroy the temples and desecrate the shrines. I would have protected them at the cost of my life". When he was thinking thus he heard a heavenly voice saying; "Son, if the followers of another faith enter my shrine and desecrate it, what does it matter? What is that to you? Am I protecting you or are you protecting me?" Vivekānanda pondered within himself. "If only I could build a nice temple here!" Again he heard the same heavenly voice: "Son, I wish I can create innumerable temples and towers. At this very moment a seven-storeyed golden temple may be constructed, so you need not worry." After this incident Vivekānanda's outlook on life underwent a thorough change and from that day he felt as if he were a child in the lap of the divine Mother.*

न तातो न माता न बन्धुर्न नत्वा
 न पुत्रो न पुत्री न भृत्यौ न भर्ता ।
 न जाया न विद्या न वृत्तिर्ममेव
 गतिस्त्वं गतिस्त्वं त्वमेका भवानि ॥●

[O Bhawani ! Thou art my refuge, thou art my refuge thou alone art my refuge, and not my father, not my mother, not my friend, neither grandson, nor son, nor daughter, nor servant, nor husband, nor wife, neither learning, nor profession.]

* See Punyatirtha Bharat by Swami Divyātmananda.

** Bhawanyashtakam by Shankaracharya, verse-1.

LIKAR

तस्य पदे नमस्सित्वा सम्बुद्धस्य सिरीमत्तो ।
सद्धम्मञ्च पूजेत्वा कत्वा सङ्घस्य चाञ्जलिम् ॥*

[I reverently bow at the sacred foot of Sambuddha. I observe the perfect religion and I pay homage to the Sangha (the Buddhist Church) with folded hands.]

Likar village is situated at a distance of about thirty kilometers west-north-west as the crow flies from Leh, the head-quarters of the Ladhak area of Kashmir. Leh can be reached by road or air from Srinagar.

There is an ancient Buddhist monastery at Likar. Images of the Buddhas are worshipped in the monastery. On all ceremonial occasions people in large numbers assemble offering prayers and receiving the blessing of the Lāmā of the monastery.

LODUV

तस्पुरुषाय विद्महे महादेवाय धीमहि ।
तन्नो रुद्रः प्रचोदयात् ॥**

(We comprehend that supreme Being. We meditate on that great God Mahādeva. May that Rudra protect us.)

Loduv is situated at a distance of about five kilometers south-east of Pampur and about twenty-six kilometers south-east of Srinagar.

The ruins of the ancient temple of Rudreshwara are in the middle of a sacred tank at Loduv. The tank is fed by the waters of two adjacent springs. There is a Shiva-Linga even today by the side of the springs which the pilgrims visit.

* Dhammapadatthakathā. A Buddha, who attained all-round, perfect wisdom.

** Krishna Yajurveda, Taittiriya Āranyaka, X-1.

The shrine of Rudreshwara was praised by Kalhana in the following verses of that Rājatarangini.

अद्यापि विश्वरक्षोन्नाम्बकान्तिच्छटाच्छलात् ।
 यो भाताव सुधासूतिसितश्वेतास्मनिगंतः ॥
 उपमन्योरुदन्याया दारिद्र्योपद्रवाहतः ।
 रुद्रो रुद्रेश्वरो नाम्ना श्रोमान्कश्मीरभूषणम् ॥
 जगत्सौन्दर्यसारं सस्वर्णमलसारकः ।
 शान्तावसादप्रासादोद्धारश्च विहितस्तथा ॥*

[She Radda Devi, wife of Jayasimha, 1128-1149 A. D., erected the illustrious shrine of Rudra called Rudreshwara, which has a golden Amalaka and which is the ornament of Kashmir and the quintessence of the world's beauty. Made of white stone bright as the moon, it shines forth at this day even as if it were Rudra when he removed Upamanyu's sufferings from thirst by making flow forth the radiant expanse of the milk-ocean.]

DEV SAR

प्रल्हाद प्रभुरस्ति चेत् तव हरिः सर्वत्र मे दर्शय ।
 स्तम्भे चैनमिति ब्रुवन्तमसुरं तत्राविरासिद्धरिः ॥
 वक्षस्तस्य विदारयन्निजनख्वीरसत्यभावेदयज्ञातेप्राणपरायणः ।
 स भगवान्परायणो मे गतिः ॥*

The moment the demon said to Prahlāda, "Prahlāda ! If your Lord Hari is every-where, then show him to me in this pillar", Hari appeared there. Being affectionate to Prahlāda like a father to his child, He, who always saves the afflicted, pierced the chest of the demon with His nails. I take refuge in that God Nārāyana.)

