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—Mataji with her mother

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

## **Mātri Vāni**

Be it meditation (*dhyāna*) or the repetition of a mantra (*japa*)—engage in some practice of this kind. Try to keep your mind on God. The impressions and dispositions developed in countless lives act as a cover of ignorance veiling the true nature of things; endeavour to get rid of that screen.

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Desires and cravings make up the contents of your subtle bodies. Just as the scent of a flower goes and comes, such are your births and deaths. Again, from another angle of vision, there is no birth or death at all. When the physical body is dead, those desires and cravings, that subtle body, float about shelterless—and then man is born again according to his karma. The ego or Iness which is studded with desires comes and goes, while for the *Ātmā* there is no question of coming and going. Man has a gross, a subtle and a causal body; the root-cause of the causal is the *Ātmā*. Until this is realized there will be birth and death. The *Ātmā* is self-effulgent. Coming and going exist only for the individual. In order to realize your Self, you have just to remove the curtain.

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There are many actions as the result of which one goes through great suffering after death—one is not saved. From darkness one has to proceed into deeper darkness.

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In the *śāstras* it is said : "Do not utter unpleasant truths." Who are you to lecture to the whole world ? Why should they listen to your words ? If you have the power to make everyone listen to what you say, then only will speaking be fitting and right. Otherwise your mind will become distracted and your *sādhana* obstructed.

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When you watch a show at the cinema you do not feel sleepy. Entertainment keeps the mind engrossed and sleep does not supervene. From the exertion during the waking-state one rests during sleep. In deep sleep man goes to his true Being under the cover of ignorance. Where there is the unveiled revelation of one's true Being, the question of sleep does not arise. In the measure as the practices and the intensity aiming at that state of unveiled revelation gain in momentum, the necessity of sleep will diminish.

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The purpose of ceremonial worship (*pūjā*) is the revelation of the Beloved (*Iṣṭa*). For the sake of finding oneself, for Self-realization should be worshipped He, at the worship of Whom the question of non-duality and duality does not arise. To perform *pūjā* for the sake of God is disinterested worship (*nishkāma pūjā*).

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## Sri Sri Mataji's Amara Vāni

( REPORTED BY BRAHMACHARI VIRAJANANDA )

September 16th, 1950.

*Question* : What in essence is *viraha* ?\*

*Mataji* : In this world of coming and going there is always a lingering sense of want. This sense of want, of lacking something, of not knowing, produces sorrow. Because there are two : one has not got what one wants, one desires fulfilment. And when one gets it, what happens ? There is happiness. When the lost son has been found there is great rejoicing—from the point of view of the world one feels delighted, contented, satisfied. On the level of obtaining and not obtaining, real *ānanda* does not exist and neither does *viraha*. What kind of happiness is it then ? The happiness of the realm of want. Why ? What has been received, what has been fulfilled belongs to the world, is within the movement of the mind. Here the sense of want will appear again. One has no son and therefore feels sick at heart; when he is born one is jubilant. But this cannot last, the sense of want will spring up again. The *ānanda* of the world, the opposites of happiness and pain belong to the realm of want. So long as one has not found that which, when found all is found, where no question of receiving or not receiving can arise, until then it is but natural that the desire for God-realization should remain kindled.

What belongs to man's true nature (*svabhāva*) ? By realizing God everything is realized. When God with form and attributes becomes revealed, what is experienced ? Union. At first one is unable to find Him. Then, after having engaged

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\* *Vivaha* Separation from one's object of love and adoration.

in *sādhana* with great steadfastness and perseverance, God reveals Himself. Now there is perfect bliss, fulfilment. This is why the *bhakta* says : "I want to taste sugar and not to become sugar."

So then, what happens ? Having persevered in *sādhana* for a long time, the Lord in His mercy appears and says : "What do you want ? You may choose a boon." The *sādhaka* replies : "Whenever I wish to see you, grant me your *darśana*." "Be it so". With these words the vision fades away. The aspirant is blissfully happy, for as soon as he desires the presence of the Lord, He appears before him. His sorrows are over. One day the *sādhaka* says : "Do not leave me any more, remain with me constantly." This also is granted. The Lord remains with him. Day and night God is present. The *sādhaka* is immersed in bliss. And what is the outcome of this ? One day, the thought occurs to the aspirant : "When the Lord did not show Himself to me, I was yearning for Him desperately. Now this is no more so, but I miss that yearning." So he prays to the Lord : "Give me again that intense longing that I felt in your absence." It is granted.

With regard to this, something has to be made clear : Having found God, one has of course realized what He is. The yearning one felt before finding Him is one kind of *viraha*, but the *viraha* that is experienced after having found Him is the genuine *viraha*. One has already found Him, yet His absence is experienced again. The union and the separation of the world belong to the level of want. But the *viraha* after having found God is an expression of one's true Being (*svabhāva*). To find means to become. Having become one with Him, yet distinct from Him, signifies the Realization of God Himself, Self-effulgent. For this reason, the state of *viraha* is regarded as an advanced state, since full Revelation has already taken place. You have returned to the sense of the want of Him, but you have found Him. Thus one speaks of the Lord's servant—of the perpetual

servant, of perpetual revelation, prepetual *līlā*. In this there can be no death.

The individual (*jīva*) is the everlasting servant of Lord Krishna, what does this signify? The *jīva* who is by his very nature bound, has been bound to God. Tied to the Eternal, he has thus become His eternal servant. Where God stands revealed, how can there be *māyā*? What does 'yogamāyā' signify? Refuged in His own *māyā*, He reposing within Himself.

*Question* : In what does this *viraha* result? Will there be no more union?

*Mataji* : The union in separation, the experience of His absence—this is God Himself. Once found and then again without Him—this can never be. Thus separation and union are one and the same thing. Once the bliss of the Self, the *Ātmā* has been realized, one can no more speak of awareness and forgetting. He is eternally revealed as *viraha*. Separation does not exist, as such He is ever present in separation which actually is union. As the feeling : "He is not with me !" He is ever present.

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# Mātri Satsang

SWAMI BHAGAVADANAND GIRI

( *Translated from Hindi.* )

January 21st, 1948.

*Question* : If constant change is the law of the world, what can be gained by performing a *yājñā* ( fire sacrifice ?\* )

*Mataji* : In *prakriti*, creation, preservation and destruction go on at all times. The whole universe is being maintained by God. But people have no direct experience of this. If they could see God, they would know by first hand knowledge that everywhere there is God and God alone. Just as there is water in the waves of the ocean and the waves are in fact nothing but water. But when one's attention is focussed on the waves, one does not see the water and when it is focussed on the water, the waves are not noticed. What appears, depends on one's way of seeing. Just as there is the natural ( *prākṛit* ) world, there is also the supernatural ( *aprākṛit* ) world. *Prakrit* implies constant change and therefore it is transitory. Take for example a flower : it is ever changing, ever in a state of development. Transition is its very nature.

All good actions are oblations. Everything that happens in the world is in essence sacrificial offering. He who was first a child, then grew into a man, in his old age he gets ready to be sacrificed to death. What actually is fire ? Fire is present in everyone. There is no difference between the fire you see before you and the fire within you. The daily act of eating food is in fact also an oblation. Everything is sacrifice in essence. The whole universe is kept going by

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\* The questioner obviously refers to the great *yajña* performed in our Varanasi Ashram from 1947-1950.



sacrifice. What does *ahuti* ( oblation ) mean ? An act of sacrifice to God. Sacrifice yourself to God. How ? Lay your animal nature on the altar to be sacrificed. Give your head to God. By offering one's head to God, one finds everything. To give means to become. In ancient times the Rishis would produce rain by vedic mantras. A violent storm also could be appeased by mantras. Whatever the Devas were lacking was supplied to them by mantras. Just as we experience satisfaction when eating, so do the Devas experience satisfaction when *yajnas* are performed. A light can be lit by kerosene as well as by fine oil. Fire is potentially contained in wood, but without igniting it, food cannot be cooked. A yogi may of course prepare food even in a wooden vessel. Water also may become an oblation. Some men advance towards their goal by bullock-cart, others by train, and yet others by aeroplane. If by chance the train or aeroplane meets with an accident, the bullock-cart may reach earlier. Sacrifice is going on at all times. The Rishis enjoined on men to perform *yajnas* for various purposes. When you do *pūjā*, why do you put a garland of fresh flowers round the deity's neck ? Why don't you rather offer a garland in thought ? If the physical body is not given physical food, how will it thrive ? Therefore there is need of material oblations also. By offering such oblations again and again, inner oblations are produced. Yogis can live also without eating. How ? Because the energy that is necessary to sustain the body can be generated by their yogic power. They do not require any material substances. There is something else to be said regarding this. The five elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth are present in every one of you. Each of them is closely connected with each of the others. Just as one official meets another, so the elements are related to one another. Some people perform *havan* ( fire sacrifice ) for a particular purpose and some just for the love of God. Material oblations are offered at those sacrifices. But if someone does not feel inclined to do this, he may offer oblations in

thought. When doing physical *pūjā*, it is necessary to do mental *pūjā* simultaneously. Only by becoming one with the object of one's worship can *pūjā* be effectively performed. By identifying oneself with the adored, real *pūjā* comes about. Mentally sacrifice your all at the Lord's lotusfeet.

