

*The Eternal, the Atman—  
Itself pilgrim and path of Immortality,  
Self-contained—THAT is all in One.*

## **ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ**

---

**Vol. XXV**

**July, 1978**

**No. 3**

---

### **CONTENTS**

- |  |                            |     |     |
|--|----------------------------|-----|-----|
| 1. Mātri Vāni  | ...                        | ... | 133 |
| 2. Matri Satsang   | —Swami Bhagawatananda Giri |     | 136 |
| 3. Vespers   | —J. N. Dhamija             |     | 146 |
| 4. An Unknown Village-Girl Becomes<br>the Mother of Millions | —Anil Ganguli              |     | 147 |
| 5. From The Life of Mataji                                   | —Bithika Mukerji           |     | 162 |
| 6. Mātri Upadeshamrita                                       | —                          |     | 170 |
| 7. Homage to Rama Tirtha                                     | —Narayan (U. S. A.)        |     | 185 |
| 8. Matri Lila  | —                          |     | 189 |
-

# PATH and GOAL

( Quotations from Mataji's Sayings )

Steadfast in the patience and endurance necessary for Sādhana, stride forward cheerfully with untrammelled gait, sights ever fixed on the One. That Heart-Indweller will have to be revealed both within and without.

Live vowed to abide constantly in contemplation of that. All other contemplation causes anxiety. The all-protecting Companion has already taken your hand, so why worry? Don't let your mind be drowned by circumstances. Drown it solely in contemplation of the one Supreme.

Man must aim at the superman, at real greatness. By the ultimate stepping forth, a pilgrim may reach the ultimate stopping place-at-Oneness. Here lies every human being's first and foremost duty.

He alone knows to whom He will be revealed and in which way. How the absolute-willed Almighty pulls anyone irresistibly to Himself along a unique path is beyond human comprehension. For each wayfarer a different approach. Often He removes sorrow by sorrow, or by a hard blow prevents a wrong turn. To advance truthward each needs his own path. "Own path" means self-revealing path, leading to deepest Selfhood, highest Goal Perfection.

Isn't it wonderful to be a hiker on the summit-bound path? This is surely the trail to follow. The all-illuminating Goal is reached exactly where the all-illuminating Path becomes entirely clear.



# Mātri Vānī

(Dictated by Sri Ma as letters in response to devotees' requests for personal advice and guidance.)

Become drunk with Him, absorbed in Him, affixed to Him, immersed in Him, stripped naked before Him. Then only everything in this world will be recognised as His expression, as the One Himself, the field of His creative activity. He alone as action—with action and actionless, as form, quality, idea, mode of being and all the rest. In the universe and beyond is the One alone, enthroned in the posture of mahāyoga; He who is seated, Himself the posture. To realise Him in the world and beyond the world—this is the death of death; there indeed death is conquered, time quelled. To direct his course towards this and this alone must be the aim of everyone without exception.

\*

\*

\*

He who paints you black as a result of your karma, He Himself again washes you clean by your good and righteous deeds. Behold His compassion, His grace in everything that comes to pass. "I am a tool in His hands"—a human being who ever lives and moves in this awareness, through him no action can be wrought that causes pain and trouble. His is the path to true Being, his progress straight and simple.

\*

\*

\*

He who never abandons, never forsakes, to that eternal Bliss a human being must aspire.

\* \* \*

One's main duty in life is the remembrance of God. Try to depend on Him alone in every sphere of life. Whatever He ordains comes to pass, so utter His name at every moment. Time flies.

\* \* \*

This body is always near her wherever she may be. Ask her to write and make clear her doubts and questions. One should not waste precious time in idle gossip and useless work. Do what is essential for existence and talk only when necessary. Spend your time in japa, meditation, uplifting reading, kirtana, and so forth.

So long as there are outer personal problems, how can one make progress on the spiritual path? One should always dedicate oneself to God who dwells within so as to realise Him.

\* \* \*

When all work is done in the awareness of God and if this attitude then comes spontaneously, of itself, there is hope that the ego may lose its hold.

\* \* \*

The Calcutta devotees meet every Thursday for an hour's *satsang* with kirtana, silent meditation and reading of Sri Ma's books. They have named this meeting "*Mouna Milani*" ( Silent reunion ). Sri Ma was asked for a message. She said :

"For *Mahāmouna* (the great silence which is the Brahman), the creative activity of the mind practised in "*Mouna Milani*" is the instrument. To get a touch of that Silence this silence is observed; and the reunion to obtain a glimpse of the Union that eternally exists".

\*

\*

\*

**The meditation, the Name that appeals to you most, that you should practise in order for attain to supreme Peace and Bless. Whatever Word or Name you love most and which expresses God to you that Word or Mantra will take you to Him.**

**MA ANANDAMAYI**

# Matri Satsang

**Swami Bhagavatananda Giri**

( Translated from Bengali )

( 20 )

The following is a report of the satsang that took place with Mataji at Ahmedabad from May 8th to 12th, 1957. From 8th to 10th, Satsang was held at the residence of Sri Mukundbhai Thakore and from 11th to 17th at the home of Sri Kantilal Munshaw.

May 8th, 1957.

