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*An unpublished picture of Mataji taken in 1936 in the grounds of the  
Yogoda School at Ranchi.*

*Courtesy : Sri Daya Mata, President, S R F.*

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

## Mātri Vāni

While one is in the midst of *māyā* it is difficult to understand from where *māyā* arises. Aspire to the knowledge of Him. Truly, to know oneself means to know Him. Having found one's Self all problems are solved. So long as there is *māyā* it is difficult to know what *māyā* is.

\* \* \*

The path which the Guru has pointed out, that path you must try to follow. Do not stay idle ; make an effort to go forward. And if you feel inclined to do work, do it in the spirit that everything is an expression of THAT. Service may be of the country, of one's wife as the presiding goddess of the home, of one's children as Gopal and Kumari, of one's husband as the Lord—for it is the ONE who appears in many guises. Do not pass your time merely with eating and sleeping. The invaluable boon of human birth must not be wasted in vain thought. Dwelling no longer in the traveller's inn (*dharmasāla*), make an attempt to go to your own real home.

\* \* \*

Due to the non-observance of the one *Brahmacharya Āśrama*, the rules and regulations of all the other *āśramas* are not carried out as perfectly as they should be. Just as a house can be built only on a solid foundation. '*Āśrama*' means absence of toil and weariness (*śrama*). Yet, with the sole exception of God everything is indeed fraught with toil and weariness. Consequently, how can there be rest and ease (*viśrāma*)? Even in the householder's *āśrama*, if service is performed with the conviction that all are manifestations of the ONE, one is actually living the life of an *āśramite*.

\* \* \*

Rather than being a master in this world, one should become its servant. The very fact of being a master creates troubles and complications. But if one can regard oneself as a server, there will be no more clash. Perfect ease ! "This world belongs to God and I am merely His servant. Following His injunctions, I shall engage in service only." If this attitude of mind is maintained at all times, no new ties will be formed, although one is living in the family ; one will merely exhaust one's *prārabdha karma*. He Himself will put everything right.

\* \* \*

So long as one has not found God, sorrow will not depart. If He is to be realized, one has to practise the repetition of His name, His contemplation, His worship, singing His praises — no other path to man's Supreme Welfare exists. The company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth, religious gatherings and the study of Scriptures are also helpful on this path. This body ever stresses one thing : sense enjoyment is poison and gradually delivers one to death. Therefore this body always emphasizes : endeavour to be engrossed in Him as much as you possibly can.

\* \* \*

You have been blessed with birth in a human body, which is so difficult to obtain. Let not a single moment be wasted. Plants, animals and birds also, after remaining in the world for some time and producing more plants and animals of their species, leave this world. If you too do nothing more than this, what difference is there between you and them ? Everyone should make a strenuous effort not to have to leave this world with a 'return ticket'.

# Sad Vāni\*

*Bhaiji*

*Translated by Atmanandaji*

## Foreword

There is nothing in the world that can be called new. Revolving ceaselessly on the wheel of time, the old appears again and again clothed in ever new forms. This is even more obvious concerning the dissemination of Supreme Wisdom (*Parama Tatva*). Time after time, expressed in many different ways, there have been numerous attempts throughout the ages to proclaim the Eternal Truth of the ONE in the many. This ancient Truth (*Satya*) has ever purified and enlightened the human mind. To this category belongs the teaching set forth in the 'Sad Vāni.' May it bring Supreme Joy to all its readers !

Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma, at whose Holy Feet I sat, listening to her words collected in this small book, has said : "The search after Truth becomes easy for one who can be completely one-pointed and firmly concentrated under all circumstances, no matter what path may have been chosen." It is well to remember this. That to which the mind is attached, ever appears delightful to man.

—Bhaiji.

1

In the field of action, people's minds become crippled by the lack of freedom to proceed in their own way. The same is true in the sphere of religion. If the aspirant does not find scope for a wide extension of his search in keeping with

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\* *Sad Vāni* was first published in English translation by Sri Hari Ram Joshi and N.N. Das Gupta in 1935, long before the foundation of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, and has been out of print for many years.

his individual temperament, his efforts will stagnate in narrow grooves. The path that has been chosen must be pursued with great vigour, in order that purity of mind and heart may be developed. When the goal is ever before one, and has become a living reality all that is needful will come of its own accord.

## 2

To be attracted means to become transformed. Whenever you feel drawn to anything, be it a person, an object, or an idea, you have to sacrifice something of yourself. In the exact degree that you give up, so will you receive. This is an axiom of life. To gain everything, without letting go of anything, is never possible for the simple reason that two things cannot at one time occupy one and the same place. That is to say, without sacrifice nothing can be achieved. The more the heart becomes filled with the love of God, the fainter will grow the appetite for material enjoyments. The moment you become charmed and therefore transformed and inspired by Him, your mind will be stilled. True, it is not possible to be fascinated by Him unless His pull is felt from within; yet determined effort and constant alertness are essential. As a business man always keeps himself informed about the market rates, so should one remain ever occupied with thoughts and discourses concerning Him.

## 3

In the midst of limitation, if one line of approach is selected and steady progress made in that, the bonds of limitation will fall away as soon as one becomes fully concentrated on the goal. Then the One will stand revealed as the many, and the many as the One. In order to be blessed with the power to reach Infinity, one must begin by labouring within the finite.

So long as the body has sway, it is necessary to submit to the rules and prohibitions set forth in the Sacred Texts. This requires patience and endurance. Nature although

itself in constant flux, never accords help to a restless wavering pilgrim.

## 4

(This is in verse in Bengali and loses all its charm in a translation. It has therefore been omitted).

## 5

Without experiencing the anguish inherent in the mechanism of life in the world, the desire to become acquainted with the Great Mechanic (*Yantri*)\* Who causes the cosmic machine to revolve does not arise in the human heart. Disease, grief, privations, remorse and the like, are very necessary for man. Just as fire burns away all dross and rubbish, so the three-fold suffering (*tritāpa*)† purges man's heart from all impurity and results in a growing single-mindedness in his search after Truth. When he becomes deeply conscious of his weakness and tormented by the thought of his undesirable impulses and distressing characteristics, when afflictions like poverty, bereavement or humiliation make him feel his life is futile, then and then only does he develop real faith and religious fervour, and becomes anxious to surrender himself at the feet of the Supreme Being. Suffering should therefore be welcomed. Never does the soft moonlight appear more soothing than after the scorching heat of a summer day.

## 6

You all say : "I want to find God, I want to find God". But are you really seeking Him with your whole heart and mind, with your whole being? Just watch and you will see! If you are in dead earnest you are bound to find Him. Do you know by what signs a true seeker can be recognized?

\* Play upon words : *Yantrā* machine and *yantrana* anguish,

† *Tritāpa*—Suffering in all aspects of our being : *adibhautika*, *adidaivika*, *adhyātmika*.

If you pine for Him as a shipwrecked traveller longs for the shore, as a mother yearns for her dead child; if you desire Him with such eagerness you will find that He is with you every second, day and night.

You pray to Him for the good things of this world, and this is why He bestows on you riches, family, friends, position and so on, which make you forget the real treasure. Seek Him solely for His own sake and you will certainly find Him.

## 7

There is nothing in this universe that may be treated with disregard or contempt. He acts His Divine Play in infinite ways, through infinite forms, and in an infinite variety of settings. Without appearing as the many how can this Play be staged? Do you not see how light and darkness, joy and sorrow, fire and water, are inextricably linked together in one unbroken chain? Remember that spiritual endeavour must be coupled with purity of heart. To the extent that we harbour unkind or narrow thoughts, we increase the cause of evil in the world. What necessity is there to pay attention to what others have or have not? Far better be intent on your own improvement. If you can develop inner beauty, and enshrine Him, the ever Beautiful in the glorious temple of your heart, you will then be able to perceive beauty in everything.

## 8

People who come to see me, sometimes say: "I hope my visit is not putting you to any inconvenience?" It is because they wish to keep apart from me that such questions come readily to their lips. Just ask yourself whether this sort of consideration enters your mind when you wish to see your father, mother, brother or sister? You feel at ease in their loving company, and even should your visit cause them some inconvenience, they will not notice it. If you understand that this body is here for you all, such hesitation will not



arise in your mind when you come to me. Wherever you go at any time, go with your whole heart and soul, and nobody will seem as a stranger to you. It is a great joy to see all of you who are manifestations of the One Joy Supreme.

## 9

Since everything in this universe is the creation of the one Great Father, all are kith and kin. Just as the sons and daughters of one large family choose a dozen different professions whereby to earn their livelihood, just as they settle and build homes of their own in a dozen different places, so all human beings, although one in essence, are grouped in various ways and under various denominations, according to the demands of their multifarious lines of activity.

For the cure of the ailing body many systems of medicine exist, such as Allopathy, Homoeopathy, Ayurveda and others. Each person makes use of the method that is best suited to him. Equally, to cure man of the diseased condition that causes the perpetual recurrence of birth and death, there are elaborate prescriptions to be found in the *Śāstras* and many rules and regulations to be learnt directly from sages and saints, yet all have the same purpose. The diverse paths followed by Hindus, Mohammedans, Vaiṣnavites, Saktas etc., all ultimately lead to the threshold of the Eternal.

At the entrance to a railway station, there is much agitation and noise, much pushing and jostling ; but once the correct platform has been reached all confusion ceases for everyone's destination has been settled.

## 10

The Master and the servant, though separate embodiments, are essentially one. When the Master in His infinite mercy, descends into a physical body, He becomes the Servant. Just as there can be no servant without a master, so also the Master is dependent on His servant. Thus there is an eternal mutual relationship between the two, so much so

that the one cannot exist without the other. The Master is the sole object of the servant's self-dedication. On the other hand the Master must rely entirely upon the servant for service. The One Who in His fulness, in His totality is the Master, He Himself when appearing in division becomes the servant ; in other words, the servant is but a partial manifestation of the Master.