If for example if today you decide to cultivate the soil, you will first buy land, then sow the seeds and later the crop will be harvested. First of all the decision was taken by the mind. By the cause the effect is created. In the Vedas there are definite rules according to which various substances are mixed together and offered as oblations in the sacrificial fire. All those substances are accepted by the Devas. If you have made up your mind to give a donation to someone, you should certainly do so.

Some people say that meditation and *japa* cannot be accomplished by the mind. Start meditation and *japa* with your mind. There are great yogis who can create any kind of thing by thought power. Therefore start meditation with your mind. If you continue faithfully and regularly, a time will come when God will appear to you face to face. By the sustained adherence to such a concrete practice, God finally reveals Himself. Therefore people also offer oblations to something concrete. *Nāma-Kirtana* is also called "*Nāma Jajñā*" by some. Whatever happens, constantly changes. Everything is replete with sacrifice.

*Swami Sharananandaji* : Fire has the capacity to transform material things. It makes them pervasive.

*Mataji* : What the *Sāstras* say, you people know.

Suppose someone has made accounts with meticulous care, but has forgotten to write down one zero. The entire account becomes thereby wrong. Because of one single zero all his labour has turned worthless. In one grain of sand the whole universe is contained potentially. The drop is in the ocean and the ocean in the drop. Everything that is true reveals Truth.

*Question* : What is a *mudra* ?\*

*Mataji* : How are *Mudras* connected with *pūjā* ?

*Swami Sharananandji* : *Mudra* is a part of *samyam* (self-mastery).

*Mataji* : It leads to self-mastery. *Mudras* and *pūjā* are connected. When the entire worship becomes real worship, then *mudras* come about. When Sri Krishna was teaching Arjuna, which *mudra* did he assume ?† Every person at all times shows some *mudra* or other. Why ? The *mudra* is an expression of one's mood and attitude of mind. The pose one takes on depends on one's state of mind. Just as the *Jñāna mudra* (the tips of the thumb and the first finger join and form a circle) is a *mudra*. While performing ceremonial worship, one's poses (*mudras*) come about in keeping with what one feels and thinks. By identifying oneself with the deity He is worshipped. There are many kinds of poses (*mudras*). Movement is contained in stability and stability in movement.

The variety of *mudras* is infinite. *Mudras* and *āsanas* are connected. There is a special *āsana* even for taking one's meal. Weakness also is expressed by a particular pose. By looking at the posture of a person one can detect what is going on within him. The *āsana* and the *mudra* occur jointly. When someone thinks of sense objects, his pose and expression undergo a change. The number of *āsanas* as well as of *mudras* is infinite. When the brain is disturbed everything goes wrong. When feeling shy in the course of conversation with someone, one's hand at once starts scratching one's head. *Mudras* and *āsanas* correspond to each other. Try to awaken within yourself the deity whom you

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\* *Mudra* Particular pose of the body as a whole or of its parts, representing the expression of a particular *deva śakti* (higher natural force). Without that pose that particular *śakti* cannot function.

† The *Jñāna mudra* (gesture of knowledge).

are worshipping by *mudras* and *āsanas*. What a beautiful pose Lords Krishna assumed while instructing Arjuna !

At that moment the clock struck 10.

*Mataji* : This is called "ten o'clock." There is timelessness in time and time in timelessness. One must go beyond time.

*Question* : Is it really possible to go beyond time ?

*Mataji* : Yes, it is. Time and space can be transcended. They exist only in the realm of *Prakriti*.

*Question* : Time means change, does it not ?

*Mataji* : In *prakriti* there is constant change—the world is nothing but a play of time. (*Mataji* laughs heartily). Not everything can be uttered at all times. Occasionally some scrap of knowledge issues forth of its own accord.

*Question* : What happens ?

*Mataji* : What is meant to happen anywhere, happens.

*Swami Sharananandaji* : There are two kinds of instruction : One is of Reality Itself and the other suited to the propensities of the aspirant.

*Mataji* : If you talk about giving instruction—this body does not know how to give instruction. It simply converses with its fathers and mothers. The children are all my friends. Everywhere is only the home of the ONE. This body does not feel timid in the least when talking to its fathers and mothers. You all are this body's fathers and mothers—its everything. The ocean is contained in one drop of water. Everything is contained in everything. Thus this body does not go to anyone's house, does not eat anyone's food. Neither does this body give instructions or orders. Don't you talk to each other ? From what this body says, take that which leads to your ultimate good, not what is merely pleasing. This body is like a musical instrument. As you play, so you hear the sound.—Now, Govinda, start the *Kirtana* !

## Mataji and the Cosmic Elements

R. K. BANERJEE

Mataji's unique mastery over the forces of Nature is just one fact of her *sakti*, with which almost all who have come in close contact with her, could not fail to have been deeply impressed.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate this aspect of Mataji's personality by relating certain incidents which have either come to my knowledge directly or have been communicated to me first hand by reliable witnesses.

Among the subjects controlled by her may be listed the weather or local climate, wind, rain, waters, including those of rivers or oceans, fire, the skies, the sun, the moon, plants such as trees and flowers, and animals such as dogs, cows, snakes, goats, and so forth. Human beings are being purposely omitted for the moment.

Many instances of Mataji's use of sacrificial fires have been described in the several volumes of Mataji's life as published by Didi Gurupriya Devi, which show the close and sacred association Mataji enjoys with Nature's prime force, Fire. I was privileged to witness a most wonderful incident at Agarpara that shows how Mataji could literally summon *Agni Deva*\* himself to obey her command, when circumstances so demanded.

The occasion was the inauguration of the *Yajña Shala* at the Agarpara Ashram. The original embers of the sacrificial fire had been brought with great care from Varanasi, and imbedded in the smouldering ashes of the new *kunda*, but when the actual moment of inauguration arrived, all the efforts of Batuda and Nirvananandaji and other Brahma-

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\* God of fire.

chari priests failed to ignite the fire properly. We were all crowded round the new building situated on the bank of the Ashram pond and some distance from the temple. I fortunately had a window view from the west.

Suddenly I saw Mataji rise from her seat inside the *Yajña shāla* by the side of the *kunda*, with an unforgettable determined expression on her face. She came round to stand beside Nirvananandaji with her back towards me, facing east, and did something with her hands that I could not exactly follow. Immediately, with a terrifying roar, the flames shot up from the smouldering embers to the full height of the tapering roof of the *Yajña shāla*—just once—and thereafter went down to burn with a steady normal flame inside the *kunda*.

Stunned, I had fallen back momentarily with fright but soon realized how Mataji had actually evoked *Agni Deva* to appear in person to carry out his pre-ordained part in our *yajña*.

The incident remained so deeply imbedded in my mind that I must have been unconsciously pondering over its miraculous nature during a journey to Ranaghat that I undertook soon after by car in Mataji's august company. During this long drive, Mataji of her own accord elaborated on the close connection between herself and sacrificial fires by relating an episode that took place when she toured the Chittagong hills a long time ago. She then clearly saw the *yajña* fires in the Siddheshwari Kali temple in Dacca practically in the process of dying down and, *Agni Deva* himself appearing in person before her, asking for a fresh lease of life through her personal intervention. This request was graciously granted, and led to the gradual introduction from this original to the permanent sacrificial fires in several subsequent Ashrams.

The seashore near our Puri Ashram has more than once proved to be the scene of demonstration of Mataji's

control over the seas, wind and rain. I have heard first hand accounts of how the waves came and touched her feet while she happened to be walking along the shores at a point when normally there was little prospect of the waves reaching shore walkers.

Before the Jagannath car Festival in 1965, Sri Hari-babaji Maharaj was staying at the Ashram as Mataj's guest, *Rāsā Lilā* used to be performed daily on the beach in front of the Ashram under a hurriedly constructed canopy to keep out the sun. Each morning it started punctually at 9 A. M. and ended around noon-time. One morning heavy rain accompanied by a gusty wind started at about 7.30 A. M., with the result that the canopy broke down and the site of the performance became exposed to the elements. In spite of the herculean efforts of Swami Paramananda and others, it did not appear that the canopy could be re-erected by 9 A. M. neither was there any prospect that the rain would stop.

At 8.45 a. m. Mataji suddenly came out of the Ashram and walked in the rain for a few minutes on the sea-shore. The rain diminished abruptly and ceased entirely by 8.59 A. M. so that in the absence of sunshine it was possible to commence the *Rāsa Lilā*, while the canopy was refitted before the sun came out, by which time the wind had dropped conspicuously.