Tonight during the hour of Matri Satsang, Goswami Mukut Behariji gave a discourse on various aspects of the unique love between Sri Kṛṣṇa and the people of Vrindaban.

Mataji related only the following story :

*Mataji* : When in obedience to Lord Rama's instructions a bridge was built between Rameshwaram and Sri Lanka, famous warriors were engaged in fetching and dropping large mountain boulders into the sea. In the midst of this strenuous activity an insignificant couple of animals known as squirrels were also contributing their mite to the stupendous task of constructing the bridge. That is to say, after dipping into the sea they would roll in the sand and then throw off the sand from their bodies to seal the crevices between the boulders. Again and again they were repeating the same process. They were continuously engaged in this work and held no fear of death or injury from being trodden under the feet of bigger beings. Suddenly the following incident occurred : Lord

Rama's beloved messenger, the great hero Hanuman, spotted the squirrels and requested them to leave the precincts of those strenuous activities. But they were undaunted. Enraged, Hanuman with the toe of his foot, flung one of the little animals far away. The tiny creature screamed loudly in agonizing pain. Its wife at once went and related the whole incident to Sri Rama and asked for redress from the entire gathering.

Lord Rama had watched everything. Smiling gently, he at once lifted the wounded animal with his hands and lovingly stroked its back with his fingers, thereby removing all pain. He then asked : "Tell me, what punishment shall I mete out to Hanuman ?" The squirrel replied : "Wait a moment, let me first consult my wife !" Having obtained her consent, he cried out : "He Rama, just as Hanuman kicked me with his foot, exactly in the same manner, please kick him with yours." Sri Rama obliged. The little creature was highly pleased and said : "Well, Hanumanji, will you ever kick me again ?" Yes, "was the reply, "I shall kick you daily, and several times daily." On being asked why, Hanuman said : "For the simple reason that my Lord Rama will then have to kick me again and again with His lotus feet !"

Thereafter, Lord Rama assured the tiny couple of their safety, saying "You need have no fear now, nobody will in future be able to hurt you for my finger-marks will for ever remain engraved on your backs !"

At the urgent request of the gathering, Mataji started singing "Rādhe, Rādhe." So sweet and melodious was the kirtana that everybody joined, singing in unison with Mataji as if under a spell, and every fibre of their bodies vibrated in rhythm with the music.



May 9th, 1957

*Question* : Japa should be carried out in a sacred place, but where can such a place be found ?

*Mataji* : Where the name of the Lord is taken, sanctity will ensue of itself. Temples are holy spots graced by the presence of mahātmās are sanctified, their company is holy, and sacred are all places of pilgrimage. Some maintain that if japa is performed in certain pilgrimages, it will be crowned with success. God's name is eternally holy. Wherever the Bhāgavata is being read the atmosphere of the locality is thereby purified. If one sits in such places the mind will be cleansed.

*Question* : Why is japa done in a certain rhythm ?

*Mataji* : (Addressing Swami Madhava Tirtha) Pitāji, would you please reply ! It is advisable while repeating the mantra to meditate on its meaning. Thereby optimum results can be obtained, as stated in the Yoga Sutras.

*Question* : Suppose the pronunciation of the mantra is faulty how can I correctly ponder on its meaning ?

*Swami Madhava Tirtha* : If a seed mantra is repeated one need not meditate on its significance.

*Mataji* : One method is to perform japa while pondering on its meaning, another to dispense with all thought. The śabda Brahman, the akṣara Brahman is indestructible. Where the Brahman is, there is eternity, no decay. The word (śabda) also resounds, just as a musical instrument does. If through the continuous reverberation of the word, the japa becomes automatic, goes on effortlessly, the knots that constitute the

ego will be loosened and the path will open out for the undoing of the knots. The *Om̐kara*, the *śabda* Brahman is resounding constantly. Yogis can hear it. The sound of the seed mantra also goes on without interruption. By continuously practising japa, its meaning becomes clear. Just as sparks are struck by rubbing two pieces of wood against each other, so the meaning is revealed as a result of sustained japa.

Once an ignorant person was listening to the recitation of the Srimad Bhāgavata. The Sanskrit text contained the word "*Jagat hitāya*" (for the good of the world). But the foolish man thought it was '*jagat dhipāya*'. He started repeating "*jagat dhipāya*" with tears streaming from his eyes. Somebody asked him : "Why do you recite : '*jagat dhipāya*' ? What does it mean ?" He replied "It means that the whole universe is entering into God." While saying this, his tears flowed profusely and he was vouchsafed the vision of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*Swami Madhava Tirtha* : If the heart becomes purified, such events do take place.

*Matāji* : If one's heart and mind are pure, the significance of the word becomes revealed. This body says, if you can, lie prostrate at the Lord's door and keep on crying. So long as the door does not open do not cease from weeping and calling out to Him. Whether your body will live or die, give no thought to this. If there is force in your exhortation, the Lord's door will burst open.

*Pitāji* has said you should engage in japa while meditating on its meaning. However, some say, no need to ponder over the meaning. Continue to perform your japa full of faith.