You boast so much of doing service. This is just idle talk. The real servants were Hanuman, Garuḍ and others like them, who identified themselves so wholly with their masters that they had no longer independent existences. Complete subjection of oneself in service, is what is required. He who is incapable of unreservedly offering to his Lord, his all, his wealth, family, friends, mind, heart and body, cannot become a servant of the Lord, that is to say he cannot claim to be recognized as His true servant.

## 11

This world may be likened unto a drum, with only one player. The rhythms it gives forth depend on His Will.

When kirtan is performed, have you not noticed how many people dance and sing to the rhythm of the music ? But do any give a thought to the instruments or their players ? Those who in happiness pass their days on this earth, although their happiness is only a tiny fragment of the real Joy, are not interested in knowing Him, the Source of all delight. Seek Him Who is the Fountainhead of everything. This is real *tapasyā*,\* this is real *sādhana*.†

## 12

One often hears people say that while living the life of a householder it is impossible to make spiritual progress. Is this really true ? How many opportunities are offered to a

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\* *Tapasyā*—To undergo hardships with the definite object of attaining to the spiritual.

† *Sādhana*—Any spiritual practice for the purpose of arriving at Self realization.

householder for practising religion in daily life ! Parental affection, the fondness between brothers and sisters, the love between husband and wife, the reverence and devotion of children for their parents, the companionship between relatives and friends, the blessings of dependants and of the poor and suffering, are all potent aids towards a life that ultimately aims at Self-realization. Think it over and you will understand ! Tossed about incessantly between the ordeals and pleasures of family life, the spirit of renunciation sometimes awakens in man together with a desperate yearning for God : Where this is so, the householder has a better chance even than many an anchorite who has left home and family.

## 13

What is the good of saying : "I want to turn my mind to the Eternal, but I am unable to do so." When anyone in your home has just an ordinary illness or indisposition, no matter how preoccupied you may be, you at once consult a doctor and run here and there for remedies ; or if anything goes wrong with your worldly affairs, think of the amount of trouble you take to put it right. But when you find a difficulty in concentrating on God you at once give up, fold your hands in your lap, saying : "I cannot", and wait for His Grace. Does this befit a *Karma Yogin* ? If once you rouse yourself to enthusiasm you will be able to concentrate well enough. You spare no pains to make your body healthy, strong and beautiful ; if you try equally hard to educate your mind, you will see how wholehearted, how fervent your aspiration will grow. Merely to sit down and philosophize will not take you anywhere ; it is necessary to apply theoretical knowledge in practice and to engage in *sādhana*. To be one-pointed in all you do, will of itself teach you the secret of how the goal can be attained through action.

## 14

Restlessness, agitation and the like are certainly objectionable ; yet it is the search for happiness that lies at their

root. Like a child, thoughtlessly flitting here and there, not discriminating between good and evil, the mind ever seeks joy. But the evanescent pleasures of this world that come and go, cannot hold the mind for long. Loving attention and reprimand are both necessary for the education of a child. In a like manner the mind has to be trained. By frequenting the company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth, by harbouring only pure and noble thoughts and emotions, by listening to religious discourses, and by reading books of wisdom, will be provided the right sustenance for the mind, inwardly as well as outwardly. Gradually you will be freed from all worries until at last you find your rest in the Supreme. On the battle field one has to lay stress on the means of self-defence rather than on provocative attack. Similarly one should take special care to keep oneself protected within the entrenchment of discrimination and intelligent reasoning re-inforced by consecrated activities that make the mind God-centred, so that the outer enemy in the form of craving for sense pleasures may not be able to intrude. The mind is its own friend or foe, the mind itself has to destroy its own ignorance. The easiest and most effective means for purging the mind is to associate with saints and seekers after Truth and the ceaseless invocation of God's Name (*Nāma Kīrtana*).

## 15

People seek only outer opportunities and conveniences. They fail to realize that so long as they are merely concerned with success and failure they simply remain on the surface of things. Unless one looks within and without simultaneously, God cannot be found. The body, worldly possessions, one's home and people belong to the external ; meditation on the Self and the endeavour to let one's thinking be permeated by Him are inner processes. To run after physical and mental comforts will only strengthen attachment to external pleasures, and rust will collect inwardly. This is why life after life has to be spent in cleansing the mind from all

accumulated dross and impurity. So long as one cannot make a clean sweep of outer attractions, one should at least aim at directing one's attention within as well, by seeking the Essence of things, and meditating on him, who is Bliss Eternal.

Gradually the glorious moment will come when one's whole being will be united in single-minded contemplation and the inner and outer welded into one.

*(To be continued.)*

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*"God is the breath of life, the Heart of hearts, the Self. To find Him means to find oneself."*

*—Ma Anandamayi*

## A Few Days with Mother

MADAN MOHAN MISRA

The *Dasera* of 1945 (October) will remain memorable in the history of Rai Bareilli. In most towns of the U.P. this festive season witnesses the usual *Rāma Līlā* celebration lasting for nearly a fortnight, culminating on *Dasami* in the burning of the effigy of the demon Ravana. But this year the people of Rai Bareilli had the rare good fortune of having the holy Sri Sri Anandamayi Mata in their midst during the *Dasera* week and also of witnessing the celebration of *Sri Durgā Pūjā* with all due eclat and ceremony, probably for the first time in the history of the town.

I awoke to the fact of the holy Mother's presence in our town by the sight of a large number of her devotees bustling about in the streets day and night, stirring its usual quiet. My curiosity was aroused and I resolved to go and see what was happening.

Arriving at the mango grove in front of "Nain House", I found that a beautifully decorated spacious *shamiana* had been set up and under it the image of the Goddess Durga with her companions and satellites had been installed. It was indeed an impressive sight.

The whole grove was crowded with people of all classes, rich and poor, men, women and children, including visitors of high social status from different towns—judges, lawyers, doctors, all agog with excitement and eager for the *darśana* of Mother. Motorcars, buggies, tongas thronged the place as in a *melā* or exhibition. A group of *pūjārīs* were reciting the *Sapta Sati Durgā Pātha*. The whole place throbbed and hummed with life and activity of various kinds. The melodious chanting, the perfumed smoke of incense and the hubbub of the people gathered there, filled the atmosphere and infused even in the most matter-

of-fact person a spirit of devotion and enthusiasm. But the attention of the beholders irresistibly moved between two poles of attraction. On the one side there was the splendour of the artistic image enhanced by all the accessories of *pūjā*, flowers, incense, blowing of conches, and so forth, and on the other, the glory of that real and living figure, holy Ma Anandamayi. People were seen rustling towards both with eager steps.

I approached the tent where Mother was seated surrounded by a respectful crowd of men and women. Mother favoured me with her characteristic affectionate glance. I felt I also was an unwor'hy son of hers. It is quite possible that every beholder of Mother who believed in her had a similar idea. The universal motherhood of Mother was amazing in its effect. The mere sight of Mother with her radiant face with its hālo of eternal bliss and her sweet speech made the heart throb with immense joy and created faith in the Divine.

A desire was aroused in my heart to invite Mother to my house and to worship her there with all ceremony. But I was informed that she did not go to the houses of *grihas-thas* (householders). I did not feel much disappointment at this, because I had the firm conviction that if my faith was genuine, Mother would fulfil my wish somehow or other.

The readers will be surprised to know that the very next day the silent prayer of my heart was mysteriously acknowledged and granted by Mother. She came to my place of her own accord, not inside the house but into the compound. My joy knew no bounds. My wife and children were happy beyond measure. I realized what a special favour Mother had done me by this gracious visit of hers.

The Puja took its due course. For these few days joy and devotion flowed in the hearts of the people assembled as it had never done before. When the Puja was over,

Mother departed from the town and with her departure there was an exit of visitors who had flocked with her. Now the town wore a deserted look very noticeable by contrast.

After a few days, hearing that Mother had gone to Vindhyachal, I decided to pay a visit to her during *Divali*, though it was difficult for me to leave my family at the time. But the only figure that was enshrined in my heart now was that of Mother. I came to have a firm believe that if there can be incarnations of God, Ma Anandamayi was surely one of them.

When I reached the Vindhyachal Ashram, I found Mother surrounded by devotees watching approaching visitors from the upper storey. They were trying to guess the identity of the new arrivals from a distance. Rai Bahadur Satish Chandra Gupta, Government Pleader from Mymensingh, was mentioning my name as a probable visitor when I reached the place. I approached Mother and prostrated myself at her feet with a feeling of great happiness. Mother asked me to rise and seated me near her with great affection. I felt I had become free from all bonds and attachments. My time there passed very happily. I went and saw some ancient temples in the neighbourhood, such as *Asta Bhūja Devi*, *Kali Gufa*, *Sitakunda* etc.

I heard that Mother was going to Benares soon. We too all went there by train. I very much liked the Benares Ashram, a fine three storied building on the banks of the Ganges and I experienced there a happiness that I had never felt elsewhere. I lodged myself on the uppermost floor in a room adjacent to Mother's. But I was asked by a devotee to move down and occupy a room on the lower floor along with others. I obeyed reluctantly disliking the idea of being far away from Mother. Late at night, Sri Gurupriya Didi came to me saying that Mother wanted me to stay in the room upstairs from where I had brought down my bedding. Needless to say I was overjoyed not only at



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the prospect of being near Mother but also at this new token of Mother's kindness and affection.

Next day I payed a visit to *Viśvanātha* temple. Although I had been there several times before, yet everything seemed to pass so smoothly and I met with such facility at every step that I could not help noticing it and attributed it to the kind protection of Mother. While returning I bought a garland and worshipped and garlanded her to my heart's content. Even the fact that Mother retained my garland for some time filled me with a childish satisfaction.