Many are aware that on important sacred festivals, contrary to the forecasts of weather prophets or meteorological stations, gentle benevolent showers are experienced near our Ashram premises, or wherever Mataji happens to be residing, or even in her absence wherever functions are held according to her wishes, as a portent of benediction from the heavens. For instance, at Vrindaban, on the day Sri Chheliya Krishnaji with his consorts was carried out in procession before the inauguration of the temple and the installation of the deities, the skies became overcast and the many hundreds of processionists on bare feet were afforded the

clemency of gentle rain at intervals, providing them welcome relief both on the soles of their feet as well as overhead. Many other instances, may be recalled when Mataji has induced the heavens to open up in a shower of merciful blessed rain to grace special festivals, quite contrary to local weather forecasts.

Mataji's mystic power over river waters can be highlighted by the classic example of the control of the Gomati floods when the *Samyam* and *Bhagavata Saptahs* were held at Naimisharanya some years ago. On that occasion because of late rains the Gomati river was in high spate in late October and early November. Lucknow was cut off on all sides, the Gomati water had risen several feet and the site of our camp at Naimisharanya was completely under water even ten days before the date of commencement of the functions.

All the U. P. Government Officials concerned, including the Chief Secretary and Chief Conservator of Forests, who had so far ably supervised the camp construction, installation of lights and various allied works, went into complete despair and gave up all hope of keeping to the programme. Swami Paramananda alone battled on against superhuman odds, unshaken in his belief that, as Mataji was fully aware of the dates of the functions, the programme would be adhered to in due course and all obstacles would disappear.

And so it was. Many of you know that staying as she was at the Kishenpur Ashram of Dehradun, Mataji when informed of the crisis at the Naimisharanya camp site asked for and drank a glass of water like Agastya Rishi of yore as related in the *Puraṇās*. Lo and behold, thereafter the Gomati waters receded in a hurry and Swamiji had to engage an army of additional labourers to clear and prepare the camp site after rapid withdrawal of the flood waters. When I arrived at the camp during the last days of the *Samyam Saptaha*



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none could have guessed that the whole area had been under water barely ten days earlier.

Two instances of the finding of lost articles in river waters come to mind. Our venerable Sri Arun Prakash Banerji of Allahabad, once wandered into the Ganges under the Rishikesh hills for a bath, while residing there with Mataji, and lost his keys in the process. On becoming aware of his loss after sometime he returned to the river bank without remembering the exact location, yet to his amazement, he discovered the keys as soon as he started to grope blindly under the waters.

The stay of Udasji's now famous *Narayan Sila* being discovered in the Jamuna waters at Vrindaban under similar circumstances, may also be cited in the same connection.

Once I had the good fortune of staying at Vindhyaçal when Mataji was resting there quietly with a few devotees. Luckily for us, a full moon was due to appear during the few days we were there and, like many others, I experienced an earnest yearning to sit with Mataji in *satsang* in the stillness of the night, with nothing to break the quiet except flooded moonlight all around us. That evening of all evenings, dense and dark clouds gathered over the horizon and by 8 P.M. the skies were completely overcast. I was sorely disappointed.

The late revered Kalida was in residence nearby and was due to appear before Mataji at 10 P. M. We were all sitting quietly around Mataji on the first floor veranda in the dark after 9 P. M. and sure enough a fresh breeze sprang up which soon blew away all the dark clouds and the whole area was flooded with brilliant moonlight by the time Kalida arrived for his *daršana*. I was profoundly grateful to Mataji for granting us our earnest desire in her all-embracing and loving mercy.

When Mataji wishes to be quiet, have you, dear reader, not noticed how she can cast her spell over all the elements

around her to bring about an unearthly peacefulness? I have seen her do this times without number; when sitting out in the open on the paved circular platform at Vindhya-chal of an evening or near the seashore at Puri, or on the open roof of the 3rd floor of the *Kanyapith* at Varanasi or on the open terrace of the Kishenpur Ashram or in the courtyard of the Almora Ashram in front of Bhaiji's *samādhi*. When she desires to be silent herself and commune with our thoughts singly or jointly, or influence our thought processes simultaneously in a *mouna* gathering, she makes sure that Nature herself in our vicinity is quietened and stilled, lest our meditation be interrupted by extraneous contacts through the senses. On such occasions invariably the weather turns favourable; if the sun is hot, clouds are sure to cover it; if it is warm, a soft breeze may spring up; if it is rainy, the rains cease suddenly without any visible reason; if it is very cold the wind drops so that it is not uncomfortable, chilly for us; if it is too dark the moon appears. In fact Nature herself is all attention to carry out the behests of her Creator.

Turning now to plants, Mataji can literally see through trees, right into their souls, so to speak. In *Vaiṣṇava* literature, the trees and creepers of Vrindaban have been described as ex-devotees of Lord Krishna, thus paving the way for Sir Jagadish Bose's researches several centuries later. The story of Nalakuber and Monigriva immediately comes to mind. In our Ashram in Vrindaban stand a similar pair of neemtrees in a location which Mataji has named "*Śrikunja*" to the south of Sri Chheliya's temple. Here, even on the hottest day, the wandering pilgrim can find rest, shelter, shade, comfort and coolness. These trees seem to have blossomed out anew since Mataji has founded the Ashram. One day perhaps she may tell us the full story of these bygone devotees, who perhaps are now eking out their predestined existence by standing up tall and straight in a spirit of service in our Ashram.

In the courtyard of the Varanasi Ashram, between the *Yajñashala* and the *Chandī Mandap*, there is a flourishing Atanda shrub, which has come under the spell of Mataji's mystic influence more than once in the course of time. The large peepultree outside the Vindhychal Ashram certainly has an air of mystery. Few people indeed dare to sit below it after dark and legend has marked the tree as the abode of spirits. But Mataji can see through its soul and can provide the explanation for its existence.

During Mataji's birthday celebrations in Ranchi in 1965, I was present among the large assembly in the *Nāt Mandir* while kirtana was being performed, when Mataji suddenly twice looked in a peculiar manner towards an open window leading out into a courtyard outside our compound, and beckoned to someone to silently close the window. She explained afterwards that she had seen a disembodied spirit clad in white robes, stand with folded hands and look into the *Nat Mandir*, apparently joining in the *kirtana*. It was ascertained afterwards that the *sāmadhi* of a fakir was underneath that tree.

During Mataji's earlier visits to Naimisharanya, before the present Ashram site was acquired, she used to stay in the *dharmasāla* of Sri Pragnarain Saigal, situated near the bank of the Gomati. There was a tree in the compound, practically withered away, when Mataji one day broke a piece of stick from the dead branches and asked that the twig be replanted. This twig has developed into a flourishing tree. Thus there is a close parallel between this story and the story of the Siddha Bakultree in Puri, which grew out of a twig used as a tooth brush for Lord Jagannath and was later planted by Sri Krishna Chaitanya Deva in the gardens adjoining his residence. Under this hoary tree, which still stands to-day although hollowed in the centre, sat Thakur Haridas doing his daily three lakhs of *Nāma kirtana*; and it was under that tree that he gave up the ghost in the arms of his beloved Lord, with the sacred name

on his lips, with his eyes gazing at his Master's face and with his hands clasping his feet.

So far as Mataji's influence on flowers is concerned, many instances may be cited by others, but mention must be made of the garland of java flowers discovered by Bhaiji in the Chunar hills on the instruction of Mataji. In our own garden there is an Asoka tree that suddenly broke out into a profusion of flowers, out of season, when Mataji first stayed in the garden kutir for three nights several years ago. She once gave me a garland of marigold flowers when I was taking leave of her at Vrindaban and this garland withstood the long hot journey from Mathura to Calcutta and remained fresh for a week after arrival in Calcutta. Similar must be the experiences of many others who have either offered flowers to Mataji in worship or been given flowers as *prasāda* from her hands.

Mataji's strange influence on animals must have been observed by those who have seen her with cows, goats, snakes, etc. I have often noticed how cows are drawn to her like to a magnet, especially in Vrindaban, as in the days of Lord Krishna to Him. Even during the recent *Bhagavata Paksha* at Naimisharanya, I saw a cow suddenly ignore everybody else in the street outside our Ashram and go straight to Mataji sniffing at her and ready to lick her body. Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj and I were standing close by. The whole incident was over within a few seconds, according to Mataji's wishes, without many others in the vicinity realizing what had happened. Mataji's complete control over cows and bulls has also been observed when she walks along the Ashram lane at Varanasi.

There are several stories of her control over snakes, the one described by Didi while Mataji was walking along the forests on top of Vindhya-chal, and another at Raipur in connection with Swamiji, both well known. More recently, at Kishenpur, during the last Durga Puja celebrations, there was a narrow escape of young Madhava from the king-

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cobra that frequented the jungle below the old Panchavati, now in the compound of Mr. & Mrs. Khaitan. The next morning Mataji expounded this mystery in her room in her new residence there in her own inimitable way.

Bhaiji has clearly brought out Mataji's supernatural power over goats in his vivid description of the goat sacrifice during the Kali Pūjā performed in the Shabbag gardens in Dacca.