* The Rājatarangini, eighth Taranga, verse 3389. Translation by M. A. Stein.

* Artatranaparāyana Nārāyanashtadashakam-Vrihatstotrara-
 tnākaraḥ.

Devsar is situated on the sacred river Veshau, about ten kilometers west of Kulgam, which is about twenty-five kilometers south-west of Ananta Nāg. The village lies on the Kazigund-Kulgam Bus route from Srinagar. The distance is nearly eighty kilometers. The ancient name of Devsar is Devasaras which means the lake of the gods.

There is a noted shrine of the goddess Tripura-Sundari at Devsar by the side of a grove of pine trees about a kilometer from the main road. At a little distance from this temple, there is a spring called Nrisimha Rājā which is regarded as sacred to Lord Narasimha from very ancient times. It is believed that there was a shrine of Nrisimha at this spot.

Lord Nārāyana incarnated in the form of Narasimha (man-lion) in order to kill Hiranyakashipu, the king of the demons, a fierce enemy of the gods, and save Hiranyakashipu's son Prahlāda, who, unlike his father was a great devotee of Hari. There is a legend about Hiranyakashipu in the Mahabharata, which is given below.

Once the four sons of Brahmā, called Sanaka, Sanandan, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra, went to Vaikuntha to see Lord Nārāyana. Jaya and Vijaya, the two gate-keepers of Vaikuntha, whipped the sages and prevented them from entering the shrine of the Lord. The sages became very angry at the behaviour of the gate-keepers and cursed them. Due to this curse Jaya and Vijaya were born on earth as demons, as sons of the great sage Kashyapa and his wife Diti. Kashyapa named them Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyāksha. Both of them committed terrible atrocities against gods, sages and men. They were fierce enemies of Lord Nārāyana. Hiranyakashipu had a very pious wife called Kayādhu. They had a son called Prahlada unlike Hiranyakashipu, Prahlāda was very righteous and greatly devoted to Nārāyana. Hiranyakashipu ordered Prahlāde to abstain from worshipping Nārāyana. He engaged two tutors called

Shanda and Amarka to dissuade Prahlada from worshipping Hari but Prahlada's devotion went on increasing. Failing to convert Prahlada by peaceful means, Hiranyakashipu began to persecute him, giving him poison, burning him in fire and drowing him in the sea, but Prahlāda always remained unhurt due to the Lord's grace. Being frustrated in all his attempts, Hiranyakashipu once asked Prahlāda where is your Lord Hari? Prahlāda said, "He is everywhere." Hiranyakashipu said, "Then show him to me in this pillar." The moment Hiranyakashipu uttered these words the Lord came out of the pillar in the form of a terrible Man-Lion and pierced the chest of the demon with his nails. Prahlada was saved gods and sages rejoiced.

In olden days there was a temple of Shri Nrisimhā at this place but no ruins are visible on the surface. Now there is a shrine of Bharaba instead. Previously annual sacrifices were performed at this spot.

At a distance of about two kilometers from the temple of the goddess Tripurasundari, in the adjoining locality called Khana Barani, there is a holy spring sacred to Shiva. Pilgrims assemble on the day of the annual worship. Near Devsar there is a beautiful shrine of Vishnu which is also visited by the people.

अविनयमपनय विष्णो दमय मनः शमय विषयमृगञ्जाम् ।

भूतदयां विस्तारय तारय संसारसागरतः ॥*

[O Vishnu ! Make me free from arrogance, control my mind, pacify my hankering after illusory objects of enjoyment, create compassion for all beings in me and save me from this sea of becoming.]

* Shatpadistotram by Shankarāchārya, verse-1.

LOKABHAVANA

उदयस्थितिसंहारकारिणीं क्लेशहारिणीम् ।

सर्वशुभस्करिणीं सीतां नमाम्यहं रामबल्लभाम् ॥

(I bow to Sita, beloved of Rama, who does all good and removes all miseries and who is the cause of creation, preservation and destruction of this world.)

Lokabhavana, the ancient name of which is Lokapunya, is situated about eight kilometers south-west of Achabal. It is near Larikpur in Bring pargana, nearly sixty kilometers from Srinagar.

There is a beautiful spring at Lokabhavana which is regarded as sacred to Sitā Devi, wife of Shri Rāma. It is in the hamlet called Gagar Tahunda.