The idea of returning home appeared unbearable but I was compelled by circumstances to do so. When I took leave of Mother, she said : "Go and come again some time !" As I put a garland on her and prostrated myself at her feet prior to my departure, she put her hand on my back and blessed me, saying : "*Nārāyaṇa.*" Mother then asked Didi to give me something to eat before I started. I was served food with great affection by several sisters as if I were actually a member of their own family and then given a send off. All this took quite a long time and I was afraid I might miss the train but on reaching the station I learnt that the train was late by an hour. My journey home was unexpectedly very comfortable in spite of the great rush.

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**Ya-Ta !**

**RAMANUJAM**

**This verily is That  
In the fire of this realization  
In the power of this incantation  
Dwells that Mystic Anandamayi  
Dwells the Maiden of the Ganges**

**Om maha prajna paramita  
Om maha prajna paramita  
Om maha prajna paramita**

**In the drum-beats of the pulse  
In the silence of the heart  
Upon the seat of Space uncumbered  
Upon the breath of Time unnumbered  
Dances the Mystic Anandamayi  
Dances the Rapturous Anandamayi**

**Om maha prajna paramita  
Om maha prajna paramita  
Om maha prajna paramita**

**Within the blue of inward skies  
Within the Void in the blue  
Within the lighting in the Void  
Shines the Mystic Anandamayi  
Smiles the Mystic Anandamayi**

**Om maha prajna paramita  
Om maha prajna paramita  
Om maha prajna paramita**

**In the darkness of a secret  
In the light of revelations  
In the waking of a doubt**

In the slaking of a thirst  
 Weaving in and weaving out  
 Threads the Mystic Anandamayi  
 The loom of the Mystic Anandamayi

Om maha prajna paramita  
 Om maha prajna paramita  
 Om maha prajna paramita

In the beauty of an upraised skull  
 In the grace of a curving sword  
 In Feet that beat a rhythm  
 In the resounding ashes of creation  
 Is the laughter of Anandamayi  
 The laughter of the Mystic Anandamayi

Om maha prajna paramita  
 Om maha prajna paramita  
 Om maha prajna paramita

*Varanasi, Feb. 3, 1970.*

## Self—Surrender\*

SWAMI PARAMANANDA PURI

[Srimat Swami Paramananda, who was the youngest of the disciples of Swami Vivekananda and received *sannyāsa* from the great Swamiji in 1900 at the age of eighteen, was highly regarded and deeply cherished by the great disciples of Paramahansa Sri Ramkrishna. Swami Brahmananda called him affectionately *Basanta Kokil*, Spring Bird, for the joyousness of his spirit which always brought such blessing to those around him. Swami Ramakrishnananda, personal attendant to Sri Ramakrishna and himself a great teacher, said of him : "Paramananda lived with me for five years, in daily, hourly contact, and I was never able to find a single fault in him."

In 1906, while still a very young man, Swami Paramananda sailed for the U.S.A. where in time he founded the Vedanta Centre of Boston and the Ananda Ashrama in the mountains of Southern California, bringing, in his own radiant way, the light of Vedanta, the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna to the west. Led today by Mata Gayatri Devi, his community, now sixty years old, still strives to live by the great ideals of devotion and service with which he infused it and into which he poured his heart and soul.

At his passing in 1940, Swami Virajananda, then President of the Ramakrishna Mission, said of him, ".....radiant with spiritual wisdom, he moved among men as a little child of the Divine Mother." The truth of these words is more than evident in the following pages—reprinted here with the kind permission of Mata Gayatri Devi. Aflame with his illumined devotion and his earnest yearning that his spiritual children should learn to lay themselves at the Feet of the Mother in complete, unreserved dedication, they cannot help but bring inspiration and renewed consecration to all bhaktas].

The true devotee is always conscious of the power that works through him. Otherwise he is nothing ; he does not want to be anything independent of that Divine Power. He knows that the Mother does Her own work, that he has no

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\* from "The Path of Devotion", Boston, 1940; available from Ananda Ashrama, P.O. Box 555, La Crescenta, Calif. U.S.A. and Ananda Ashrama 1, Naktala, Calcutta 40.

right to take any credit or blame upon himself. Everything is all right as long as we do not forget Her. Egotism makes us forget Her ; It is our worst enemy. So we must fight and kill it. Let us pray that we may do a little service to Her children, remaining always a true instrument in Her hands. Otherwise this life has no value. We have only the right to live a true and pure life and serve, as much as we can, all Her children.

Sometimes the task appears very hard, as if there were no way out of it. But nothing can remain permanent in this world ; the clouds vanish and again life becomes hopeful. We must therefore stand like a rock under all circumstances. Let everything come and go, but try to remain always unmoved. Be bold and face the truth. If you have an Ideal, give your life for the realization of it. We must sacrifice our lives for our Ideal. That is the only way to worship the Ideal. Not weakness, not hypocrisy, but sincere love and strength will make us worship Him truly.

Move on and do not look back to see what happens to anyone. Thousands like me may die at this moment, but that will not do any harm to this vast world. Truth is deathless and That will shine forever. Worship the truth and die for it. Remember always that the present life is the result of past thoughts and deeds; the future is going to be according to the present. So our future depends entirely upon us. The past will be washed off by the present life.

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That which has been offered to the Ideal, at the feet of the Master, we have no right to use for our personal satisfaction or happiness. He who has truly given his life, soul and body, to the service of the Master must not think of his own will, but should sacrifice his own will at the command of the Master. This is called true self-sacrifice. Otherwise, as long as we can fulfill our own desires by serving the Master, we serve him ; but the moment it interferes with

our selfishness, we do not ; this is not self-resignation. On the contrary, it is mean selfishness. One must be bold and determined enough to conquer this unworthy weakness and must use the power of discrimination.

The path of renunciation is very hard. Complete self-surrender at the feet of the Master is a very hard thing but without that, spiritual growth is impossible. The disciple should always be ready to go to the mouth of a cannon or before a tiger at the command of the Master without asking why. This is what is called true devotion.

Another thing necessary is to have no attachment for earthly things. The mind must be free from lust and greed. "He who, even here, before he is separated from the body, can resist the force of lust and anger, that man is really wakeful, that man is happy." Try to realize this and you will be free at once. Crush down egotism and say, "I am lower than even a blade of grass." Then you will see that all impurities will vanish, you will become divine. Then you will have the right to take the Blessed Name of the Lord. Egotism stands between us and the Lord, our true Self ; so destroy it and say, "Not I, but Thou." Bring out the real strength and destroy all weakness. Know that *Atman* (the true Self) is never realized by a weak person.

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Let us therefore conquer all weakness. People take advantage when we are weak. We must know how to preserve our dignity, especially when we are among people of the world. We must "hiss" in order to protect ourselves from the wicked, but we must never try to do any actual harm. When we try to do harm we drop to the level of the evil-doers whom we oppose, and really hurt ourselves. In order to remain true to our principle, however, we must sometimes show a spirit of resistance in the form of a hiss, but never should we be actuated by a desire to injure anyone.

Stand like a rock in your faith and devotion and let

the Divine Mother hold your hand. When we hold Her hand there is some danger of our loosening our hold, but when She holds there is no more fear of falling down. So we must make ourselves free from every danger by always trusting in Her Divine Will. Do not allow any other thing but Herself to occupy our pure heart. Do not be depressed by any foolish thought, fear, or anxiety. Know that nothing is impossible for Her. Have intense faith and feel free.

Let Her will be done in everything, then all must come right. We must not question why or what, but must follow Her will patiently and quietly. If misery comes, accept it as a blessing from Mother. Who knows in which way She forms our characters. One thing we should always remember, that worldliness and holiness are two different things. If one goes towards the north, the other goes towards the south. So you cannot expect justice from the world.

We must be bold, strong and fearless in our every action. When miseries or difficulties come, say : "All right, come on," and stand up like a hero. They will run away from you at once; that is the only way to conquer them. Be bold. Be bold and fearless. Even one word of boldness brings strength ; so try to keep your mind bold and cheerful.

It is a great and unselfish work to be happy, strong and cheerful for the sake of your ideal. By working with such unselfishness you will gain every day more and more purity and strength. But this can be done only through constant thought of the Ideal and earnest prayer. The Mother will not fail to fulfill the prayers which are said from the heart with unselfishness. She will always protect you and give strength and guide you. Will She make you unhappy when you try to serve Her always with your whole heart and soul ? She will not, for She is an ocean of mercy and cannot make Her children unhappy. No fear, if any misery comes, Her heart will always be ready to share it with you.

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Then why so often do our prayers remain unanswered, you ask? We cannot know. We are only children. We should not wish to know much. She knows, the Divine Mother knows. This is Her world. She will take care of Her children. We should hold the thought, "I am only a child, a simple child; I am the servant of all Her children." There is some happiness in serving Her children unselfishly, so let us always try to serve them. But here also we find difficulty because we do not know what real service means. Out of our foolishness we hurt those whom we intend to serve. In this way we make mistakes and cause unhappiness to others. Life is very hard without the power of proper understanding.

But still let us try to depend upon Her entirely. Although clouds sometimes gather so darkly about us, we must stand and be patient. Let us walk on steadily without being afraid of anything. Never mind the results. Know that good will always produce good, it cannot be otherwise. It may not show outwardly; still, this is the only true and desirable path to follow.

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Her Divine Will, we are all guided by Her Will. Let us fully depend upon Her and say sincerely, "Let Thy Will be done." We remember this, yet sometimes a little sense of anxiety comes into the mind. But we must shake it off. We must live here boldly, have purity and strength of character, then face everything fearlessly, all the difficulties and dangers. Whom to fear? We are children of Divine Mother; our Mother is the Ruler of the universe, the whole world belongs to us. Have that kind of life-giving faith.