It is said : "God can be realized by genuine faith—He is ever distant if one argues about His existence." This body always speaks in such an outlandish fashion ! Suppose you have preserved some ashes. If there is still fire in them it will burn again on contact. If poison is swallowed even unknowingly, the person dies. So, whether God's name is taken in implicit faith or in disbelief, whether one contemplates its meaning or not—good will certainly result from God's name. The remembrance of God's name destroys all sin. Some even maintain that the name of the Lord is so potent in annihilating evil that human beings cannot possibly commit that much sin in their lifetime. The same power to burn is in fire as in a single spark. One spark can reduce the whole world to ashes.

*Swami Madhava Tirtha* : The Bhāgavata as well as other sacred scriptures assert that japa removes the effects of sin but not those of merit (*punya*). The effects of merit earned by good deeds can be annulled only by *Ātmajñāna* (Knowledge of the Self.) What should I do to get rid of the results of virtuous actions ?

*Mataji* : The results of meritorious deeds are gradually eroded and diminish of themselves. What can be burnt will be burnt.

*Swami Mādhava Tirtha* : God's name consumes sin, while merit is consumed by rigorous penance (*tapasyā*).

*Mataji* : By whatever name you invoke God, whatever mantra you repeat—everything is contained in each, therefore anything can be achieved. If the knots of the heart are undone, what will remain ? By degrees everything will be accom-

plished. As Pitāji has said, all achievements are possible if God's name is practised truly and intensely. The divine name is indeed the Lord's concrete presence (*vigraha*). By His name all sin and suffering are destroyed. Such is the power of God's name that by virtue of it Reality (*tatva*) will be revealed. God is man's supreme friend, the very breath of his life. The Supreme Being is both with form and formless. If God's name is repeated, it is His very nature to reveal Himself. Therefore, whether with full awareness or in ignorance, whether willingly or unwillingly, whether with firm faith or in doubt—if God's name is adhered to, if His remembrance is sustained, what is to be burnt will be burnt and what is to be melted will melt.

People meditate in front of a photo, but what is a mere photo? Just paper. Yet, if pure faith is maintained in meditation, the Lord Himself appears in that very photo.

*Questions* : Is it necessary to keep count while doing japa?

*Mataji* : There is real potency in numbers. If God is invoked really and truly even once, He will appear right before one's vision. It is to achieve this genuine call that innumerable japas have to be performed so that at a certain juncture the japa may reach fulfilment. Who knows after how many repetitions your japa may bear fruit? Some perform japa with each breath. One should act according to one's Guru's instructions. If the Guru has indicated a certain number, who can tell at what time the number will be complete?

\*

\*

\*

In course of conversation Ma said :

Normally power is transmitted by the Guru through the

mantra he bestows, A true mantra has its inherent potency. The *Rṣis* or *Munis* were seers of mantras, they perceived mantras by direct perception. Those who have truly received mantras have potentially realized them. One can of course adopt any of the mantras found in books. But it is much more beneficial to receive a mantra from the mouth of a Guru, as with the mantra the Guru's power enters into the disciple. If someone has brought over from former births a bent in that direction, he may achieve even without the Guru's intervention. It is related that Kabir lay at the door of his Guru waiting to receive initiation. One day the Guru came out. Plagued by pain in his legs, he sighed : "He Rāma !" Kabir thought that this was the mantra bestowed on him by the Guru. He started practising it and eventually attained perfection. Words emanating from the lips of mahātmās radiate special power.

*Swami Mādhava Tirtha* : Suppose the Guru has enjoined on the disciple to do ten rosaries of japa per day. If one day the Lord gives *darśana* to the disciple after he has completed five rosaries, will he have to ask the Lord to wait until the full quota has been completed ?

*Mataji* : In this case the fruit of performing ten rosaries per day has been reaped after completing five rosaries on a particular day. Who can tell after how many rosaries the result of the practice will manifest ?

*Swami Madhava Tirtha* : My Guru started teaching me Vedānta immediately after giving me a mantra for practising japa. After a few years he made me realize what Vedānta is.

and then took back my *mālā* (rosary), saying : "You have no further need of this."

*Mataji* : Everything is possible.

*Question* : My Guru has taken away my *mālā* so that I should do japa.

*Mataji* : It is fitting to dedicate to the Guru the fruit of one's practice.

*Question* : I shall return my *mālā* to the Guru and He will do japa for me. Why should I not get the fruit thereof by the Guru's power? So it is just a question of the Guru's greatness. (Everyone laughs.)

*Mataji* : ( pointing it out to everybody ) Look, look, Balmukunda is on his knees !

*Swami Madhava Tirtha* ; He should be exempted from the commission.

*Mataji* : ( Looking towards Mukundbhai ) Of course, he is a lawyer.

*Mukundbhai* : When there is a Guru, the disciple will most certainly reap full benefit.

*Mataji* : You must take on a Guru so that you may be properly chastised. You will have to undergo punishment.

*Mukundbhai* : I am prepared to suffer punishment but I shall not count beads. Let the Guru do *sādhana* on our behalf !

*Mataji* : The Guru does perform *sādhana*, just as Balmukunda carries out his japa.

*Mukundbhai* : Suppose I don't ?