Mataji's absolute mastery over the Elements under varying conditions, to suit the requirements and needs of devotees, has only been scantily illustrated by these few anecdotes. Feeling sure that there are many other far more appropriate examples known by personal experience to readers of Ananda Varta, I would beseech them to come forward with their own stories in the near future.

I sincerely believe that such an exchange of authentic information would be of inestimable benefit to us all, not only in providing a permanent record of inspiring literature closely associated with Mataji, but also in enabling us to comprehend to a limited extent the innumerable facets of her incomparable, inscrutable and super human personality.

May she, in her countless mercy, continue to permit us to catch glimpses of her divine Līlā for many, many years to come, in spite of the ever increasing impetus of Kali Yuga.

“Jai Ma.”

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## The Blissful Witness

JAINATH KAUL, M.Sc.

Let us talk of the *Atmā*--the blissful witness. Saints tell us, and our sacred books are also full of the glory of the source of things. In reality, they say, there is only this infinite, imperishable, unseen, self-luminous, unchanging, stable, immaterial, supra-mental, all-knowing, conscious, all-powerful oneness of ANANDA. This is all, and there is nothing else besides it. If so, then what is this colourful material multiplicity of name and form? What are these thoughts and emotions, the unending array of breathing contraptions, the endless chatter and activity of generation after generation of created entities? What are these desires and ambitions--pleasure at their fulfilment and disappointment in failures? What are the worldly attachments--the satisfaction and enjoyment of companionship of the loved-ones and the revolting reactions to ingratitude and cheating and falsehood? In short, what then is this marvellous changing pattern of our environment? Who are we: where do we come from, and where do we go? These thoughts and others, particularly those which make life seem meaningless, are disturbing. A child is born as we were born; it grows and develops; then stops growing and starts decaying; becomes infirm and helpless and deprived of vigour--a mass of useless bones, flesh, skin and blood--and finally ends up in smoke and ashes. These are facts of life, and when we reflect upon them, we get a jolt in our daily humdrum and routine of life. We see no light and are not inclined to keep our minds on these facts. We find it easier and more comfortable to escape and not to dwell upon these disturbing thoughts. WHY?

Because we are prisoners. The prisoner has forgotten his freedom. He has begun to hug his chains of slavery, the ]

inertia, the dulling and deadening comfort of inactivity, instead of vigorous, joy-giving activity of planning, execution and achievement. So we are afraid of our own thoughts which beckon us to the region of Love, Light and Joy— uninhibited, fearless, immeasurable—the super-intelligent void which IS and which drowns all the multitudinous appearances.

What is our basic urge in the midst of change and death ? Happiness—unalloyed and unbroken. Why ? Because that is our inheritance. Because we are That already. We are, in truth, personifications of JOY. We do not have to get it from somewhere. No. We have only to uncover it by removing the cloudy, muddy or smoky soot of the false and unreal non-existent world of thoughts and emotions in which we have entangled ourselves. But we enjoy these thoughts and emotions. They give us a feeling of security, of pleasure, and we see nothing beyond. The world has a form and content which our mind and senses apprehend and we like to spend our time and energy in losing ourselves in the round of these petty and transient pleasures. And the more we do this, the farther we get from discovering the HOME of TRUE Happiness, the goal of human urges and longings. We must understand clearly what it is that we want, what it is that can give us complete satisfaction, and then with courage and full faith go after it.

The method is simple. Fill your mind, again and again, with the lofty thoughts about the basic Reality. Pray unceasingly and believe that you are the children of immortality. As Mataji says, this appearance, this unreal world 'will either get burnt down by *jñāna*, or melt by the fire of *bhakti* and then 'you' alone for the *jñāni* or 'He' alone for the *bhakta* will remain. How ? Like the dream when the dreamer stops sleeping and awakens, so this world which torments and makes us oscillate between temporary periods of pleasure and pain, of hope and disappointment,

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and makes a shuttle cock of us with our likes and dislikes, will DISAPPEAR completely, or to begin with, temporarily, at least during periods of deep reflection when we try and succeed with God's help to get immersed in our TRUE BEING—the CORE OF OUR BEING—the GOD WITHIN—the ONE unmanifested cause of everything beyond the senses, beyond the lower mind of emotions and, finally, even beyond the discriminating faculty of the intellect. In the great silence, we find ourselves. In losing our petty existence of petty thoughts and emotions, we discover our true SELF, *ATMA*, the blissful witness.

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# The Upanisads and Life Divine

(ETERNAL RELIGION)

(1)

**Divya Darshi**

*Institute of Culture and Prayer (Chander Nagar)*

The Upaniṣads represent the Divine Life which inspired the Vedic seers from the dawn of human civilisation and the realization of which made them declare to the world :

वेदाहमेतम् पुरुषमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।

*'Vedāhametam Puruṣam Adityavarnam Tamaṣa Parastāt.'*

"I know the supreme truth of Being which is resplendent like the sun and which is beyond darkness." Seers discovered the ultimate truth of human life; they declared that man is nothing but a particle of Immortal Bliss. They invoked the spirit in man and cried out in joy :

शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्राः ।

"Oh you men of the world; you are the sons of the the immortal." Indian seers have put down their experiences of the Immortal bliss in the Upaniṣads. Divine life here will inspire man always to see where the ultimate end lies of this ephemeral existence on earth.

The Upaniṣads are the fountain-head of Indian spiritual culture. They form the pinnacle of the religio-philosophical thought of India. They have occupied an exalted position, informing and inspiring the spiritual life of Indian people. Their soul-elevating message has uplifted and transformed hundreds and thousands of men and women and transported them to a realm of supreme bliss and beatitude beyond all human comprehension. The Upaniṣadic truths are outpourings from the hearts of perfected souls who had a vision of Reality face to face. The voice of the Upaniṣads

speaking through the sages of dim antiquity has come down to us through the corridor of time undimmed and full of vigour.

It is because the Upaniṣads preach the eternal religion (*Sanātana Dharma*) to mankind. The Upaniṣads are an impressive record of vivid experiences of spiritual illumination in human life. Unless it is clear to us what is the significance of the term 'eternal religion' or *Sanātana Dharma* and its uniqueness, it is difficult to appreciate the picture of Divine Life that is enshrined in the Upaniṣads which are also called '*Srutis*' or *Vedanta*. Particularly in this modern age where the progress of science and social knowledge of human history has far advanced; when man refuses to accept anything on the basis of authority only; when man has developed a habit of rational investigation in every aspect of human knowledge, it is quite natural that man may desire to apply the same test to spiritual understanding also. In this respect the Upaniṣads have a special message for the ears of enlightened humanity bewildered by the material progress of human civilisation.

The Upaniṣads are the only sacred books that occupy themselves exclusively with the discovery of essential spiritual truths and are leading man irrespective of creed and race to realization in his own life. Indian tradition refers to the Upaniṣads therefore as *Sruti* as contrasted with another class of religious literature known as *Smṛti*, including the *Dharma Sāstra* to which it wisely left the work of forging social rules and regulations in the past, as it would leave it to the political constitutions and social sciences to day. To the category of *Smṛti* also belong the sacred books of all the historical religions which derive their origin and authority from a personal founder. Thus among India's sacred books, the *Gītā*, *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyana* and all the *Purānas* are classed as *Smṛtis*, besides *Manusmṛti*, *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* and similar other books. *Smṛtis* come and go; they change age after age, but *Sruti* according to the penetrating analysis

of Sāṅkara contains *Vastutatva jñāna*— 'knowledge of reality as it is, (Brahma Sutra 1.1. 2) and as much it stands the test of time and history. Whereas *Smṛti* contains *Puruṣatatva jñāna* (knowledge depending on the person)'— which can be modified or altered by human effort.

कर्तुमकर्तुमन्यथाकर्तुम् ।

A *Smṛti* that sustained society in one age may choke it in another age. As socio-economic conditions change, laws and regulations need to be recast and re-interpreted. Otherwise they result in strangling the social organism. If the bark that protects the tree fails to grow and expand along with the growth of the tree it will choke the tree. A living tree will shed that bark and grow a new living bark for itself. Regarding all *smṛtis* Sri Ramakrishna's pithy utterance correctly conveys the Indian idea : "Mughal coins have no currency under ( East India ) Company rule."

Much of the irrelevance of the world's religious traditions today proceeds from their inability to separate the *Śruti* or the essential from the *Smṛti*; or the obsolete contents, the eternal spiritual truth from the historical socio-political dogmas, due to traditions and their unwillingness to throw overboard the latter which have no more any currency value under the changed conditions. Historian Arnold Toynbee in this respect has nicely put this point when he says : "Thus in our society in our time, the task of winnowing the chaff from the grain in mankind's religious heritage is being forced upon us by a conjunction of social and spiritual circumstances. (An Historian's Approach to Religion).