Bring out the life, the strength, the purity and unselfish love which you possess within yourself; they are your birth-right. Come up, come up bravely. There is no death for you. Throw off all impurities; old superstitions. They do not belong and never belonged to you. Know that you are free,



free from all bondage. The little feelings of jealousy, hatred, envy, name, fame, are all mere superstitions. What are you to do with them? Drown them all in the ocean of wisdom without having any mercy. Do it quickly and realize that you are free. Free! Wherever you go, you are free. No more bondage! No more fear! Let fools talk nonsense. Pity them, they do not know any better. Move on and never look back to see what is going on behind you. Let them talk, let them do whatever they want. Say nothing, but walk on silently and steadily.

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O Mother, everything is done by Thy will. Not I, not I.

This is true wisdom. One becomes free after realizing this. Vanity is ruinous, is the worst enemy of mankind. Kill it, kill it forever. Then will shine the sun of wisdom. Think, "Who am I? Why should I quarrel or dispute with anyone? I am a child of God. I am free from praise, blame, sorrow, misery, pleasure, pain." That is freedom. Only foolish people wish to be regarded as great by others, try to get praise from others. If they do not get it, they are unhappy and miserable. Nonsense! Do you care for such nonsense? A foolish play of five minutes. What is the reality in this world? We must use the power of discrimination. No use in living like slaves.

Why should we be guided by our senses and desires? We have plenty of work before us. The work is hard, but it must be done. It must be worked out before we can be free. If we neglect it or do not do it out of fear, then it will take more lives and cause more suffering. Through the blessings of the Lord the path lies open. Walk steadily, being fearless and cheerful. It is a very hard task to carry a burden, and still harder for the one who removes it. How can one repay this debt? Only by living a pure and true life according to his teachings. There is no other way,

there is no other way. Material help and service are nothing.

Cast off all slothfulness, therefore, and move on. Know that you are not the body, you are not matter, but you are Spirit, the pure, divine, holy and spotless soul. Hold this great ideal always in your mind ; then nothing will ever dare to disturb your peace.

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Mother will always protect you. Without Her grace no one can do any good work. Let us not forget that, then we shall always be on the safe side. Man is in danger when he forgets his Mother and runs after earthly things, regarding them as great and substantial. It is through Her grace that one gets light and non-attachment to worldly pleasures. Let us sing Her Divine glory as long as we live. Never mind whether we are in happiness or in the midst of misery. Let us be absorbed in Her thoughts ; let us become mad in Her divine love. The world will at once drop off from our minds naturally. What is there in human praise or blame, love or hatred, jealousy and other narrow things of the world ? Let us forget everything and worship Her and Her alone with all our heart's love and devotion.

Mother will scatter all around us peace and blessings. We are Her loving children and She will never fail in giving Her motherly care. The waves come and go, the waves of pleasure and pain ; they are very good for our spiritual growth. Stand firm. Let everything come and go, but stand like a rock and have always faith in yourself and in your Ideal. It is through faith and self-surrender that one realizes the truth, and never through useless arguments or power of human intellect.

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Human friends and foes are nothing. Mother is everything. She is all in all. Every moment must be spent in Her worship ; all else is false, whether good or bad, all illusion,

*māyā*, ignorance. Truth is one without a second, and it is She. She is the foundation of the whole universe. Without Her Will nothing can be done. She is our Mother, Mother of all. When Mother is near no evil can touch us. Have faith, strength and courage. Know that Mother can make everything possible. No one can harm him who takes shelter at Her Divine feet. A fearless child he becomes.

Pray to Mother and take shelter at Her feet sincerely, then fear, care and all weakening thoughts will cease to exist. Say "*Jai Ma Anandamayi*," "All-Blissful Mother, victory to Thee!" Repeat it with force, all evil will vanish. She is the only destroyer of evil and She is ever the Protector of Her good and innocent little children, who know none but Mother. What else is there in this world to talk of? Everything is useless and unreal except the glory of Divine Mother, who is the source of our existence, the source of eternal peace and bliss.

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Let us always rest in peace in Her arms. Mother knows best how to take care of Her child. There is no fear for a little child so long as he is in his Mother's arms. She is all in all, one without a second. Whom shall we worship if we do not worship her Divine blessed feet? Let the rest go. Let all other things drop from our minds. Where will evil exist then? Where will be fear or care or anxiety to disturb us when every room of our hearts is occupied by Her?

You know that beautiful song in which it is said that in this world he is supremely blissful who knows the Supreme Blissful Mother. Ceremonies and rituals are nothing to him. He does not go on pilgrimage to purify himself; he does not even hear any other word than the name of All-Blissful Mother, and does not believe in anything except the will of the Divine Mother. In this way he who has made the Mother's feet all in all, forgets the world very easily and naturally, and he alone will reach the other side of the ocean

of *samsāra*. There cannot be any fear for him. He does not listen to the praise or blame of the world, but he remains ever intoxicated by drinking the nectar of the Mother's name.

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Mother is the goal. She is the only place of rest and peace. Pray to Her. Pray to Her and think of Her and Her alone. She is the real protection. She is the source of all happiness and bliss. Let us dive deep in the ocean of Her divine love and be mad. This world will drop off from our minds at once. Everything that is unworthy of Her will be forgotten in a minute. "*Jai Ma Anandamayi.*" All fear will vanish, everything will become blissful in Her presence.

Pray to Her like a little child and She will protect you. We are all Her children. Why should we fear anything? Mother will take care of us. Our duty is not to forget Her in the turmoil of this miserable world. What else can I say except that we must worship the Mother Divine always, under all circumstances; that is all one must do in this life. There is no higher or greater duty than this.

Pray to Her, "O Mother! give me true love at Thy feet. I do not want anything else. Take everything else from me, only give me pure love at Thy feet." Pray day and night, and weep for pure devotion and pure love. This is called true worship. Be absorbed in this grand worship; then the world will slip away from you and you will always live in peace and bliss.

Remember that everything is done through Her Will. She can do whatever She likes. She can make the most impossible possible. Who knows Her glory? Who can sing Her glory? Ours is to give up all egotism and say, "*Nāham! Nāham? Tuhu! Tuhu!*" "Not I, Mother, not I. It is all Thou." Give me only true love at Thy feet, so that I may never forget Thee. O Mother! Thy name is so sweet; give me intense love and faith in Thy name. Mother, O Mother, take

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me in Thy arms. I do not want to stay here ; this is not my home. Thou art my home, my refuge ; Oh let me come to Thee ! Thy work must be done. Let me do it truly and faithfully, with unselfishness and purity. Let Thy will be done ! Give us strength and give us light, and may we say truly and sincerely, "Let Thy will be done."

"Mother, grant unto us peace and blessings."

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FOR THE DEVOTEE WHO MAY HAVE SEEN  
ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS OF  
MA ANANDAMAYI

ELWOOD DECKER

You have the memory of a Goddess  
With Infinite Power to Save and Bless,

By Her generous, motherly Grace  
You have seen Her compassionate face.

For you the *Sahara* of sense life  
May become wonderfully free from strife.

Like wearing in a ring on your hand  
A colorful grain of its gleaming sand.

Her Eternal Bliss you will always find  
By keeping Her memory first in mind.

MA

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## Sri Sri Muktananda Giri Maharaj

SWAMI BHAGAVATANANDA GIRI

(Continued from the last issue)

I had put some questions to Sri Giriji, now I shall try to give the answers I received.

**Question :** Please tell us some of your experiences regarding MA.

**Giriji :** Arrangements were once made for Kālīpūjā at Shahbag, Dacca ; your 'MA' was to perform the *Pūjā*. Mataji first offered sindur to Kali and recited verses in her praise, then she sat down and began the *pūjā*. After offering some flowers her *bhāva* underwent a change and she told Bholanath to put some flowers in her hand. After receiving the flowers she tried to offer them to Kali with her left hand but being unable to do so, she said to Bholanath : "You perform the *pūjā* and I shall sit." Saying this she sat down to the left of Kali with a smile on her face. When about to start the *pūjā*, Bholanath, observing the strange *bhāva* of Mataji, asked all those present to close their eyes. Everyone complied except the gardener's wife, who was standing at a distance outside. Mataji said : "Sukhadia (the *malin*) is still gazing." Sukhadia was then asked to either close her eyes or to leave the place ; so she left. We opened our eyes when Bholanath started performing the *pūjā*. It was learnt later that the covering garment had slipped. As soon as the *pūjā* was over I went out to get the *pūrnapātra*. As I was going to the other room someone exclaimed : "Look at MA !" When I went back and saw Mataji, I discovered that her face had assumed a bluish hue and the elongated tongue was hanging out. I saw at a glance this changed appearance of Mataji and turned away.

**Question :** Why did you turn away ? Were you overcome by awe ?

*Giriji* : I cannot now say why I did so. People at that time were overwhelmed by this appearance of your MA. When they quietened down I went to sit in the *pūjā* room.

*Question* : It is said that you had gone to offer *pushpānjali* at the feet of MA, but you came away without doing so. Why did you not make the offering ?

*Giriji* : Yes, at the time of making the offering the idea did occur to my mind to do so at the feet of Mātāji : But as I picked up the flowers and the bilva leaves in my hand, I thought : 'How can I make the offering to my own daughter ?' So I offered the same handful of flowers and the bilva leaves to Kali.

"When your MA and Bholanath had sat down for their meal, MA pointed to me. She then asked someone to inquire from me to whom I wanted to make the offering. I replied : "I had thought of offering the *anjali* to you but then I made the offering to Kali."

It is recorded in the Bhāgavata Purāna that the feeling of divinity slightly replaced the maternal affection in mother Yashoda when Lord Krishna showed her the vision of the entire universe in his mouth. Lord Krishna immediately covered the momentary enlightenment by the veil of *Vaiṣṇavī Māyā*. Similarly MA put our Giriji also under the spell of *māyā* when she was about to offer the *pushpānjali* to her. Consequently Giriji offered the *anjali* to Kali.