King Lalitāditya of Kashmir built a town at Lokabhavana. There is a reference about this in Kalhana's Rājatarangini.

लोकपुण्ये पुरं कृत्वा नानोपकरणावलीम् ।

प्रतिपादितवाञ्छिष्णुगोपैः साकं स विष्णवे ॥*

(After constructing at Lokapunya a town, which was provided with the requisite accessories, the victorious king made it, together with other villages, an offering to Vishnu.)

The Nilamata refers to the sanctity of the spot in the following verse which shows it was held sacred even long before Lalitāditya.

लोकपुण्यं हि तं नाम सर्वपापहरं परम् ।

कपोतके नरा स्नात्वा गोप्रदानफलं लभेत् ॥†

(Its name is Lokapunya which removes all sins and which is very sacred. By bathing in Kapotaka one derives the benefits of making a gift of cows.)

* Fourth Taranga, verse 193.

† The Nilamata, verse 1292.

MAMAL

शिवं शान्तं शुद्धं प्रकटमकलङ्कं श्रुतिनुतं
 महेशानं शम्भुं सकलसुरसंवेद्यचरणम् ।
 गिरीशं गौरीशं भवमयहरं निष्कलमजं
 महादेवं वन्दे प्रणतजनतापोपशमनम् ॥*

[I bow to the great god Shiva, who is peaceful and pure, who is manifested and unblemished who is the supreme ruler of all, who is Shambhu (cause of good), whose feet are worshipped by all the gods and who relieves the sorrows and pains of those who are devoted to him.]

Mamal village is in Pahalgam which is about ninety-seven kilometers east of Srinagar. The ancient name of Mamal is Mamalaka. Pahalgam is on the way to the sacred shrine of Amarnāth.

At Mamal, on the right bank of the sacred Lidar, there is an ancient temple in ruins. It was dedicated to Shiva called Mammeshwara. In front of the temple there is a tank fed by a sacred spring. This holy spot is visited even to-day by the pilgrims on their way to the cave-shrine of Amarnāth. Most of them do not know when and by whom the temple, the ruins of which they see here, was constructed.

There is a reference about the temple of Mammeshwara in the Rājatarangini where Kalhana says that the temple was adorned by a golden Āmalaka by King Jayasimha, who ruled in Kashmir from 1128 A.D. to 1149 A.D.

मम्मेस्वरं स सौवर्णमलसारं चकार यः ।

सोमतीर्थं तथातोयोद्यत्तमुद्ध्योतितान्तिकम् ॥*

[He furnished the shrine of Shiva Mammeshwara with a golden Āmalaka and embellished the surroundings of Some-tirtha by bringing water there and laying out a garden.]

* The Rajatarangini, eighth Taranga, verse 3360.

* The Rajatarangini, eighth Taranga, verse 3360.

MANASBAL

Manasbal is a very sacred lake on the northern side of the Jhelum river (ancient Vitasta) situated about twenty kilometers north-west of Srinagar. It is about three kilometers long and about one hundred meters wide. It contains deep azure blue waters with pink lilies floating on its surface. It is connected with the sacred Vitastā by a short canal. Its name is in analogy with the sacred lake in the Kailash mountain. It is the loveliest of all the lakes of Kashmir.

At Andarkot, two kilometers from Sumbal village at the entrance of Manasbal, there was the ancient capital of king Jayapida (753-784 A.D.), who was the grandson of the famous king Lalitāditya. The place was called Jayapura in those days. There are ruins of Buddhist Viharas (temples) and the temple of Keshava built by Jayapida. It is mentioned in Kalhana's Rājatarangini that Sri Krishna appeared to the king in a dream and asked him to raise a fort in the lake near the town and name it Dwārāvati. A temple of Sri Krishna was therefore constructed at this place by Jayapida. In Kalhana's time the temple was called Abhyantar Kottā of which Andarkot seems to be a corruption.

तस्पुरे चतुरात्मा च शेषशायी च केशवः ।

बिष्णुलोकं स्थितिं त्यक्त्वा वह्नाति सन्निधिम् ॥*

In his town of Jayapura, Keshava, in his quadruple form and reclining on the divine serpent Shesha, has taken up his abode abandoning his residence in the region of Vishnu.]

* The Rājatarangini, fourth Taranga, verse 508

Matrī Līlā

(March 15th—June 15th 1969.)