The philosophy and religion of the Upanisads in their inimitable way point to humanity that 'Eternal Religion'— *Sanātana Dharma*. The Divine Life based on the spiritual illumination as revealed in the Upanisads derives its authority from its truth character and not from any person, be he a saint or even an incarnation; and the truth character

of a teaching demands that it be verifiable by all at all times, irrespective of dogma, creed, race. It has a high place for saints and incarnations as examples and teachers of the eternal truths of religion.

Throwing light on this unique characteristic of the eternal religion (*Sanātana Dharma*) as derived from the Upaniṣads, Swami Vivekananda says in his lecture on 'The Sages of India :'

"This is a peculiarity which we have to understand—that our religion of the Upaniṣads preaches an Impersonal-Personal God. It preaches any amount of impersonal laws plus any amount of personality; but the very fountain-head of our religion is in the Upaniṣads which are perfectly impersonal. Persons all come in the *Smṛtis* and *Purānas*—the great *avatāras*, incarnations of God, prophets and so forth. And this also has to be observed that except the religion of the Upaniṣads (which is the basis of Hinduism), every other religion in the world depends upon the life or lives of some personal founder. Christianity is built upon the life of Jesus Christ; Islam upon Muhammed; Buddhism upon Buddha; Jainism upon Jainas, and so on. Our religion is not based on any person but on principles. That you obey your religion is not because it came through the authority of a sage, no, not even of "Incarnation" but because it speaks of the eternal principle of spiritual truth. ... Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world."

Upaniṣads speak of the Divine life based on spiritual truth of perennial character—they speak of the eternal religion. Here in lies the distinctive feature of the upanisadic message to modern man in quest of a soul in circumstances radically altered by the progress of science and society.

(To be continued)

## The Heart and Soul of India

( Part of the article : "Song of India" )

EILEEN JASNOWSKI AND MARION BOOTH

The soul, the truest song of India, is best expressed by the beautiful saint, Anandamayi Ma, commonly called Mataji or Mother. She will be seventy-three in May, yet she hasn't a grey hair on her head and moves gracefully as a dancer. Her words are like poems to the multitudes who seek her *darśana* wherever she goes—and that's all over India. *Darśana* is an unfamiliar word to westerners, but it means a blessing conferred on anyone fortunate enough to be in the presence of a saint. Known for her gentle love to all, her colourful figures of speech, Mataji may answer a question, beginning with an Arabian Nights' turn of phrase. "In the kingdom beyond the mind . . . ." Or, in answer to some who are testing her ability to read their minds, she may say, "If you wish to hear with the ears, you must speak with the mouth." Possessed of full yogic powers, she scorns to use them now, using only the universal power of love—as did Lord Krishna, to justify her reputation as "stealer of hearts." No sad saint, Mataji. Her very name means "joy-permeated," and although much is lost in the translation, one doesn't need to understand Hindi to realize her keen wit. She loves all of mankind easily, and she laughs easily—but she can blow cold as the north wind, if the situation arises.

Mataji never asks for money ; never accepts it for herself. Indians traditionally bring flowers and fruits to their holy-ones and Mataji gives them to all who come. She compares herself to the trees that provide shade and fruit to all who ask. And for over forty years, day and night, all manner of men and women have asked for her *darśana*. Queens, maharajas, maharanis, outcasts, VIP's, children, peasants,

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princes, and Prime Ministers. Pandit Nehru was close to Mataji, for his wife, Kamala, was an ardent devotee right up until her death. Preparing for her South American trip and pressed for time, still Indira Gandhi—even as you and I—had the desire for Anandamayi Ma's darśana. The last thing Mataji did before she left New Delhi for her Himalayan ashram at Dehra Dun was to spend half an hour with the Prime Minister and her sons. ....

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*"It is necessary to try and dedicate to the Supreme every single action of one's daily life."*

—Mata Anandamayi

# Sacred Places of Kashmir, Jammu & Ladakh

A DEVOTEE

(Continued from the last issue)

## HALADHAR

वहसि वपुषि विशदे वसनं जलदाभं  
हलहतिमिति मिलितयमुनाभम् ।  
केशवधृतहलधररूप

जय जगदीश हरे ॥\*

[Glory to Hari, the Lord of the world, to Keshava, who has taken the form of Haladhara\*\* (Wielder of the plough), who has put on the blue garment which has fitted his white body like the river Yamuna, shy and afraid of being furrowed by the plough.]

At a distance of about four kilometers north of Manasbal lake there is a sacred rock on the top of the hillock called Haladhar. The place is called Maktaphikar and is near a village named Ingura rising over a plateau called Hanin.

A religious fair is held at Maktaphikar every year on the day of *Nirjala Ekadashi*\* which falls on the eleventh day of the bright half of Jyaishta.

The pilgrims assemble at the spot near the sacred rock and chant in chorus the following words.

बलभद्र हलधर पाल पोणि त्रायो ।

(O Balabhadra, holder of the plough, allow water to flow from below this rock).

When the song is sung all on a sudden a large quantity of water gushes out from underneath the rock and the pilgrims bathe in this sacred water.\*\*

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\* Dashavatarastotram by Jayadeva.

\*\* Haladhara also called Balabhadra was the elder brother of Shri Krishna. He is also believed to be an incarnation of God.

\* On this day people fast and do not take even water.

\*\* According to one ancient account the lake called Satisara, which existed in this area, was desicated by Balabhadra by his poughshare.

## MANSAR

नमो देवदेवाय शिवाय परमात्मने ।

अप्रमेयस्वरूपाय व्यक्ताव्यक्त स्वरूपिणे ॥\*\*\*

(I bow down to Shiva, the God of gods, the supreme soul, who is incomprehensible and who is comprised of both the manifested and the unmanifested.)

Mansar is a small lake beautifully situated in the midst of low-lying hills at a distance of about twenty-seven kilometers east of Jammu town. It is very deep and about one and a half kilometer long and about one kilometer wide. It is regarded as very sacred.

There is a temple of Shiva near the lake.

## MARTAND (MATTAN)

सो खण्डिताश्म प्राकारं प्रासादान्तर्व्यघत्त च ।

मातैण्डस्याद्भुत दानाद्राक्षास्फीतं च पत्तनम् ॥\*

(That kind hearted King Lalitaditya built the wonderful temple of Martanda (Sun-god) with its massive walls of stone within a lofty enclosure, and its town swelling with grapes).

The ruins of the once famous temple of the son-god one of whose names is Martanda, is five kilometers east of Ananta Nag in Kashmir Valley. It was constructed by Lalitaditya who ruled in Kashmir from 761 A.D. to 764 A.D. The original temple which existed at this spot is said to have been constructed by Raja Ramdev in about 3000 B. C.\*\* It is on the top of a plateau commanding one of the finest views of Kashmir. The ruins are also very impressive. The place is called Mattan which is a corruption of Martanda. The temple was destroyed by Shikandar-But-Shikan.

Percy Brown in his famous book on Indian architecture writes the following about the temple of Martand.

\*\*\* The Skanda Puran, Pravasa Khanda, chapter 22, verse-32.

\* The Rajatarangini, fourth Taranga, vers—192.

\*\* See 'Kashmir through the ages' by Gwash Lal Kaul.



"On plan the central structure occupies a rectangle 62 feet long and 35 feet wide, the projecting wings of the portico extending the width of the front to 56 feet. Although the main shrine is a square, the cell in its interior is an oblong 18½ feet by 14 feet placed transversely, while the entire height of this central building was in the vicinity of 70 feet. The quadrangle measures 220 feet long by 142 feet broad, the pillars facing this enclosure being 84 in number, each 3½ feet in height with a space between of 6¼ feet at the base.

"It will be seen therefore that the temple of Martand is a building of average size, but throughout a feeling of a large scale is consistently maintained, as there is nothing small or sparing in its composition. In its appearance of simple dignity, and in the solid nature of its masonry it has something of that power expressed in amphitheatres and aqueducts of the Romans when these seem to form part of the landscape itself. In its prime in the eighth century, few spectacles can have been more enchanting than Lalitaditya's grey stone masterpiece, with its bold trefoil arches, stupendous walls, and elegant arcades, symmetrically elevated against its mountain background, and looking out on the splendour of the everlasting snows."

At a distance of about two kilometers north-west of Mattan are the sacred springs of Bhawan which form Martanda-Tirtha ( the sacred pool of the sun-God ), Two of the springs called Vimata and Kamata are regarded as the most sacred.\* Sacred fish in abundance swarm in the large basins filled up by the springs.

नमः उग्राय वीराय साराय नमो नमः ।

नगः प्रबोधाय मार्तण्डाय नमो नमः ॥\*\*

\* See the note on Bhawan in the November 1967 issue of Ananda Varta.

\*\* From the Ramayana of Valmiki.

(Obeisance to the Sun, who is terrible, who is powerful, who stimulates all activities, who travels fast, who makes the lotuses bloom and infuses life into a dead world).