In 1936, Mamū was working in Calcutta. At that time Didima and Dada *Mahāsaya* were living at Kalighat in a rented house. It was realized here later that Dada *Mahāsaya*'s days were numbered. At that time Mātāji was on her way to Kashi via Burdwan. It is said that she had told the late Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj to go to Dada *Mahāsaya* and initiate him into *sannyāsa*. Swamiji thought that he should first see Mātāji off to Kashi and then leave by the next train for Calcutta. When Mātāji had told Swamiji to go, there was an earlier train for Calcutta. If Swamiji had left by that train he would have reached Calcutta in time for the

initiation of Dada *Mahāsaya* into *sannyāsa*. But as he arrived at Calcutta by the next train he found that Dada *Mahāsaya* had already breathed his last. Till the last moment Dada *Mahāsaya* was fully conscious and kept on repeating his *Iṣṭa-mantra*. It was learnt later that as Swami Akhandanandaji failed to reach in time, Mataji herself appeared in her astral form before Dada *Mahāsaya*. He thus attained *moksha*. Mataji is reported to have said: "The father of this body has become one with this body"

A year after this Didima got Mamu married.

Mataji, Didima and Bholanathji, accompanied by some devotees, had gone to Hardwar in 1938, on the occasion of *Purna Kumbha*. Mataji stayed there in the house of late Dr. Pitambar Pant. The well known revered saint Swami Mangal Giriji Maharaj was then staying at Kankhal. On the 13th of April, 1938, on the sacred occasion of '*Pūrṇa Kumbha*' and the auspicious day of *Mahavishuva Samkranti*, the revered Guru Sri Mangal Giriji Maharaj initiated Didima into *sannyāsa* and conferred the new name Swami Muktananda Giri on her. Swami Mangal Giriji Maharaj normally did not initiate any woman. Women were not even allowed to stay in his Ashram at Kankhal, but he had made an exception in the case of Mataji. He had initiated Didima into *sannyāsa* as the mother of Sri Anandamayī Ma. He had also given the *sannyāsa* mantra to Didima in the same way as it is given to a male Brahmin.

Swami Vidyanāya has laid down in '*Jivan-muktiviveka*' that women are also entitled to *sannyāsa*. Bhishma, while narrating the dialouge between Sulabha and Janaka during his discourse on *moksha-dharma* in the Mahabharata referred to Sulabha as well-grounded in Yoga and wandering about like a mendicant.\* Nilakantha the well known commentator of the Mahabharata has explained the term *Bhikshukī* as implying the right of women for *sannyāsa* either if un-

\* Atha dharma-yuge tasmin yoga-dharmamanushṭhitā.

mahīmanuchachgrāikā Sulabhā nāma bhikshukī.



married or after widowhood. The duties of a *sannyāsini* are enumerated as begging, listening to discourses on *moksha*, quiet contemplation and the carrying of *tridaṇḍa*.

The scriptures give the following ten attributes for one who has attained spiritual knowledge :—Absence of anger, complete detachment, control over the senses, forgiveness, liberality, compassion, freedom from all temptation, freedom from fear and sorrow.<sup>1</sup> All these characteristics, natural to Giriji since early childhood, entitled her to *sannyāsa* in every way. Treatises on Vedanta classify *paramahansa sannyāsa* in two ways. Firstly, one who desires to attain Knowledge and secondly one who has attained Knowledge. The former embraces *sannyāsa* with the desire to know the Supreme Reality. It is therefore called *jijñāsa* or *vividisa sannyāsa*. It is mentioned in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that a completely detached person takes to *sannyāsa* with a desire for *ātma-loka* (*ātma-jñāna*).<sup>2</sup>

The *lokas* (worlds) are of two kinds 'ātma' and 'anātma'. The latter again is of three kinds : the world of men, the world of the manes (fore-fathers), and the world of the gods. One can master the world of men by begetting a son, the world of the manes by good deeds, and the world of the gods by learning. But a *sannyāsi* should try to attain the knowledge of the Self only<sup>3</sup> as there can be no salvation without<sup>4</sup> it. A *jijñāsu paramahansa* therefore should continuously strive to attain the knowledge of Brahman by practicing *sama*, *dama* etc.<sup>5</sup> Swami Vidyaranya has described in detail

1. akrodha-valrāgya-jitendriyatvam kshamaṁ dayaṁ sarva-jana-priyatvam.  
nirlobha-dānam bhaya-sokabhānam jñānasya chinham dasa laksha nam cha.
2. etameva pravrajino lokam ichchhantah pravrajanti.
3. ātmānameva lokamupāsita.
4. rite jñānāna muktiḥ.
5. brahma-vijnāna-labhya brahmahansa-(paramahansa) samah-vayah  
santi dāntyaḍibhiḥ sarvaiḥ sadhanaiḥ sahito bhavet.

these two types of *sannyāsa* in 'Jivan-mukti-viveka'. *Vividisa sannyāsa* is so called as it is brought about by the yearning Knowledge, which in turn is intensified by good deeds like for the study of the Vedas etc. either in this birth or in previous ones.

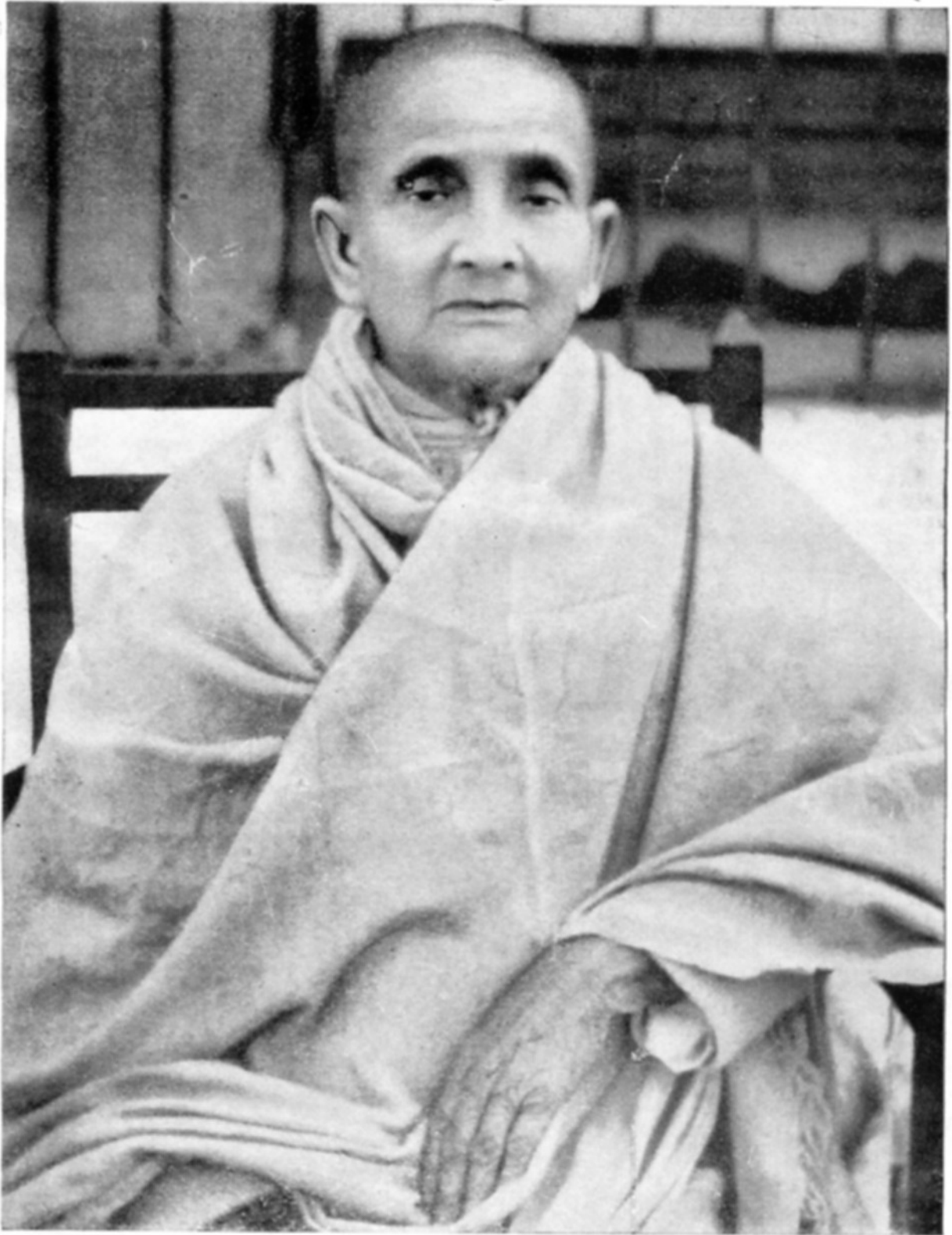
The second classification of *paramahansa* is *jñānavān* or *vidvat sannyāsa*. *Vividisa sannyāsa* is taken for acquiring spiritual knowledge while *vidvat sannyāsa* represents the stage after the attainment of the knowledge of the Self. One who has attained this knowledge forsakes all the bonds of this world and remains engrossed in Supreme Bliss. The sage Yajnavalkya belonged to this category. When he had realized the Self, he told his wife Maitreyi. "I shall now renounce the world." This appears to apply to Giriji too. One finds all the indications of knowledge in her from her very childhood. She took to *sannyāsa* at the appropriate time, that is the moment the knowledge of Brahman was acquired<sup>1</sup>.