In the last issue of Ananda Varta we already reported that Mataji arrived in Varanasi from Naimisharanya on March 18th, in time for *Navaratri* which started on the 19th. The yearly celebration of Vasanti Puja, the Durga Puja in spring, has always been a special feature of the Varanasi Ashram. In 1945, when only a small portion of the Ashram had been constructed, Mataji together with Sri Chakrapaniji and Sri Prabhudatt Brahmachariji and others were present at the first celebration. On that occasion special puja for Rama had been performed on Ramnaomi day, similar to the one described below.

This year the puja started on March 24th (*Sashti*) in the Chandi Mandap. The traditional *vighraha* of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati etc. was small but extremely beautiful and alive and charmed everyone. Mataji was present almost throughout the ceremonies on those four days. She even daily attended the *Mangal Arati* at 5 a.m., which is not at all usual with her. Mataji was in a wonderful mood and of her own *kheyala* sang in great ecstasy more than once. Every evening after the *arati*, a Bengali singer used to recite from the Ramayana for about three hours in the courtyard in front of the Chandi Mandap. His rendering was greatly appreciated and attracted a large audience. Mataji remained present daily for the whole of this programme as well.

Quite unexpectedly the grand-daughter of one of Mataji's oldest devotees arrived from Calcutta. At her request a special *puja* to celebrate Sri Rama's birth anniversary was performed on March 27th, Ram Naomi day. This function took place in Sri Gopalji's temple called 'Ananda Jyoti Mandir'. Sri Narayan Swami cut a papaya fruit in half and

after removing its seeds, placed a *Narayana Sheela* into it. Wrapping the closed fruit into a silk cloth, he kept it in Gopal Mandir near Mataji. At exactly midday, which is the time of Sri Rama's birth, Narayan Swamiji produced the *Narayana Sheela* from inside the papaya, to the blowing of conch shells, and put it in Mataji's lap. Under great rejoicing, the *Narayana Sheela*, representing Sri Rama, was bathed in curds and turmeric and offered durbagrass. Mataji then put a mark of curd and turmeric on the forehead of each one present. Mataji was all inspiration. For nearly an hour she sang Rama Nama with raised hands, swinging from side to side like the boy she had seen last summer at Kishenpur and also heard him sing: "*Nartan pāya, ao pyāre, bolo Rāma nāma....*" People felt as if Kaushalya Ma and the newly born Rama were actually among them and deemed themselves singularly blessed to have been able to witness this blissful occasion. The next day Mataji sang again before the goddess was taken to the Ganga for immersion.

Mataji remained at Varanasi until April 10th. She would give *darśana* every evening on the open terrace on the first floor of Ananda Jyotir Mandir. Dr. Gourinath Shastri, Vice-Chancellor of the Sanskrit University used to deliver interesting as well as learned lectures on the Srimad Bhagavata every evening. Sometimes there were also questions and answers.

On April 10th, Mataji and Didima with a small party left for Ranchi, where Didima's Sannyasa Utsava was observed on April 13th. Mataji had not visited Ranchi for several years. Many devotees arrived from far and near and the residents of Ranchi daily collected in large numbers throughout Mataji's stay. Didima's puja was performed by Swami Bhagavatananda Giri in the morning of the 13th to the accompaniment of kirtan and bhajans that were sustained all day whenever there was no other satsang. At midday a feast was given to *sannyāsis* and to all present. A

renowned Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission had been invited to talk on *sannyāsa* in the afternoon. At night Mataji sang and also replied to questions.

On April 15th, Mataji all of a sudden decided to go to Calcutta for a day only. She left by the night train, reaching Calcutta the next morning. Only two persons were allowed to accompany her. It was her express wish to keep her visit strictly confidential. Nobody was therefore informed of Mataji's arrival. From Howrah Station Mataji proceeded straight to her Ashram at Agarpara. Since her arrival was completely unexpected, she was alone and able to rest for a couple of hours. A few people of Calcutta were now given the good news that Mataji had come. Those devotees had been waiting (some of them for four or five years) for Mataji to grace their newly-built houses with her presence before occupying them with their families. Like a whirlwind Mataji rushed by car to those various places one after another—eleven in number!—and also went to two hospitals to see some sick devotees who had been sorely longing for Mataji's darsana. At the end she paid short visits to the houses of Prof. Tripurari Chakravorty and Sri Ganga Charan Das Gupta. Sri Das Gupta is now full 100 years old. He and his whole family are deeply devoted to Mataji. From there Mataji motored to Howrah Station to catch the evening mail to Varanasi, where she alighted the next morning after two nights in the train and a very hectic day in between.