*Mataji* : The Guru will certainly get it done. He will do so by chastising you. Those who deserve punishment will be chastised. The Guru resides within you in the form of the mantra and in the form of *śakti* (inner strength). Why has he taken on full responsibility for you? To kill your ego. He who is full of "I" will have to suffer punishment. When two people quarrel and blame each other, saying : "you have done this, you have done that!", how charming does this not seem ! Two egos fighting with each other. It is to conquer this ego that the Guru appears of his own accord. What you said is perfectly true.

*Question* : Who is the Being that makes us enjoy and suffer ?

*Mataji* : According to the Samkhya doctrine the Supreme Power is not the doer but only the enjoyer; whereas according to Vedānta He is neither doer nor enjoyer.

*Question* : The Wise say that the waking-state is but a dream.

*Mataji* : Where real Knowledge is there is only one Brahman and no second; there, everything that you see is nothing but a dream. There are two kinds of dreams : the dream of waking and the dream while sleeping.

*Question* : I have seen you today and also yesterday.

*Mataji* : That which should be seen has not been seen. If one sees really and truly there is no more question of today and yesterday.

*Question* : Is man free to do what he wants or is he dependent ?

*Mataji* : Pitāji will reply.

*Swami Madhava Tirtha* : In the field of *māyā* a human being is bound but in the spiritual field he is independent.

*Mataji* : So long as the realization has not come "I am merely God's tool", it is fitting to think of God in all one does. In the Upaniṣads two roads are pointed out— one appears pleasing, the other is for one's highest good. The road of pleasure should be discarded and the one that is truly beneficial adopted. Follow the line whereby you will know your Self. You gather wealth and bring up your children using your own capacity and energy. Apply this very capacity and energy to the search of God. Try to find Him. To realize Him is to realize your own Self and to realize your Self means to realize God. God is indeed ever in evidence, but there is a screen covering Him, so He is not perceived. To remove the screen it is necessary to perform action. The body has been obtained to reap the results of actions done in previous births. So long as one harbours desires and longings there will be birth and death—a "return ticket" will have to be taken. Do not proceed on the road of death. The poison of sense enjoyment acts like slow poison that will eventually lead to death. You have the heritage of immortality—ever remember "I am the *Ātmā*." Your duty is to realize "Who am I?" Those who have courage must choose the path to the Supreme Object of life ( *paramārtha* ). *Paramārtha* means Supreme Wealth—the wealth that is yours by your own right. In spite of possessing Supreme Wealth, why are you suffering like a beggar? Become a pilgrim on the path of Immortality.

( *To be continued* )



# Vespers

**J. N. Dhamija**

In mystic light the earth and heaven meet,  
The moon behind the softly swaying palms  
Weaves a magic spell; the breeze is fresh  
With rhythmic murmurs of a distant Shore  
Vibrating echoes of Immortality.

I breathe sacred air of ages past;  
A Peace descends, it is from Heaven  
Softly, softly it comes on seraphic wings  
All permeating. Transfigured and transformed  
I stand upon the edge of Time and Space,  
My being flows into the Non-Being,

Self submerging into the Universal Whole.  
Waves subside, the ripples cease, Time stands still  
The Space and sky dissolve into the Void Vast  
A fathomless Ocean of disembodied Bliss.

Thy Grace Abounding, Immense and Infinite  
It comes, it ever comes in floods of Light  
It comes, it ever comes in floods of Joy  
Supreme, engulfing and submerging all.

# An Unknown Village Girl Becomes the Mother of Millions

**Anil Ganguli**

*(Continued from the last issue)*

## **Ma's thirty-sixth Janmotsava (Birth Anniversary) and farewell to Dacca**

By the time the Mother of Shahbag reached Her mid-thirties, She had already become a celebrity known as Ma Anandamayi. Circumstances were shaping themselves in such a way as clearly to indicate that Ma was destined to be a great power in the spiritual sphere, not only of Bengal but the whole of India. However, Her *kheyāla* decreed otherwise. Eminence had come Her way unasked, unsought and almost inspite of Herself. She, as it were, submitted to it upto a certain point and then preferred retiring to a life of seclusion and solitude, at least for the time being. So, Her emergence as Universal Mother was delayed for some time. Ma's *kheyāla* is, indeed, a study in outward contradictions and its course unpredictable.

Under Ma's inspiration an atmosphere of religious fervour was created in Dacca. With Her as the central figure of adoration, a genuine spirit of brotherhood grew among Her devotees. The need for an Ashram was now keenly felt and one was founded at Ramna in Dacca in the year 1929; not by Ma but by Her devotees. Ma has no attachment for anything but She was the guiding spirit of the Ashram which

attracted many spiritual aspirants and seekers after Truth. In the town of Dacca Ma came to occupy the uppermost place of adoration in the minds of a large number of Her "children". She was now an integral part of their joys and sorrows and apparently interested in their well-being and adversity. So deep was their devotion to Her and so unwavering their trust in Her unerring judgment that many of them would not take any step whatsoever even in their worldly affairs without consulting Ma, nor move an inch without Her approval. For years they had been drinking deep the joy of almost uninterrupted *mātrisanga* (association with Ma). They also had the sorrowful experience of pangs of separation from Her for short periods which were, of course, few and far between. If and when Ma would be away from Dacca, Her "children" would live on the hope of Her *darśana* in the near future; they were thus steeped in the sweetness of divine love inspired by Her presence.