### MIRPUR

आपदामपहर्तारं दातारं सर्वसम्पदाम् ।  
लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामं भूयो भूयो नमाम्यहम् ॥

(I bow down again and again to Sri Rama, who is very pleasing to all people, who removes all troubles and bestows all wealth).

Mirpur is on the left bank of the Jhelum river situated about sixty kilometers west of Naoshera town in Kashmir. It is at present under the illegal occupation of Pakistan.

There are many sacred shrines in Mirpur out of which the most noted is the temple of Sri Raghunath. It is not known in what condition the temples are now.

### NIL NAG

Nil Nag is a small oval shaped lake situated in a deep hollow on the slopes of a hill lying about thirty-four kilometers south of Srinagar and about six kilometers west of Tasrar Sharif. Its altitude is 68,000 feet above sea-level. The lake is about one hundred meters long and twenty meters wide. It is fed by a number of springs. Nil Nag is regarded as very sacred. It is sacred to Nila Naga.

### PAMPUR

नमस्ते भगवन् विष्णो लोकानां प्रभवाण्ययम् ।  
त्वं हि कर्तार्हृषीकेश संहर्ता चापराजितः ॥

[O Lord Vishnu : I bow to Thee. Thou art the cause of the origin, existence and annihilation of the worlds. O Rhishiksha ! Thou art the doer and Thou art the destroyer unconquered by anyone else.]

Pampur is about twenty-one kilometers south-west of Srinagar. Its ancient name is Padmapura. It is picturesquely situated on the right bank of the Jhelum river where the enchanting saffron flowers grow and spread their fragrance.

The ruins of the once famous ancient temple of Padma-shwamin may still be seen in the village of Pampur. It was constructed early in the ninth century by Padma, the uncle of Chippata-Jaypida (802-814 A. D.). The shrine of Shah Hamdan nearby has appropriated some portions of the ancient temple.

On a hilly rock above the village of Uyan, which is at a distance of about five kilometers north-east of Pampur, there is a symbol of the goddess Bhagwati called "Jwalamukhi Chakra". The ancient name of Uyan is Ovana.

### NARU

मन्दारमालाकलितालकायै कपालमालांकितकन्धराय ।

दिव्याम्बरायै च दिगंबराय नमः शिवायै नमः शिवाय ॥\*

(I bow to Shiva (Parvati) and Shiva, Parvati having looks of hair decorated with a wreath of Mandara flowers and being clad in a beautiful garment and Shiva having his shoulders decorated with a garland made up of human skulls and wearing no raiment at all).

Naru is a small village situated about two kilometers south-east of Bidar in the Bring Valley.

There is an ancient shrine of Shiva in the of *Ardhanarishwara* at Naru by the side of a small spring. Lord Shiva revealed himself to Brahma in the form of half male and half female (*Ardhanarishwara*) when Brahma worshipped him in order to receive the power to create more.

About a kilometer towards south-west from this place there is a sacred spring called Swedanaga.

तद्वीतव्यतिकरेकमद्रितनया देहेन मिश्रीभवन्निष्प्रत्यूहमिह  
व्याप्तोहतु वपुः स्थाणोरभद्राणि वः ।\*

(May that body of the Immovable (Shiva) from whom there is no separate existence, which is united with the body

\* *Ardhanarineshastotram*, verse 5,  
Vrihatstotraratnakarah.

\* The *Rajatarangini*, fourth Taranga, verse—1.

of the daughter of the Himalayas (Parvati) and which knows no obstacles, the body of him on whose matted hair the serpent also seems to embrace its own female as it entwines its body with the plaited hair of Parvati which resembles in its fall and dark splendour the body of a female snake, remove misfortunes from you who are in this world.)

### PANZATH

संपूर्णः पूर्णमहिमामर्त्यमाहात्म्यमन्दिरम् ।  
पञ्च हस्ता प्रदश्चक्रे मठं सुकृतकमठः ॥†

He (King Suravaraman), who was accomplished, full of (spiritual) greatness and devoted to pious works, granted the *agrahara* and built a *Matha* (Monastery or tower) which was an abode of divine greatness at Panchahasta).

Panzath is a village in Divsar Pargana.

Its ancient name is Panchahasta. There is a large spring in the vicinity of the village which is regarded as very sacred. It is said that when Parvati disappeared from Kashmir for fear of defilement by the touch of sinners, Kashyapa by his prayer to the goddess brought her back in the guise of the spring (Naga) at Panzath (Panchahastaka Naga).

The Nilamata tells about the sanctity of the spring in the following verse.

पञ्चयज्ञान् अवापोति स्नात्वा वै पञ्चहस्तके ।  
प्रत्यहं ये वितिदिष्टा गृहस्थक्य महीपते ॥\*

(O King ! By bathing in the sacred spring of Panchahasta one gets the benefit of performing the five sacrifices which are required to be performed daily by every householder).

### PATAN

नया समं पुरवरे सुरराजोपम नृपः ।  
नस्मिन् शंकरगौरीशसुगन्धेशौ विनिर्ममे ॥†

† The Rajatarangini, fifth Taranga, verse—24.

\* The Nilamata, Sloka 1291.

† The Rajatarangini, fifth Taranga, verse—158.

(Together with his queen Sugandha king Shankaravarman, resembling Indra, built in that fine town the temples of Shiva called Shankaragourisha and Sugandhesha).

Patao is an ancient town situated about twenty-seven kilometers west-north-west of Srinagar and about twenty-two kilometers south-east of Baramula in the Kashmir valley. The ancient name of the place is Shankarapura. It was founded by King Shankaravarman (883-901 A.D.).

There are remains of three ancient temples of Shiva at Patan. They were dedicated to Shankaragourishwara, Sugandheshwara and Ratnavardhaneshwara. They were constructed by King Shankaravarman, his queen Sugandha, and his minister Ratnavardhana respectively.

#### PAYER ( Payesh )

Payer also called Payesh, is an ancient village picturesquely situated on the banks of a stream about eighteen kilometers south of Pampur and at the same distance north-east of Shupiyan in Kashmir. It is about thirty kilometers south of Srinagar.

Near the bank of the stream towards the south of the village there is a beautiful ancient shrine of Shiva. Its origin is lost in antiquity.

नमः शिवाय रुद्राय नमः श्विनधराय च ।

सर्वविद्याविधतये भूतानां पतये नमः ॥ \*

(I bow to Shiva, to Rudra, I bow to him who is powerful. I bow to the Lord of all beings who is the master of all knowledge).

#### NAUBANDHANA PEAK

हृदं च शिखरं पर्य देशे स्मिन्नप

पश्चिमे ।

नीवन्धन हति ख्यातं पुण्यं

पापभयापहम् ॥ \*\*

\* Shrimadbhagawatam—eighth Skanda, sixteenth chapter, thirty-second sloka.

\*\* The Nilamata, verse—41.

(Vaisampayana said to Janmejaya: "O King! Look at this mountain peak also which is situated to the west in this region. It is called Naubandhana, which is sacred and which relieves people of sin and fear.")

The Naubandhana Peak is situated between Sedan and Hirpura. Sedan lies at the foot of the Pir Panjal range about eight kilometers south-west of Shupiyan, which is about forty-six kilometers south of Srinagar. Hirpura is about eleven kilometers west-south-west of Shupiyan along the road leading to the Pir Panjal Pass. The peak is about 15500 feet above sea level.

Naubandhana Peak is regarded as very sacred. It is said that during the great deluge (*Mahapralaya*), the boat, in which some of the creatures of the world took shelter with the sacred Vedas with them, and were saved from utter destruction by Lord Vishnu, who incarnated in the form of a huge fish ('Matsya Avatar') and swam in the vast expanse of water which submerged this earth. That boat was tied to Naubandhana Peak. It is also said that the great sage Kashyapa passed a thousand years of meditation upon this hill. He propitiated Lord Shiva and secured his help for the desiccation of the Kashmir valley.

At the foot of Naubandhana Peak lies the sacred lake Kramasara the modern name of which is Konsar Nag. It marks a footstep of Lord Vishnu.

प्रलयपयोरधिजले धृतवानसि वेदं  
विहितवहित्रचरित्रमखेदम् ।  
केशवधृतमीनशरीर  
जय जगदीश हरे ॥ \*

(O Keshava, in the vast expanse of water that submerged the world during the deluge ('*pralaya*'), you saved the Vedas by taking the form of a fish. It was quite befitting of your unblemished character. O Hari. Lord of the world, glory be to you ).

\* Dashavatarastotram by Jayadeva, verse—1.

## Mātri Līlā

( July—September 1969 )

Mataji was in Poona when the last Mātri Līlā was written. We have in the last issue of Ananda Vārtā reported about the first half of her stay there. On June 30th the *Rāsa Līlā* party left after having enacted at Poona the complete life of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with many interesting details that were new to most people. On the last day there was a special celebration. For the next fortnight, Sri Hari-babaji was reading out from the life of Sri Chaitanya Deva in place of the dramatic performances.