On April 19th, the festival of *Akshaya Tṛitiya*, the first anniversary of Ananda Jyotir Mandir was celebrated in great style by a special puja, performed by Brahmachari Nirvanananda, in the course of which Sri Gopalji was bathed in milk. Mataji was present from beginning to end. The temple was beautifully adorned with flowers and coloured lights. Kirtan was kept up all the time. Mataji herself distributed the *prasāda*.

On April 25th Mataji left for Bombay reaching there on the 26th afternoon. She was met at Dadar Station and taken straight to her pagoda at Sri B. K. Shah's residence at Vile Parle. From May 2nd to 5th Mataji's birthday was celebrated there itself. All arrangements were quite first class. The atmosphere was full of joy and happiness and everything proceeded without a hitch not withstanding the enormous attendance. The whole space between Mataji's cottage and the main house was taken up by a pandal which looked very picturesque with some of the trees of the garden serving as pillars. The dais was decorated in Kathiawar style in a really exquisite artistic manner. The guests from outside who had flocked in great numbers even from considerable distances, including Madras, were accommodated mainly in two school buildings in the close neighbourhood. Several devotees hailing from foreign countries such as France, Germany and U.S.A. also took part in the whole of celebrations.

As customary in our Ashram, uninterrupted *japa* was kept up day and night; one hundred *Durga Saptah shatis* were recited by some Pandits in a special room, ending with a fire sacrifice. One morning there was Kumari Puja and a feast and presents given to 108 little girls including a few boys, Mataji taking a very active part in this item of the programme as she always does. It goes without saying that the lepers of Bombay were not forgotten on Mataji's birthday. A feast was arranged for them at their own place. And first and foremost there was of course the main programme in the pandal, which continued from early morning until 10 p. m. or later, with Kirtan in the intervals. The Rasa lila was performed in the morning in the hall of a school in the vicinity. The stage was elevated and very spacious. Mataji would be present daily for a whole hour sitting on one side of the stage and Sri Hari babaji on the other. So one could enjoy very good *daršana* of Mataji & Sri Haribabaji as well as the

extremely well done dramatic performances simultaneously. After the *Lilā* Mataji would give *darśana* in the pandal. In the afternoon and evening several well-known Mahatmas delivered talks. The day ended with *Matri Satsang*, when Mataji either replied to questions or there was music by renowned artists, with a song by Mataji as the climax. Arati was performed daily both at midday and at night after the *satsang*.

On May 4th music continued all night until the *Tithi* Puja began at 4 a. m. of May 5th. That night the very spacious pandal was not large enough but people sat all over the garden and the verandas and everything as always proceeded with great dignity and solemnity, Mataji lying on a couch in deep *Samādhi* until noon, when she was taken to her room. After the puja at about 6 a. m. everyone was allowed to ascend the dais to offer his pranama & flowers at Mataji's feet while Mataji lay in awe-inspiring silence and complete immobility. The queue of people seemed unending and it took about two hours until the curtains of the dais could be drawn and Mataji left herself.

For the late afternoon of the same day Mataji had accepted an invitation to Sannyasa Ashram Vile Parle. Mahamandalshwara Sri Maheshwarananda showed her round the various temples of the Ashram. This was followed by *satsang* in the large open hall. Several Mahatmas gave short talks and at the end Mataji sang for a short while. Her *bhāva* had not quite worn off and she looked unearthly beautiful and incredibly young on the day she completed her 73rd year. On returning from Sannyasa Ashram, we found the preparations for the *Nama yajña* of *Mahāmāntṛa* to be performed the next day by our Delhi Kirtan party in full swing. After the usual evening *satsang*, *adhivāsa* began and Mataji was of course present throughout and at about midnight started the women's kirtan before retiring to her room. She came out again an hour or so later and stayed for a little while

with the women who were singing kirtan all night, circum-ambulating round the traditional circular altar. When at 4-30 a.m. Sri Haribabaji arrived for his daily morning kirtan, Mataji was present once more, and after the men had taken over the *Mahāmantra*, Mataji distributed *prasāda* to the women. The *Nāma yajña* ended at sunset on May 6th. Mataji always sings for the *Purnāhūti*.

Originally Mataji was to leave for Poona immediately after the birthday celebrations. But she actually remained in Bombay until the 20th of May. Thus Bombay devotees were amply rewarded for their generosity and splendid selfless service to all, by Mataji's presence among them for full 25 days.