Ma's thirty-sixth *Janmotsava* (Birth Anniversary) was celebrated with great eclat in the Dacca Ashram in May 1932.\* Continuously for twenty-one days there was a crowded programme of a variety of religious functions, including uninterrupted *kirtan* throughout the entire period. Ma attended each and every item and Her holy presence created great enthusiasm.

Like a presiding deity, She used to move about among the assembled devotees in Her gracious and soul-kindling way, thus creating a thrill of spiritual current which seemed to electrify the entire Ashram atmosphere in a mysterious

---

\* *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi* by Gurupriya Devi, Vol. II, Chapter XVII.

manner. There was, as it were, a flood tide of spiritual fervour which uplifted, at least for the time being, all who were present to unknown heights of moral and religious grandeur. Plunged in a sea of elevating joy, they experienced the very acme of festive jubilation. They were temporarily transported to the rarefied climate of a new world where they breathed the pure air of peace, love and harmony; and they became quite oblivious of the follies and foibles of their mundane existence. But they knew not that disenchantment was very near and reaction would quickly set in. They had not the least idea that they were soon to be thrown into the deepest depths of melancholy by Ma's sudden and abrupt *kheyāla* of departure for an unknown destination without giving any indication as to when She would return, if at all.

On June 2nd, 1932 at about 11-30 p. m. when most of the inmates of the Ashram had retired for the night and Bhaji had gone home, Ma's *kheyāla* prompted Her to tell Didi and others who were present that She would be leaving Dacca that very night. Her words, uttered in all seriousness and in a strange tone of solemnity, struck them dumb. Why this proposed departure? For what destination? For how long? Nobody ventured to put any of these questions. Nothing was disclosed by Ma. When She is in a sombre mood like this, speech is naturally inhibited among those who happen to be with Her. Inquisitiveness has perforce to be checked. What fell from Ma's lips was like an ultimatum - final and irrevocable - hence shocking. Everybody knew She meant what She said; and no power on earth could prevent Her from having Her way.

Ma made it perfectly clear that She would thenceforth wander about from place to place according to Her *kheyāla* and that nobody should try to stand in Her way. Her firm decision was a bolt from the blue, as it were. Bholanath and Bhaiji, both of whom had retired to bed, were sent for by Ma. Bhaiji had taken long leave of absence from his office with the idea of going for a change to some health resort. Ma just asked him, if he could accompany Her. He wanted naturally to know where She desired to go. Ma's cryptic reply was: "Anywhere I choose!" Bhaiji submitted silently to Ma's *kheyāla* without consulting even his wife. The atmosphere appeared to be surcharged with solemnity. Bholanath had a private conversation with Ma; and immediately after got ready to accompany Her on a journey of unknown adventure. An ominous stillness prevailed in the Ashram. The encircling gloom of midnight only deepened it. Most unceremoniously Ma left on foot and started walking briskly towards the Railway Station, accompanied only by Bholanath and Bhaiji with hardly any baggage.

The parting scene was almost heart-rending for those who had to stay behind in the Ashram. Ma's "children" at Dacca were overwhelmed with grief. The light in the life of Ramna Ashram went off all on a sudden. Ma's devotees had been inspired to feel that She was the closest of dear friends, the nearest of relations, and the most loved and adored personage one could conceive of; yet they were always inwardly conscious that Ma belonged to a world beyond their access. This remoteness was like the paradoxical "isolation of omnipotence".

Ma's sudden departure in this background shows that Her *kheyāla* is a study in contradictions. Perhaps the apparent

contradiction can be understood in the light of Ma's observation in a different context : "Sorrow comes in order to lead you to happiness. At all times hold Him in remembrance.\* To lose all is to gain all. He is merciful and compassionate. Whatever He does at any moment is all-beneficent, though certainly painful at times. When He manifests Himself as all-loss, there is hope that He may also manifest Himself as all-gain."

"To pine for the ONE who helps towards the light of Truth is salutary, for it kindles the awareness of Truth. Verily, He is everywhere at all times. The endeavour to awaken to his real nature is man's duty as a human being. In the field of His Play even getting means losing. This is but the nature of its movement. Think of Him who cannot be lost. Meditate on Him alone, on Him, the Fountain of Goodness. Pray to Him; depend on Him. Try to give more time to *japa* and *dhyāna* (meditation). Surrender your mind at His Feet. Endeavour to sustain *japa* and *dhyāna* without a break".\*\*

Ma is all love; but not in the sense in which we understand it. Normally so considerate and sympathetic, even indulgent, She can be relentless and inexorable, if so prompted by *kheyāla*. When She left the Dacca Ashram She did not evince any sign of sharing Dacca's pangs of separation. On the contrary, Her calm and composed behaviour suggested that nothing unusual was happening; She seemed supremely indifferent to the emotional disturbance caused to the ashramites. Inscrutable is the *kheyāla* of Ma Anandamayī, the Joy-permeated Mother.

\* *Mother as revealed to me* by Bhaiji (4th Ed.) P. 151.