One, who thus renouncing the world, leads a completely detached life, unaffected by worldly joys and sorrows and remains immersed in Supreme Bliss is called '*jivan-mukta*', that is liberated while still alive. The cessation of all apprehension by the removal of the idea of doer and enjoyer in a *vidvat sannyāsi*, who has directly apprehended Brahman is called the state of *jivan mukti*.

A *jivan-mukta* has also been variously described in the scriptures as firm in judgement (*sthita-prajña*), full of devotion (*bhakti*), beyond the three *guṇas* (*guṇātīta*), beyond the pale of society (*ati-varṇāśrama*). The sage Vasishṭha states in the 'Yoga-Vāsishṭha Rāmāyaṇa' that the liberation, while living, is attained by one who renouncing all actions, listens to the scriptures and the teaching of the Guru.<sup>2</sup>

1. jñatvā samyak param brahma sarvam tyaktvā parivrajat.

2. nṛṇaṃ jñānaikanishṭhānaṃ atma-jñāna-vichariṇaṃ.  
sā jivan-muktatodeti videhānmuktateti va



*Swami Muktananda Giri Maharaj—  
Mataji's mother, who has just completed 93 years,*

In addition to this he also strives for the knowledge of the Self through contemplation and meditation. A *jīvan-mukta* is one who though apparently carrying on worldly activities looks at the world as non-existent and sees everywhere only the Brahman.<sup>1</sup>

The description of *sthita-prajña* in the Gita is also applicable to a *jīvan-mukta*. A *jīvan-mukta* is variously described in the Upanishads, the Smṛitis and the Purāṇas. The life of our most revered Gurudeva Sri Giriji is also that of a *jīvan-mukta*. She is all the time immersed in the contemplation of the Self. Though carrying on ordinary activities, she is constantly engrossed in the meditation of Brahman. On February 14th, 1963 at Delhi, Mataji said about Giriji :—“Japa of the *sannyāsa* mantra is going on incessantly within Giriji.”

We had all gone to Jodhpur with Mataji in early February. Giriji was then at our Aśrama at Kankhal (Hardwar). On the night of February 10th, 1963 at 2.30 a.m. Giriji had an urge to discard her physical body. She sat on her *āsana* and had a divine *darśana* which lasted the whole night.

This incident has already been narrated in great detail by Swami Śivānanda Maharaj in ‘Ananda Vārtā’ of February 1964, hence I am not repeating the details here. Mataji, who was then at Jodhpur, appeared before Giriji in her astral form and dissuaded her from her resolve. Giriji then asked Mataji, “I have crossed this ocean of life and reached the goal, but what will you do for those who are standing on the bank ?” The boatman repeated three times : “Yes, certainly I shall bring them across.”

Giriji once experienced *mahā-bhāva* which was followed by the spontaneous exclamation: “How can I have salvation before everyone is liberated !” Animals, birds,

1. yathā-sthitam idaṃ yasya buddhya vyavahratospī cha.  
astam gataṃ sthitam vyoma sa jīvan-mukta uchyate.

insects, trees, creepers none should suffer the agony of birth and death !” What a wonderful notion ! Lord Buddha is believed to have expressed similar feelings of compassion on attaining Enlightenment.

It is not possible to attain Self-realization without the Guru’s Grace.<sup>1</sup> Let us all pray at the lotus feet of the most revered Gurudeva Sri Giriji Maharaj and the most compassionate Ma, “Bless us, so that we may attain the Lord and realize the Self. This is the one and only prayer.”

*Jai Guru ! Jai Ma !!!*

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1. durlabho vishaya-tyago durlabham tattva-darśanam.  
durlabhaḥ saha-javasthā sad-guroḥ karuṇām viṅś.

# Sacred Places of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladhak

A DEVOTEE

S H A Y

निन्दसि यज्ञविधैरहह जूतिजा तम्  
सदयहृदयदर्शितपशुवा तम् ।  
केशव धृतबुद्धशरीर  
जय जगदोश हरे ॥ \*

[Seeing animals killed for sacrifices, Thy heart was full of compassion. Thou then spakest ill of the teachings of the Vedas regarding sacrifices. O Keshava! Thou incarnated as Buddha. Glory be to Thee. O Lord of the world, Thou who takest away all sin and sorrow, glory to Thee].

Shay is a village on the right bank of the Indus river situated at a distance of about eleven kilometers north of Leh in the Ladhak area of Kashmir.

There is an ancient Buddhist monastery at Shay.

S H E S H N A G

तत्रैकस्यन्किलोद्याने स्वच्छस्वादुजला चितम् ।  
आसीत्सुशर्वा नाम्नां नागस्य वसतिः सरः ॥ \*\*

(There, in a grove in a pond of limpid and sweet water, was the habitation of a Naga called Sushravas).

Shesh Nāg is a mountain lake situated between three high peaks at a height of about 11,700 feet above sea level. It is on the way to the cave-shrine of Amarnath at a distance of about twenty-one kilometers from Pahalgam. The lake is about one and a half kilometers long and about one kilometer wide. It is connected with a small lake called Zāmti Nāg, which is fed by a large glacier situated under the three remarkable peaks mentioned above. The

\* Dashavatāra stotram by Sri Jayadeva.

\*\* The Rājatarangini, first Taranga, verse -203.

lake remains frozen from the middle of December to the beginning of June. It is regarded as very holy in Kashmir. At a distance of about three kilometers south-west of Shesh Nāg there is another small lake called Sonasar Nāg, also regarded as very holy. The history of Shesh Nag as narrated by Kalhana in the Rajatarangini is given below :

King Nara founded a very beautiful city named Kinnarapura. A Nag named Sushravas lived with his two beautiful daughters in a pond near a spring in the main garden of the city. One day a poor young Brahmin named Vaishakha came to rest in a grove near the pond. When he was about to have his meal that he had brought with him, he saw two lovely maidens dressed in blue robes emerging from the spring. They were hungrily eating the pods of fresh green grass. On seeing this, he, full of pity, asked them who they were and why they were eating such inedible things. One of the beautiful maidens replied that they were the daughters of Nag Sushravas. As to the cause of their poverty she asked him to inquire from their father. Vaishakha would be able to recognize him by his hair-tuft dripping with water when on the twelfth day of the dark half of Jyaishta (May-June) he would be visiting the sacred spring of Takshaka Nāg. Accordingly, Vaishākha went to the spring\* of Takshaka on the specified date. He met the father of the maidens and came to know from him that though they were entitled to get a share of the rich crops growing in the surrounding fields of the city, yet they could take them only after the field-guard would partake of the new harvest. Since the field-guard had sworn not to take a single grain of the fresh crop, they were unable to get anything and therefore had no grains to eat. Vaishakha was overcome by pity for them. One day he stealthily put some fresh corn into the cooking pot of the field-guard. As soon as the field-guard had unknowingly eaten the food, the Nāga carried away, through thunder and storm, the rich har-

\* This spring is at Zewan, eleven kilometers south-east of Srinagar.

vest from the fields around Kinnarapura. Out of gratitude, he gave one of his beautiful daughters to Vaishākha in marriage. Vaishakha and his wife lived happily in the city but unfortunately the king Nara came to know about the beauty of Vaishakha's wife and tried to win her for himself. In great fear the helpless husband and wife jumped into the pond where Nag Sushravas lived. When Nag came to know about all that had happened, he full of anger, launched thunder-storms and torrential rain which destroyed the beautiful city of Kinnarapura, its King and people. He with his daughters and Vaishakha then left the ruined city and created for their residence the beautiful lake of Shesh Nag on the high mountains. Kalhana concludes his legend by telling the following verse :

दुग्धाब्धिघवलं तेन सरो दूरगिरी कृतम् ।  
अमरेश्वरयात्रायां जनैरथापि दृश्यते ॥\*

[ A lake, which is as white as the ocean of milk, was created by him on a distant mountain. It is seen even to-day by the people on their way to the pilgrimage of Amareshwara (Amarnath). ]

### SINTHAN

ये नाचैयिन्ति गिरिशं समये प्रदोषे  
ये नाचितं शिवमपि प्रणमन्ति चान्ये ।  
एतत्कथां श्रुतिपुटैर्न पिवन्ति भूढास्ते  
जन्मजन्मसु भवन्ति नरा दरिद्राः ॥

[ Those men, who do not at even-tide worship Siva, the mountain-dweller, those who do not bow in reverence to Siva when others are worshipping him and those who do not listen with eagerness to the glory of Siva, become poor, life after life ].

Sinthan village is at a distance of about twenty kilometers east of Bandipura which is on the north-eastern bank of the Wular Lake.

\* The Rajatarangini, first Taranga, verse—220.



There is an ancient cave-shrine of Siva in the north of the village. The Siva-Linga is said to have manifested spontaneously and is therefore called *Swayambhu*. Above the Siva-Linga there are stones projecting from the ceiling of the cave which resemble the udders of a cow. From these stones natural water-drops fall on the Siva-Linga as if to bathe the deity.

### PANDRETHAN

Pandrethan is situated on the right bank of the sacred Vitasta (Jhelum) at a distance of about five kilometers south of Srinagar. It is on the way to Ananta Nag.

At Pandrethan there are the ruins of a temple of Vishnu called Merubardhanaswami standing in the middle of a tank. The temple was constructed in the tenth century A. D. by Merubardhana, the Prime Minister of King Partha (906-921 A. D.) of Kashmir. The tank is fed by two sacred springs. The ancient temple was of sculptured stone rising in the centre of a tank. The ancient name of the place was Puranadhistan.

King Maghavahana also constructed temples at Pandrethan. This is mentioned in the following verse of the Rajatarangini of Kalhana—

स मातृचक्रं निर्माय बः पूर्वं प्रवरेश्वरम् ।  
पुण्याः पुराणाधिष्ठाने प्रतिष्ठा विविधा व्यधात् ॥

[ After having constructed first a shrine of Pravareshwara together with a circle (symbol) of Mother, he (Meghavahana) constructed various holy shrines at Puranadhithana ].