The birthday celebrations had been terminated, but as long as Mataji stayed on, the Rasalila (which was shifted to the pandal and changed into "Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Lila"), Sri Haribabaji's satsang at 4 p. m. & evening session from 8--10 p. m. continued in Mataji's gracious presence. Almost daily Mataji replied with great vivacity to very interesting questions after 9 p.m. and one can well imagine that large numbers of people came daily from all over Bombay. Mataji's cottage was besieged practically all day, and half the night by those clamouring for *darsana* and private. However during the later half of her sojourn Mataji was taken for a drive to the sea shore or some other solitary place every evening for an hour and a half. This was the only daily holiday she had from the multitude. At midday, after the Rasalila, Mataji would sit on the veranda of her cottage and everyone could line up and offer his individual *pranāma* to Mataji and thus had the chance of a short word with her, or to ask for a private interview and receive her blessing. As a rule she would immediately after grant a number of short interviews in her room.

On two occasions the evening *satsang* was held in the centre of Bombay, once at the house of Sri Thakorebhai

Patel and once on the lawn of Sri Mafatlal's house at the Cumballa Hill. Both evenings were extremely well arranged and proved a great success.

One morning Mataji visited the Ashram of Swami Akhandanandaji of Vrindaban.

One evening, Ex-Minister Sri Gulzarilal Nanda suddenly appeared in the audience of the evening gathering. Mataji sent one of our sadhus to request him to give a talk, which he did very successfully after a good deal of hesitation.

Another evening a well-known christian saint, who has lived in India for 37 years, Mother Anna Huberta, hailing originally from Germany, attended the evening satsang. The next morning she, together with an English Reverend Father of the Catholic Church and two nuns had a long private with Mataji. Anna Huberta was deeply impressed and delighted. The next evening 15 of her young novices (who are being trained to work in the slums without converting people) attended our evening meeting and listened with great interest to Mataji's replies. The day before Mataji left for Poona Sri Kamubaba, a famous Mohammedan saint, came to see Mataji. An informal meeting was held in front of her cottage and Mataji requested him to reply to questions.

A few days before Mataji left, some Bengali and Gujerati devotees' sons received their sacred threads in her presence.

On May 20th early morning Mataji and Sri Haribabji motored to Poona. A large number of Mataji's party had gone ahead by train the day before, others followed by bus. Mataji had not spent the summer there since 1961. Then the Ashram was new and very small. This time also it could accommodate only a few of Mataji's companions, the rest staying in various houses in the vicinity. Poona is of course more restful than Bombay, but there also Mataji is kept extremely busy.

Early in the morning Mataji usually takes a brisk walk in the open grounds adjoining the Ashram. At 10 a.m. she attends the Rasalila for 1½ hours and then gives *darśana* for some time. At 4 p. m. and again at 7-30 or 8 p. m. she comes for Sri Haribaba's *satsang* and after that usually sits on the veranda of the Ashram with a smaller group. A large pandal has been erected in the Ashram compound, where the Rasalila and the *satsang* are held. In the late afternoon Mataji almost daily goes for a drive, sometimes to a lake, or up to Kharakvasla gate or some other place, where she takes a walk. Sometimes she drives to the Poona University which is near the Ashram. One day she and Haribaba visited Alandi, the *samādhi* of Saint Dhyaneswar, the author of the world famous "Dhyaneswari" (a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita). This place is 16 miles distance from Poona. Another day they went to a Siva Temple at Bhageshwar at the other end of Poona. Mataji also accepted invitations to residences of various devotees.

One day the famous singer Srimati Hirabai Barodekar came to see Mataji and delighted everyone by her inspired singing. Sri Dilip Kumar Roy came several times. Once he gave a recital of his beautiful songs and another day he recited his poetry. Swami Akhandanandaji paid a visit to Poona and talked in our Ashram about *Bhakti* on three successive nights. On four nights films of Mataji and Sri Haribabaji were also shown.

Mataji is expected to remain in Poona until July 15th and then go to a place near Pandarpur for a few days. She will probably reach Ahmedabad on the 27th where Guru Purnima is to be celebrated on July 29th. Before going to Ahmedabad, she is expected to return to Poona again for a few days, to be present at the opening ceremony of a new cottage that is being constructed for Mataji's use in the Ashram grounds. After Ahmedabad she is likely to visit Bhavnagar and Bhopal in the first week of August before proceeding to Vrindaban where the *Jhulan* and *Janmāsthāmi* festivals are expected to be celebrated this year.