\*\* *Matri Vani*, Vol. I, published by Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

### Seclusion in the solitude of Raipur (Dehradun)

Ma, Bholanath and J. C. Roy reached the Dacca Railway Station and according to Ma's *kheyāla*, tickets were purchased for a journey right up to the terminus. On arriving at the terminal station on the bank of the river Jamuna (the continuation of the river Brahmaputra beyond the point where it enters into the district of Mymensingh), Ma said, "Let us cross over to the other bank." Bholanath and J. C. Roy complied; it was not for them to make any reply nor to reason why. Ma's *kheyāla* prevailed at every step. The Railway ferry steamer took them over to the other side of the river, and the party entrained again for a westward destination, known only to Ma. On their way they visited some places in North India till at last they reached their journey's end and rested at a *dharmaśāla* (rest house for pilgrims) in Dehradun. The contrast with their life at Dacca must have been very great. Bholanath and J. C. Roy naturally felt a little ill at ease. To them the local people were strangers and everything appeared unfamiliar. But Ma said complacently, "Everything seems known and familiar to me!"

After a brief halt at Dehradun, Ma and Her companions trekked up to Raipur, a desolate place at the foot of the Himalayas. There, on the top of a small hillock stood a very old temple of Siva in ruins. The environment of the locality seemed frightening; it was a lonely tract not far from a forest infested with wild animals. A damp and ill-ventilated room near the Siva temple offered temporary shelter to the party. The cracks and fissures in the courtyard and in the dilapidated walls harboured snakes and scorpions. Not far from this place there was a belt of green woods dotted over by hills.

At Raipur, Ma used to live on boiled potatoes or a piece of unleavened bread (roti) and arum acquired by Bhaiji by begging in the surrounding villages. Here Ma's *kheyāla*, it seems, was to subject Herself to a life of abject poverty. Abruptly had She left Dacca, wrapped in only one raiment without even any thought of a second for a change. She was not in the habit of taking a daily bath. With Her dishevelled hair, unwashed sari and pale and listless appearance, She presented a picture of misery arousing pity. The funny impression created on the female folk of neighbouring villages was once described by Ma in Vindhychal when I was present. Certain rustic women, She said, who used to come to a canal close to the Siva temple, took Ma for an unfortunate wife deserted by her husband. Their idea was, added Ma, that the husband had renounced the world and chosen the life of a mendicant, and his wife, having gone half crazy, was pursuing him. These simple-hearted women sympathised with Her and offered Her advice; "Well, dear, go on repeating the name of Ramaji; but first take a bath, change your dirty clothes and practise cleanliness; otherwise you cannot expect Ramaji's mercy and blessing."

The Raipur *Līla* comprising Ma's *kheyāla* for austerity and renunciation started in 1932. Twenty-one years later it was my good fortune to be at the feet of Ma at Raipur and to hear from Her a vivid description of that chapter of Her life. The occasion was auspicious. It was *Vijaya Dasami*, (the day of immersion of the image after Durga Puja). The whole area had been inundated with mellowed moon light. Standing in the courtyard of the Siva temple, Ma was in a reminiscent mood. We all listened to Her, spell-bound. I asked a question :



“Were the austerities necessary for your spiritual uplift?” At once Ma said : “No” and then after a pause She added that the question of “uplift” can arise only where there are two comparative levels—that is to say, when a person rises from one level to a higher level. From what was uttered by Ma it became quite clear that in Her case there was no scope for spiritual uplift or improvement at any stage. The inevitable conclusion is that She must have been perfect since birth.

At Raipur Bholanath was mostly absorbed in *sādhana*; and Ma was absolutely free to be by Herself. Perhaps this was preparatory to what appears to us to be the next stage in the full manifestation of the budding mother in Ma—a stage in which Ma would no longer be in need of Bholanath either for Her appearance in public or for freely talking to strangers.

J. C. Roy, the Government Officer on leave, volunteered to act as a faithful attendant on Ma and Bholanath at Raipur. His unassuming dress and modest demeanour made him look very much like a menial. This fact created a problem for the local postal authorities. Notwithstanding frantic efforts they failed to trace at Raipur Mr. J. C. Roy, I. S. O., the addressee of certain important-looking letters sent by post by the Government of India. The fellow who claimed to be J. C. Roy did not look respectable enough to be the Government officer addressed on the envelope. At this juncture Bholanath identified J. C. Roy to the entire satisfaction of the postal authorities by giving out that G. C. Roy was the *dharma putra* (spiritual son) of Ma and himself. Thence forward J. C. Roy came to be known as “Bhaiji” (elder brother) of all “children” of Ma.

This interesting episode was recently narrated by Ma in Her inimitable manner, and She smilingly concluded by saying :

“This is the story of his being christened ‘Bhaiji’.

Some educated men of Dehradun heard from the Post Master the story of Bhaiji and his “Mother”. They became interested to have a look at the lady at whose feet a man of Bhaiji’s official position had completely surrendered himself. They belonged to the pioneer batch of the local people to have Ma’s *darśana*. They came just to satisfy their curiosity, but returned with their hearts full of adoration, and gave publicity to their experience in Her presence—an unprecedented feeling that She was near and dear beyond comparison. Gradually the number of visitors eager to have *darśana* of the “Mother from Bengal” increased. In no time She came to be known in Dehradun simply as *Mātaji* (revered mother). Thus, the local people now accepted Her as their own *Mātaji*; they were not prepared to have Her identified only with Bengal. This is how the erstwhile Mother of Shahbag spontaneously became also the “Mataji” of Her Hindi-speaking “children”.