About a kilometer east of this place there are the ruins of two Buddhist stupas (mounds).

# The Last Days of Sri Hari Ram Joshi

SRI B.D. JOSHI

[Sri Hari Ram Joshi of Almora, who left his body in Lucknow on 13th April this year at the ripe old age of seventythree, first met Mataji more than thirtyseven years ago in the month of April, 1933 at Raipur (Dehradun). Popularly known as "Joshiji" among the devotees of Mataji, it will be no exaggeration to say that he was indeed a devotee *par excellence*. Joshiji, who held respectable posts both in the Government of Uttar Pradesh as well as in the Central Government, was held in great esteem both high and low. It was Joshiji whose ceaseless endeavour was to draw more and more people to the divine personality of Mataji, brought to her such persons like Kamala Nehru; Govinda Ballav Pant and many others. It was again he, who through his untiring efforts, founded the Ashrams in Mataji's name at Kishenpur (Dehradun) at Pataldevi (Almora) and Dhaulchina (Almora). Joshiji happened to be a Life Member of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha and was also a member of the Governing Body of the organisation for a number of years].

—Managing Editor.

I have been approached by Sri Prabhat Kumar Banerjee; retd. Deputy Director of Education, U.P. to give for publication in *Ananda Vārtā*, a full and detailed description of the last days of my late lamented brother, Sri Hari Ram Joshi.

Sri Joshiji, who was an ardent devotee of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi, left this mortal world for his heavenly abode at the age of 73, on April 13th, 1970 at 1-15 P.M. in Lucknow. Although for the last couple of years he had been in poor health, he was nevertheless quite active and alert till his last moments. Even while confined to bed with fever, he dictated his own reminiscences of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi for about four months during the last summer, devoting almost six hours daily to this work, which awaits publication in future.

Since his first *darsana* of Ma Anandamayi at Dehradun in 1933, he lived only to propagate Ma's teaching and died with Ma's sacred name on his lips.

He was very sincere and out-spoken, ever-ready to help the needy, . God-fearing and always aspiring to Ma's *ahetuki kripa* in all his actions. It was his nature to always stick to his decisions despite all protests. His outspokenness and tenacity were often misunderstood even by his relations and brother devotees.

On April 1st, I received the very tragic news of the sudden and untimely death of my nephew, aged about 24 years, in a truck accident at Moradabad. This very promising boy had been the eldest son and the main stay of my younger brother, Sri N. K. Joshi, Chief Dairy Development Officer, U.P. Hari Ramji was so fond of this brother and his family that he chose to stay with them during the period of his illness. My younger brother's wife, Smt. Kamala was all the time in attendance on Hari Ramji even while battling with the greatest tragedy in her life, the loss of her eldest son. The death of our nephew was, perhaps, too great a shock for brother Hari Ramji to bear in his failing health.

When I reached Lucknow on April 3rd I found Hari Ramji lying on a wooden couch, reduced almost to a skeleton and running a high temperature of 102°. Even so he was quite alert in mind. I came to know that since my nephew's death, he had stopped eating anything and was asking only for Ma's *charanāmrita*, which he sipped after every two or three minutes.

I asked my brother if he would like my reading the *Bhagavat Gita* at his bed-side. He appreciated this idea very much. I, therefore, began to recite the Gita twice daily for about one hour.

On April 12th Hari Ramji requested us to remove the wooden bed on which he was lying and put him on the floor with only one quilt under him. He further asked us to call the priest in order to perform the last ten *dānas*, as ordained by the *Shāstras* for a departing soul before death. With the priest's help brother Hari Ramji performed nine *dānas* with his own hand and in full consciousness. He

asked the priest to chant *mantras* for the tenth *dāna* as well, which was, however, politely refused by the priest, as that is supposed to be the last act in human life. It was crystal clear to all of us that brother Hari Ramji had an intuitive feeling of his impending death.

My nephew Vidya Sagar had arrived from Chamba the day before. Hari Mohan, the second son of Hari Ramji, and my second son Naveen also came the same morning from Delhi. With the arrival of Vidyasagar and Hari Mohan (both good singers) we started the *Mā Nāma Kirtana* in brother's room. He liked it so much so that on the 12th at about 7-30 p.m. he himself participated in the *Kirtana* with his trembling and feeble voice. Chanting of the *Gita* and *Mā Nāma Kirtana* were continuously going on in his room.

At about 2 A.M. on the 13th, hearing the *Kirtana* being sung in a louder tone, I went to my brother's room and all the family members assembled there. His pulse was very very feeble. Apprehending that the end was fast approaching I began to recite the *Gita* and *Visnu Sahasra Nāma*. At about 4-30 in the morning he got his cotton vest removed and his entire body sponged and cleaned and got him clothed in clean dress. He was helped to sit against the wall. But his condition began to deteriorate fast. The doctor came and found him alarmingly weak.

At about 10 A.M. my brother enquired from us if our younger brother and the widow of my late brother Dr. M.M. Joshi had returned from Hardwar. They had gone there to perform the last rites for my deceased nephew. The party did come back at about 11A.M. bringing also *prasāda* and a garland from Ma Anandamayi, who was at Hardwar, specially given by her for Hari Ramji. Ma had also sent a message that uninterrupted recitation of the *Gita* should be performed by the side, of our ailing brother. They had also brought two bottles of Ganges water from Hardwar. Brother swallowed with great delight Ma's *prasāda* and put on the garland sent by Ma. At about 12-15P.M. his favourite *mala* (rosary)

was put in his right hand and we were surprised to see him revolving all the 108 beads with *japa* on his lips. Then our priest performed the tenth *dāna*. Continuous *Mā Nāma Kirtana* and recitation of verses from the *Gita and Vishnu Sahasra Nāma* were going on by his side. Throughout this period, he was constantly sipping Ganges water mixed with *tulsi* leaves. The end was so touching and peaceful. He breathed his last just at the close of the last sentence of the hymn to Ma: "*mōrā mili prāne prāne, pranami Sri charane, jai jai jai Mā.*" It was *Vaisākhi shuklā Astami*, an extremely auspicious day when our brother left us all mourning his demise.

This is how a very pious & great soul and a faithful devotee of Ma Anandamayee passed away from this mortal world leaving all of us to ponder if any better death could be aspired for by a truly religious person.

May his soul rest in eternal peace in Ma's lap !

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*"Keep yourself bound to meditation on God — whether you are able to concentrate or not. There is hope that some time or other you will get interested and also remain absorbed in it."*

— Mata Anandamayi

## Mātri Līla

( April—June 15th, 1970 )

In the last issue of Ananda Vārta it was already mentioned that Mataji stayed in Hardwar from 5th to 15th April. The first three days she spent fairly quietly at Baghat House, Kharkhari. On the 8th she shifted to 'Santiniketan', our Ashram at Kankhal. On April 10th she passed the day at Kharkhari where the son of a devotee received his sacred thread in her presence. That day Mataji visited the Girls' School that is being run in Hardwar in her name. Many years ago Mataji stayed on that site in "*Pita Kuti*" with Bholanath. It was there that Brahmacharini Udas received her sacred thread. Mataji also visited the Sri Bhologiri Ashram at Kankhal.

At Kankhal she also followed an invitation to the Ashram of Mahamandaleshwara Swami Maheshwaranandaji Maharaj. In spite of his failing health, Sri Maheshwaranandaji agreed to give a short talk in our Ashram on the occasion of Didima's *Sannyasa Utsava*.

We are extremely sorry to say that Sri Maheshwaranandaji suddenly left this mortal world on May 1st in his Ashram at Kankhal. It must be said that the Swamiji, who was not only an erudite scholar but was also widely respected amongst the *Mahamandaleshwaras* (heads of sannyasi orders), was very much drawn to Mataji during the last few years. He invited Mataji a number of times to his Sannyasa Ashram at Vile Parle (Bombay), where Mataji was always received with the greatest respect and ardour. It had become almost a regular practice for him to attend in spite of his physical ailments, the annual *Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata* as well as Mataji's birthday celebrations every year. The presence in itself of the Swamiji in such functions organised by the Sangha was always an added attraction to all classes of devotees. The masterly

discourses which he used to give, whenever he was with us, are still very much fresh in our memory. The sudden passing away of the great saint was all the more poignant as he had kindly agreed to leave for Poona on May 18th to be in time for Mataji's birthday celebrations there. It will be the least exaggeration to say that devotees of Mataji have been very much shocked at the demise of two great saints—Sri Hari Babaji & Sri Maheshwaranandaji in quick succession within a short span of five months.

On April 13th, the solemn consecration of a small *Siva Mandir* took place at Santiniketan in Mataji's presence. Three *lingas* called Mukteshwara, Amriteshwara and Nilkantheshwara were installed. Many devotees had assembled from far and near since the next day Didima's *Sannyāsa Utsava* was celebrated in great style by her disciples. There was *mangala āratī* in the early morning, followed by *Guru Pūjā* and *kīrtan*. At midday a feast was given to 108 *Sannyāsīs* and to all guests. In the afternoon some *māhatmās* delivered discourses, among them was the Mahant of Sri Bholagiri Ashram. At night Swami Bhagavatananda talked about Didima. The function again ended with *Āratī*.

On that auspicious day, which happened to be also *Ashtami* of *Vasanti Pūjā*, Mataji invested a few of the Brahmacharinis of our Ashram with yellow clothes. A few others received the same colour on May 3rd at Bhopal.