In the afternoons, Mataji would sometimes go for a stroll in the grounds of the Poona University. There is a beautiful place surrounded by banyan trees there. One day, Mataji sat down under a very old banyan tree. The branches of a banyan tree stretch down to the earth and take root. In this way the tree gradually assumes a gigantic size and can give shade to thousands of people. Mataji pointed out how the branches at first are at a loss where to get rooted until they finally reach the ground. Similarly, the *sādhaka* goes on practising, feeling as if in a void until at last he touches ground. Then only his *sādhana* proceeds purposefully and with new strength. Mataji then became silent and sat in a contemplative pose like a Buddha. All present sat in meditation for sometime. It so happened that not a single person passed by during that period. Then Swami Saswatananda read out an episode from the life of Lord Buddha, when he sat down under the Bodhi tree, saying : "I shall not rise until I have attained to Enlightenment." Another day Mataji took Didima and Didi with a few others to see the tree. Again all stood meditating in silence. In the close vicinity there is the Old Government House, which had to be abandoned because several unfortunate accidents happe-

ned to people staying there. It was believed to be a haunted house. One day Mataji saw the apparition of an Englishman who looked rather pitiful at first but then changed into a figure of light. It may be that this was the spirit who had haunted the house and had now been released. On July 15th, just before Sri Haribabaji left Poona, Mataji took him and his party to the banyan tree. Again all stood in silent meditation for a few minutes.

On July 16th Mataji left for Barsi. It is a town in Sholapur District near Pandarpur, which is the most sacred place of Maharashtra. All pilgrims to Pandarpur have to pass through Barsi. Mataji and her party were the guests of Sri Kantilal Madhvani, a Gujarati family, related to one of the ladies of our Ashram. For the first time they had come for Mataji's *darśana* recently in Bombay. The old mother dreamt that Mataji had come and stayed in her house with a large number of devotees. Thereupon the old lady pressed Mataji and Sri Haribabaji to visit Barsi, but Sri Haribabaji was not willing. However, as soon as he left Poona, Mataji gave in to the entreaties of the old lady, who by the way is a heart patient and one of her sons is also very ill. A new room had been built specially for Mataji on top of an outhouse which was entirely renovated to accommodate the Ashram girls. Elaborate arrangements were made for the comforts of the large party that accompanied Mataji. Two daughters of the family had arrived from Africa to welcome Mataji in their home at Barsi. The wonder was that both patients kept quite fit and active during Mataji's visit. At Kurudwar, 20 miles from Barsi, Mataji was received by a profusely decorated car, with a band playing religious tunes, with garlands and fruits and a considerable assembly of people waiting eagerly for Mataji's *darśana*. At Barsi, satsang was held twice daily, attended by a large crowd. Mataji was in a very communicative mood and also sang every single day. There is a *Chakratīrtha* and an old well at Barsi and connected with them a legend about the pious King Ambarish, an ardent



devotee of Lord Vishnu, who is supposed to have thrown down His *Chakra* in defence of the King. Mataji laughingly remarked that "*Chakradhāri*" (Holder of the Chakra, namely Lord Vishnu) had drawn her to this spot like a magnet; so the dream of our hostess bore fruit in the material world.

On July 18th Mataji visited the temple which contains a statue of Lord Vishnu in black stone with King Ambarish sitting at His feet. The Lord's hand is placed on the King's head in blessing. When offered a boon, he had prayed that the Lord's hand might always remain on his head, he had no other desire. Special *pūjā* was performed at the temple in Mataji's presence, attended by an immense throng of pilgrims. On the 20th Mataji again went to the temple, and stood near the image. Unfortunately people have the bad habit of throwing offerings at the deities. A beetle-nut meant for Lord Vishnu struck the back of Mataji's head. She said: "The Lord wanted to teach you not to throw things at Him. It hurts Him just as it hurts me."

Before Mataji left Barsi, the old mother of the house performed an elaborate *pūjā* exactly as she had done in her dream.

On July 22nd, Mataji with entire party halted at Sholapur for a few hours at the invitation of Sri Pratap Singh. There also a room had been specially built for Mataji and painstaking preparations made for her visit. At the satsang Mataji sang and related about Barsi. From Sholapur she returned to Poona, where she stopped from 23rd to 26th July. On the 25th the opening ceremony of a new self-contained cottage for Mataji's use took place. *Akhanda Rāmāyana* had already been performed there in Sri Haribabaji's presence. On the 26th, foundation stones were laid for a *satsang* hall and a Krishna Temple in the Ashram grounds. The same evening Mataji and her party left for Ahmedabad via Bombay where Mataji halted for a few hours.

Mataji was visiting Ahmedabad after several years. She put up, as usual, in the compound of the Munshaw family. A very beautiful, artistic ceremony to welcome her had been arranged. Young girls, dressed in Gujarati style, carrying brass pitchers on their heads, stood in two long lines on both sides of the path, singing Gujarati songs. A conch was blown at Mataji's approach. Everyone was deeply moved. A large pandal had been erected for the *satsang*. On July 29th, *Guru Purnima* was celebrated from early morning. Didima's *pūjā* was performed and people queued up to do individual *praṇāma* to Mataji. Everything was extremely well-planned. Many had come from great distances to pay homage to Mataji and Didima on that auspicious day.

One day, the Governor of Gujarat, Sriman Narayan had a private interview with Mataji for a whole hour. Mataji followed his invitation to Government House where the Gujarati Congress of men and women born in free India had assembled for Mataji's *darsana*. At the age of 21 they all pledge themselves to serve India. The entire elite of the city was present on the occasion of Mataji's visit. Brahmachari Brahmananda and Pushpa delighted them by their *bhajans* and Mataji also sang. At the request of the young people Mataji spoke to them. She enjoined on them to lead lives dedicated to the service of God in man. Mataji then asked them to fix 15 minutes at a definite time of the day or night to be given to the contemplation of God or Reality for their whole lives. If possible one should sit in meditation during that time, but even if one happened to be travelling or sick or attending on a patient or in any other way prevented from sitting still, one should, under all circumstances whatever, sustain the remembrance in one's mind and refrain from speaking during those 15 minutes. By the strict and punctual adherence to this practice, one would finally be automatically reminded of it even in the event of extreme joy, sorrow or accident. Moreover, every-

one participating in this stream of unbroken meditation would be benefited by the combined efforts of all the others taking part. Wherever Mataji had gone, in Bombay, Poona, Barsi she urged people to take part in this "*Akhanda Bhagavat Smriti*" (The Perpetual Remembrance of God). A young girl came to Mataji at Ahmedabad, who was shortly going to study at an American University. Mataji asked her also to make propaganda amongst her fellow students for this cause.

Mataji further accepted an invitation to an orphanage called "*Shreyas*", which is run by Srimati Madalasa Narayan, wife of the Governor and daughter of the late Jamnalal Bajaj. Mataji was shown round the entire institution. Mostly widows are employed to act as mothers to the orphans. The children sang to Mataji and for a few minutes there was silent meditation. Mataji asked the children whether they were her friends and then told them to observe five things as she usually asks children to do, viz (1) To remember God first thing on waking and last thing before going to sleep. (2) To obey their parents and elders. (3) To speak the truth. (4) To study well. (5) Having observed those four things, to play, run and jump as much as they pleased.

On August 1st, Mataji travelled to Bhavnagar at the invitation of the Maharaja and Maharani of that State. Mataji and her companions were put up in a very spacious Girl's School, which was renamed "*Mātri Mandir*" in Mataji's honour after her visit. All arrangements were excellent. *Satsang* was held twice daily : in the morning on the lawn of the palace called "*Nilam Bagh*" and in the evening in the huge school compound. Several thousands of people flocked every evening. The enormous congregation was well organized and everything proceeded in great quiet and order. Several hundred students of the school requested Mataji to talk to them. On this occasion also Mataji advocated the "*Akhanda Bhagavat Smriti*". At the end she distributed

sweets to all. On August 5th, Mataji returned to Ahmedabad for one night, leaving for Bhopal on the 6th evening.

On the 7th morning, Mataji alighted in Bairagarh near Bhopal and occupied the Ashram, which Sir and Lady Datar Singh had built for her on their estate in 1965. This was Mataji's third visit to the Ashram situated in beautiful natural surroundings. In spite of the unabating rain throughout Mataji's sojourn, all the dignities of Bhopal came to pay their respects to her and some of them had private talks : Sri Reddy, the Governor and his wife, the Chief Minister with his family, some other Ministers and Ex-Ministers, several high officials as well as Rajas and Ranis of neighbouring states. A few old devotees arrived from Jubbulpore and other places in the M.P. to spend a couple of days with Mataji. Every morning Sir Datar Singh would read out from a Sikh Scripture. At night after *ārati* Mataji replied to questions. The night before she left, some of the people of Bhopal complained that they would feel very lonely after Mataji's departure. In response, the Ashram was by a simple ceremony and kirtan inaugurated as a permanent-one. It was decided to continue regularly the daily reading of Sikh scriptures and to hold every 2nd Sunday of the month a meeting with *kīrtana pāṭha*, silent meditation etc. for all who wished to gather. On the night of August 10th Mataji left for Vrindaban, remaining there from 11th to 13th of August only. She met Sri Haribabaji. *Rāmalīlā*, *Rāsa līlā* and *Rāmārchā* were performed during her stay. From August 15th to 20th Mataji stopped at Varanasi.