Hari Ram Joshi, a Government official of the U. P. (United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, now named Uttar Pradesh) then posted at Dehradun, had heard about Ma from somebody. One day he called on Her out of curiosity. “At my first *darśana*,” he has observed, “Mataji’s enchanting and smiling face transformed my mind altogether. I had no preconceived notions about Her spiritual attainments, not having heard from any quarter anything about Her *sādhana* or supernatural powers.”\*

\* *Ma Anandamayi Lila, Memoirs of Hari Ram Joshi, p. 36.*

Thereafter Hari Ram Joshi became one of the life-long devotees of Ma. He had respectable connections in U. P. and was well-known to some leading personalities of India. Immensely benefited by his association with Ma, he made it almost the mission of his life to bring his friends and relations to receive Ma's grace. Among eminent persons introduced by him to Ma were Srimati Kamala Nehru, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Pandit Govinda Ballabh Pant and Seth Jammalal Bajaj, details of whose *darsana* of Ma will be given later.

Among the few persons who were fortunate enough to be blessed with the privilege of close association with Ma during Her stay at Raipur, two deserve special mention : Sri Manmatha Nath Chatterjee, an officer in the Survey of India Department, Dehradun, and his son Nrisinga Prasad. The former was a pious Brahmin, well-versed in religious texts and thoroughly acquainted with rituals. Later on Ma on certain occasions entrusted him with the duty of officiating as a priest. His son, then a motherless boy in his teens, was taken up by Ma almost in the same affectionate way as a mother in ordinary life takes care of her own child. The young boy had the unique privilege of listening to Ma's inspiring utterances which stood him in good stead throughout his later career as a member of the Indian Administrative Service and in his retired life.

### **In the limelight at Dehradun**

The rising sun needs no candle to illuminate its splendour. It is not only self-luminous but radiates light all around. So it is with Ma. The period of Her studied seclusion in the solitude of far off Raipur came to an end in due course;

and then She shone, like the sun, in the plenitude of Her spiritual grandeur which could no longer be confined to the narrow bounds of Raipur. The scene of Her *līlā* now shifted to Dehradun which is, in many respects, an antithesis to Raipur. A populous and prosperous town, Dehradun is modelled on western lines. Its population includes persons of varied and sophisticated culture, who hail from different parts of India - from the Punjab, Sind and Kashmir. It also happens to be one of the popular and fashionable health resorts of Uttar Pradesh.

In the first week of July, 1933, Ma left Raipur for Dehradun and had the *kheyāla* of selecting as Her temporary abode a room which was the annexe to a temple at Ananda Chawk. The worshippers who used to congregate to offer their daily prayers and homage to the deity of that temple looked with amazement upon the new lodger popularly known as "Bengali Ma". Never before had they set eyes on one like Her. She was a mystery to them. They were impelled automatically to bow down to Her in profound reverence. Among them were a few respectable Kashmiris: Kashi Narayan Tankhā and his wife (whom Ma gave the name of Mahalakshmi), Prakash Babu and his wife (whom Ma used to call Mira), and Triloki Babu and his wife (whom Mother named Kausalya). At Dehradun quite a number of Kashmiri families had settled down, some of them connected with the famous Nehru family. These Kashmiris and some others belonging to different communities became deeply attached to Ma and set an example of devotion, a model which others were inspired to follow.\*

\* *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi* by Gurupriya Devi, Vol II, p. 441.

The residents of Dehradun spoke different languages supposed to be Greek to Ma, and they did not understand Bengali. But the artificial barrier of the spoken language did not prove formidable at all. Those who were destined to receive Ma's grace, unerringly understood the language of Her eyes. To them Her benign glance was a deeply-felt message in itself; Her divine smile a charm to infuse a spirit of holiness. As at Dacca in the late twenties, so at Dehradun in the early thirties, Ma's very appearance, radiating a sacred light, arrested people's devout attention and evoked their solemn admiration. Thus history repeated itself: the common experience of strangers everywhere was exactly the same, namely, that to know Ma was to revere Her.

"To come to Ma and know Her  
was to stay and adore Her."

Very quickly Ma became a centre of attraction in Dehradun. People who had never before seen Ma were at once so impressed as to look upon Her as a goddess in human form - an embodiment of Love and Light.

One evening in July 1933, Kamala Nehru (wife of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who was then behind prison bars in Dehradun), accompanied by Hari Ram Joshi, came to the temple at Ananda Chawk for Ma's *darsana*. She sat on the floor close to Ma, touching Her body. Within a few minutes Kamala Nehru lay down on the floor as if to relax, and went into what appeared to be a trance. After she had regained consciousness Ma sent her to her residence. But Mrs. Nehru could not stay there for long; she came back to