On April 15th, *Rama Navami* day, Mataji visited *Bhagavad Dhama* Ashram and in the evening motored to Kishenpur. She went straight to Kalyanvan, where Sri Rama Chandra's birthday was celebrated since the morning by *Akhanda Ramayana* in Rama Mandir. After some time Mataji alighted at the Kishenpur Ashram. The next morning at 6 a. m., she was again at Kalyanvan, supervising the preparations for the sacred thread ceremony of the Raja of Madhupur which took place later in the morning in *Amar Kutir*, one of the cottages at Kalyanvan. After the *Purnahuti* of the Ramayana and the completion of the

sacred thread ceremony, everyone gathered at the Kishenpur Ashram for a feast.

Mataji remained in Dehradun for five days only, yet managed to do an enormous amount in that short period. Her stay was like a continuous festival. Among those coming for her *daršana* were inmates of Swami Sivananda Ashram and also quite a number of the European and American disciples of Maharshi Mahesh Yogi. They turned up daily in small groups, as they had already done at Kankhal.

On April 18th evening, Mataji motored to Raipur where she remained overnight. The next morning on her way to Kishenpur she visited three houses of devotees and the *Sadhan Ashram* at Jakhan.

On the night of the 20th she left for Patiala at the invitation of Rai Bahadur Sri G. M. Modi, to grace with her presence the consecration of the *Lakshmi Narayana* temple, constructed in the vicinity of the Sanskrit College which Sri Modi had started some years ago. Festivities had been in full swing already for several days in a pandal adjoining the new temple.

On April 24th evening Mataji left for Delhi where she remained only for a few hours. On the way to the railway station she went to a hospital to cheer up a devotee who had recently undergone an operation.

On the 25th morning Mataji alighted at Bairagarh near Bhopal, in the Ashram which Sir and Lady Datar Singh had in 1965 built for her in the grounds of their farm.\* Just then the heat wave that was scorching the plains of India had reached its climax. Bhopal experienced its hottest day within ten years. Mainly for the sake of Didima who is 94 years old, our hosts felt deeply anxious and fervently prayed for cooler weather. Lo and behold, the temperature fell by six degrees the next day and it remained pleasant throughout Mataji's stay. In those quiet and beautiful surroundings, Mataji had a really restful time for a few days. As last she

\* See Ananda Varta, October 1969, ( Matri Lila ).



was able to get through piles of correspondence. *Darśana* time was only in the evening after 6 p. m. At night Brahmachari Virajananda used to read out from "Amar Vani" and in that peaceful, undisturbed atmosphere Mataji related generously about olden times when the *Lilā* of *sādhana* was going on.

On the night of May 3rd, Mataji's birthday was celebrated by the usual *pūja* accompanied by sweet songs. Mataji's wooden couch was right in the open, decorated with strings of *bela* flowers with a curtain made of lines of the same kind of fragrant jasmins. Mataji, as always on these occasions, lay perfectly motionless. *Kumāri Pūjā* of a little Kashmiri girl was performed along with the main *Pūjā*. The next day sweets were distributed to all patients of the local hospital. Many people had come from Bhopal to witness Mataji's birthday celebration, also several Rajas and Ranis from neighbouring states.

During Mataji's sojourn, most of the dignitaries of Bhopal came for her *darsana*. Sri K.C. Reddy, the Governor and his wife stayed quite a long time in Mataji's room. Several Ministers of Madhya Pradesh Government also paid their respects to Mataji. Many of the people of Bhopal had private talks with her and a few took even *dikṣā* (initiation) from Didima.

On May 6th Mataji left for Delhi. It had originally been planned to celebrate Ma's birthday in her presence in Poona during the whole period from her solar birthday on May 3rd to the lunar *Tithi* on May 24th. But Ma had the *kheyāla* to visit three other places as well during that period, namely Bhopal, Delhi and Bombay. In the early morning of May 8th, the opening ceremony of the newly constructed kitchen and dining hall was performed in Ma's presence. Immediately after, the foundation stone was laid for a cottage for Mataji's use to be built in the recently acquired extension of the Ashram grounds. This was followed by *Akshaya Tṛitiya pūjā* performed by several devotees, led

by Dr. Gourinath Sastri, Vice-Chancellor of the Varanasi Sanskrit University. At midday a sumptuous feast was given to all present. During her short stay for only two nights there, the Prime Minister Srimati Indira Gandhi, the Vice-President Sri G.S. Pathak, Sri G.L. Nanda, Union Railway Minister and many others availed themselves of this opportunity to have even private interviews with Mataji. *Nāma Yajna* of the *Mahāmantra* was celebrated, continuing until early morning on the 9th. During the night, Mataji's birthday *pūja* was performed in grand style at the *Panchavati*. Mataji's forty-eight hours in Delhi were an uninterrupted festival. A throng of four to five hundred people were present in the Ashram day and night, enjoying Mataji's *darśana* to their heart's content.

On May 9th morning, Mataji boarded the train to Bombay reaching there the next morning. She stayed for three nights in her special cottage at Vile Parle within the compound of the house of Sri B. K. Shah. This was a comparatively quiet period after the two hectic days in Delhi.

Mataji motored to Poona on the 13th morning. Mataji's birthday celebrations had been carried out at Poona with full vigour since May 3rd. Swami Paramananda, Brahmachari Nirmalananda and a few others were already there in the Ashram to assist the local devotees. Swami Krishnanand Avdhutji had also arrived with a *Rāma Līlā* party who performed for 2½ hours daily from May 4th to 24th. Besides the *Rāma Līlā*, there was *kīrtana*, chanting of the Ramayana and the daily recitations from the *Gīta*, *Chāndī*, *Upanishads* and *Bhāgavata* that form part of the Ashram routine. A spacious pandal had been provided for the *satsang*. Another small structure, next to the pandal, served for the recitation of one hundred *Durga Sapta Satis* performed by several *pandits*. In a tiny little hut made of bamboo matting, *akhaṇḍa japa* was sustained day and night. A spacious new dining hall, kitchen and store rooms were also ready for use.

As soon as Mataji arrived, She and Didima occupied the new cottage, which has been recently built for Mataji's use by Sri and Srimati Bhagwandas P. Nangpal. It is worth mentioning here that it was the Nangpals who very kindly donated the existing Ashram building to the Sangha for the purpose of starting an Ashram in Poona.

During the last and main week of the celebrations, namely from May 18th to 24th, the Swamis Sri Akhandanandaji, Sri Vishnu Ashramji, Sri Sarananandaji, Sri Avadhutji and Sri Jogesh Brahmachariji daily delivered talks from 7-30 a.m. and again in the evening. At 9-30 a.m. Sri Hara Govinda's party enacted the *Rasa Lila* and in the afternoon there was Rama Lila. The climax of every day was, as usual, *Matri Satsang* at 9-30 or 10 p.m. when Mataji replied to questions or sang. Every morning punctually at 7-30 Mataji appeared in the pandal and attended the *satsang* for long hours. A decorated chair with Sri Hari Babaji's photo had also been placed on the stage of the Lila.

On the *Buddha Purnima*, May 21st, the ladies performed an all night *kīrtana* of *Mā Nāma*. Mataji came in the early morning before the completion and distributed *prasāda* with full hands to all who had participated throughout.

A delightful function is always *Kumāri Pūjā* and a feast given to 108 *Kumarīs*, including a few little boys. Mataji was playing and eating with the children as one of them, while the Brahmacharinis of our Ashram walked along the lines of the *Kumarīs* performing *arati* to them.

For the *Tithi pūja* on the 24th night, the *Durga Sapta Sati* hut was joined to the main pandal and Mataji's decorated couch placed there, with elevated seats for the *Mahatmas* by her side. There was pin-drop silence in the entire pandal as about 550 people observed the puja going on and Mataji lay completely still from 3 a.m. to 10 a.m. when she slowly rose and was taken to her room.

On the 25th evening there was *adhivāsa* of *akhanda kīrtana* of *Mahāmantra*. Mataji was present throughout

and then started the women's *kīrtana* that continued all night, the men taking over at sunrise on the 26th and continuing until sunset, when Ma herself led the *kīrtana*. During the night Mataji came three times and also joined into the singing. Some of our Delhi *kīrtana* party had come and their *kīrtana* is always inspiring and unforgettable.

The devotees of Poona had taken great trouble to make the necessary arrangements and everything proceeded in great joy and harmony. The attendance was large, as every year for Mataji's birthday. Devotees had flocked from all over the country, including the South.

From May 26th they began to disperse. Now a somewhat quieter period followed, although visitors from Bombay and other neighbouring places kept on pouring in and Mataji had to grant numberless "privates". One day H.H. the Gaekwar of Baroda came to see Mataji. Another day Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission also had a private interview. On a number of occasions Sri Dilip Kumar Roy and Sm. Indira Devi paid visits to our Ashram. They very kindly accommodated for about ten days in their beautiful Ashram Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, who also arrived on May 28th for a change. We are happy to say that his health has very much improved.

Mataji is also having a more or less quiet period these days. Almost every evening she goes out for long drives, giving *darśana* in the morning at 11.30 and 6-30 in the afternoon. At 9 p.m. Brahmachari Virajananda would read out from the "Amar Vani" and according to her *kheyāla* Mataji would respond to questions with longer or shorter comments.

Mataji is expected to remain in Poona till about the end of June, after which she is likely to visit 2/3 places in Maharashtra and return to Poona again in time for the *Guru Purnima*, which is going to be celebrated on July 18th. Further programme after that is not yet definitely known.

We are however happy to note that the *Durga Puja* is scheduled to be performed in our Ashram at Kalkaji, New Delhi in Mataji's presence from October 6th to 10th. Our readers will be interested to learn that both the *Lakshmi Puja* and the *Kali Puja (Dewali)* are also expected to be held in the New Delhi Ashram on October 14th and 29th respectively. The next *Samyam Saptaha Mahavrata* is proposed to be held at Shuktal ( Muzaffarnagar ) this year from November 6th to 12th at the cordial invitation of Sri 108 Swami Vishnu Ashramji Maharaj.