It had been expected that Mataji would spend *Jhūlan* and *Janmastami* in Vrindaban. Instead of this she was present for both festivals in Kishenpur. Mataji usually blesses Dehradun with her presence during the two hot months after her birthday celebrations. This summer Mataji had been to Poona and came to Dehradun only for sixteen days, namely from August 21st to September 6th. She resided in her new

house in Mr. and Mrs. Khaitan's compound next to Kalyanvan where she could enjoy a certain amount of much needed rest and privacy after travelling. At 6 p. m. she would daily give *darśana* in the Kishenpur Ashram. However, there were so many festivals and celebrations that Mataji was available for very much longer than one hour on most days. Mataji was in an excellent mood throughout her stay, full of energy and intensity, notwithstanding her indifferent health. She seemed to compress into those sixteen days what she usually gives to Dehradun in two months. So much happened that was interesting and remarkable, it was difficult to keep pace. From the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> *Jhulan*, (the swing festival) was celebrated every evening. A new and much appreciated item of the programme was a daily talk by Brahmachari Nirmalananda. On the first day he very beautifully explained the significance of this festival. It is the human mind which is symbolized by the swing. The four strings by which it is held and the fifth by which it is pulled may be likened to the five senses, sight being the sense that has the strongest pull. When God occupies the ever swinging mind it becomes dedicated to Him and thus stilled. After the talk there was beautiful music, *pūjā* and *ārāti*. On August 26<sup>th</sup>, *Jhulan Purnima*, the *kirtana* continued all night, interrupted only by half an hour's midnight meditation, which was held in Mataji's presence in the open space in front of the temples. In the evening and all next day *Rakshā Bandhan* was observed. Mataji accepted *rākhis* with great patience and in exchange gave another *rākhi* to each one approaching her. On the 27<sup>th</sup> morning the swing was dismantled while all joined in the song : "*Jhule, Jhule Nandalāla*" with great alacrity and Mataji distributed the fruits that had been suspended from the swing. In her joyous mood she moved around the hall swinging with every woman and blessing the men by touching their heads. On August 28<sup>th</sup>, *Akhanda Rāmāyana* started in the Ashram hall ending on the 29<sup>th</sup> at midday. On August 31<sup>st</sup> and

September 1st there was another recitation of the whole of the *Rāmāyana* at Sadhan Ashram, Jakhan. There is an interesting story to it.

Several years ago, Sri R. C. Sood made a gift of his house and garden (at a distance of about half a mile from the Kishenpur Ashram) to the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangh and called it "Sadhan Ashram". His aged mother, he and his wife remained there as *vanaprasthas* and caretakers. He built a set of rooms for Mataji's use on top of the house, the rest of the roof serving as a suitable place for satsang amongst picturesque surroundings. Mataji has stayed there on several occasions. When Mataji came to Dehradun for one day last February, she halted at Sadhan Ashram for a few minutes before proceeding to Kankhal. She had the *kheyāla* that she would not see Sri Sood's wife again, who was ailing. In the second half of June, while Mataji was in Poona, Sri Sood dreamt that Mataji told him: "You have not had any reading of the Ramayana in your house for a long time. Do it every Sunday." Sri Sood therefore promptly started *Akhanda Ramayana* on the following Sunday and his wife, in spite of her failing health, attended. On July 4th she peacefully passed away in her sleep. When Mataji received the news, she decided that a recitation of the whole of the Ramayana should be held at Sadhan Ashram during her next visit to Dehradun. On August 31st the day the Ramayana was started, Mataji went to Sadhan Ashram at 8 a.m. to supervise herself all arrangements and be present at the opening ceremony before the reading. She returned there again in the afternoon. The evening satsang and Kirtan were held on the roof, while the Ramayana continued downstairs. Mataji spent the night in her room there. In the morning she again attended the Ramayana. When Udas rolled up Mataji's bedding, she found a small white snake below the bedsheet and durrie, just where Mataji's feet had been. Wrapped in paper she took it to Mataji and then had it thrown into the jungle. Mataji knew that a

snake had lain curled up below her feet all night. Mataji asked for the snake and strangely it was found still moving about on the paper. Someone suggested to keep it in a glass jar with a little *Gangajal*. At about 10 a.m. Mataji went to Kishenpur to receive Sri G.S. Pathak, the new Vice-President of India, who with his wife and other members of his family was paying a visit to Mataji, first thing after having taking over office. He and his family have been in close contact with Mataji for many years. They arrived during the morning satsang, listening to *bhajans* with great delight. Mataji also sang herself for a few minutes and then told them about the Sadhan Ashram and the snake. We can only presume that the spirit of the late Sm. Sood had come in the guise of the snake to lie under Mataji's feet and be present at recitation of the Ramayana. At nearly mid-day Mataji and many people present returned to Sadhan Ashram to witness the completion of the reading. No sooner was the *Arati* over than someone brought the news that the snake had just died. Mataji at once sent Dasu to Brahma Kund at Hardwar to give *jalsamādhī* to the snake wrapped into the red silk cloth that had been offered at the *Arati*. Mataji said : "That day the body died, but this was the death of death". Scarcely ever have we heard Mataji make a statement of this kind. Everybody was profoundly moved.

Sri G.S. Pathak and his family as well as his staff, including the security staff had lunch at the Ashram and took leave of Mataji at 3.30 p.m.

On September 3rd, *Janmastami* ( Sri Krishna's birthday ) was celebrated. Mataji gave *darśana* in the packed hall for an hour in the evening and sat by the side of the priest throughout the elaborate puja that started at midnight and took full three hours. Kirtan was sung from the early evening until 3.30 a. m. A *Nārāyana Silā* had been placed into a large hollowed and closed up cucumber, which Mataji held in her hands. At midnight the *Nārāyana Silā*

was taken out and worshipped in the traditional way alongside with *vigrahas* of Sri Krishna and Radha. As 3.30 a. m. Mataji sat down in the hall and distributed *prasāda* to all present.

Later in the morning, at about 11 a. m., *Nandotsava* ( the festival of the riotous joy of the cowherds over Krishna's birth ) was observed in the open in front of the temples. Fortunately the heavy rain had subsided for a while just at the right time. As usual, a few devotees were dressed up and danced and as the climax let fall a pot full of curds that was smashed into thousand pieces. Everyone stood round singing merrily. Then Mataji stood on the temple veranda and threw curds into everyone's mouth amongst much laughter and cheering and finally distributed fruits.

One afternoon during Mataji's sojourn at Dehradun, some of the Sannyasis of the Divine Life Society at Rishikesh came bringing with them about fifteen South American members of the Divine Life Society of Venezuela. They sang to Mataji in Sanskrit, although this was their first visit to India. Mataji said a few words to them and blessed them all.

Another day an old American gentleman, the head of a Yogic School in New York came for Mataji's *darśana*. He related, how years ago he had been fascinated by a picture of Mataji found on a piece of old newspaper. He kept the picture with him ever since, although he had no idea whom it represented. Only three years later someone told him whose photo it was, but he did not know where Mataji could be found. Much later he learnt a few details about Ma and now at last he had come from Rishikesh to meet her in person.

Mataji had been expected to leave for Varanasi via Kankhal on the 7th. Only on the 6th morning we heard that due to Sri Haribabaji's illness, Mataji had changed her plans and was leaving that very afternoon by car for New Delhi where Sri Haribabaji had been brought down from Vrindaban.



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Mataji stopped in Kankhal for a short while and alighted in our Delhi Ashram at about midnight. Sri Haribabaji was waiting for her. She persuaded him to stay at the Willingdon Nursing Home for a few days for medical examination and subsequently went to see him there daily. Sri Haribabaji's devotees performed uninterrupted Kirtan in our Ashram day and night for his recovery while he was at the Nursing Home. We are happy to say that his condition improved and he has returned to Hoshiarpur. Sir Datar Singha also happened to be a patient at the same hospital. Mataji paid a visit to him too. Thereafter he suddenly began to recover and he was soon able to leave the Nursing Home.

During Mataji's short stay in Delhi, Sm. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, in spite of her hectic programme, paid a visit to the Ashram at Kalkaji and was closeted with Mataji for about half an hour.

Mataji left for Varanasi on the 10th morning reaching there at night. During the period from 12th to 25th two Bhagavata Saptahs were held one after another from September 12th. We hope to report in greater details about them in our next issue.

Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, and the Diwali are all expected to be celebrated in Varanasi this year in Mataji's presence while the twentieth Samyam Mahavrata is proposed to be held at Vrindaban from 17th to 23rd November.

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