Ma at about 11 p. m. and spent the night with Her. The experience of the first *darśana* followed by the mysterious influence of Ma's touch left in Kamala Nehru's mind an almost irresistible urge for constant association with Ma. She lived hardly for three years thereafter, most of the time in different Sanatoria for treatment of some chronic illness. During her stay in Switzerland she kept in touch with Ma through correspondence with Bhaiji. She was fortunate in having visions of Ma, sometimes in dreams and sometimes in waking hours, though physically separated from Her by thousands of miles.\* After Kamala Nehru's death, her illustrious husband kept in touch with Ma. Though he professed to be an agnostic, he used to come and pay homage to Her from time to time, notwithstanding his innumerable commitments when he was at the height of power. So does his daughter, Srimati Indira Gandhi, now, to whom Ma has been a solace in all circumstances.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya often used to spend the summer in Dehradun. Some time in 1935 he heard about Ma from Hari Ram Joshi and at once felt keen to see Her. The very first *darśana* left a deep impression on his mind, so much so that he treasured a photograph of Ma and placed it on his bedside table close to his head. He advised the teachers and students of the Banaras Hindu University, to go and have *darśana* of Ma. Once he took Her to Varanasi and arranged for *kirtan*. This was a memorable event in the history of the Banaras Hindu University. Perhaps it marked the beginning of the turning of the youth of U. P. towards Ma.

\* *Ma Anandamayi Lula-Memoirs of Hari Ram Joshi*, p. 55.

During Her stay in Dehradun commencing in July 1933, Ma seems to have developed a *kheyāla* to play the role of the Mother of all. This was a definite departure from the phase in Dacca where She had been the Ma of only a limited group. At Dacca a fringe of Her *sāri* was used as a veil to cover Her head (like a nun's hood), the conventional mark of feminine modesty in the presence of outsiders. At Raipur there was no sophisticated, formal society and hence no occasion for observance of the social convention. At Dehradun Ma openly came out of *purdah* (seclusion) as *the Mother of all*. To Her nobody could be reckoned as an 'outsider'.\* Again, She no longer needed Bholanath's permission to talk to anybody. In fact, Bholanath was for a long time away from Dehradun, engaged in *sādhana* at Uttarkasi in the Himalayas. Bhaiji alone stayed with Ma to look after Her. He had by that time retired from Government service and dedicated himself absolutely to Ma's service.

The number of Ma's devotees went on increasing. Bhaiji and Hari Ram Joshi felt the necessity to found an ashram at Dehradun. But Ma told them not to worry about ashram buildings for the real ashram or temple should be located within everyone's heart\*\*—"the Kingdom of God is within". Was this an indirect hint from Ma that the idea of establishing an ashram should be dropped? Perhaps one whose mind was not in tune with Ma's ways might have been misled to think so. But not Bhaiji. He could read Ma's *kheyāla*. He knew Ma's prohibition was not against *working for an ashram*, but against *worrying for an ashram building*. "Worry" invariably

\* *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi* by Gurupriya Devi.

\*\* *Ma Anandamayi Lila* Memoirs of Hari Ram Joshi, p. 70.

springs from the ego; it is rooted in desire, attachment and craving for the fruit of action. Bhajji was above those weaknesses. An ideal *Karmayogin* (one who seeks Realization through self-less work in a spirit of dedication), he went ahead with his work, and by May, 1936, the building for the proposed Ashram was completed on a plot of land at Kishenpur in Dehradun and Ma's fortieth birth anniversary was celebrated there.

The founding of Dehradun Ashram appears to be a landmark in the history of Ma's emergence into limelight as an all-India figure in the spiritual world. This Ashram has since become a centre for dissemination of the ideals of Love, Peace and Universal Brotherhood based on Ma's teachings. These ideals, embodied in and radiating from Ma, easily captured the imagination of the local people. In the district of Dehradun two other branches of Sri Sri Anandamayi Ashram have since been established - one at Raipur and the other at Kalyanvan.

“So long as we feel an impulse to defend the body and to retaliate on behalf of personality, returning tit for tat, we are dead.”

There is no safer test of greatness than the faculty to let mortifying and insulting expressions pass unheeded.”

— SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA



# From the Life of Mataji

**Bithika Mukerji**

( *Continued from the last issue* )

( October 1942-January 1944. )

At the end of October, 1942, Mataji left the district of Dehradun to go on one of Her usual unplanned tours. The whole country was experiencing the unsettled conditions of the war situation. Troop movements were given priority; travelling, therefore was fraught with uncertainties for civilians. Persuasively allaying the fears of Her companions to allow Her to travel under such conditions, Mataji first went to Solon, via Ambala. She had taken no women companions with Her this time but only a few brahmacharis. Swami Paramanandaji was with Her and from his occasional letters, the devotees came to know of Mataji's movements. She did not have the *kheyāla* to advertise Her presence, so the devotees of towns She visited sometimes remained ignorant of Her being near them. In this fashion She spent short periods in Sawai-Madhupur, Mathura and Karnavas. The end of December found Her in the village of Pundri in district Mainpuri at the residence of Sher Singji's daughter and son-in-law. Didi, who had been waiting impatiently at Raipur all this while was able to join Her here. She found Mataji suffering from a stomach-ache and reduced in health although looking Her own radiant self.

Plunging the whole countryside in despondency, Mataji came away to Vindhyachal at the beginning of the year 1943.

The small ashram on top of Astabhujia Hill immediately filled up with guests from nearby places and daily visitors from Mirzapur. The day of Saraswati-Puja drew near. One of the young girls, Sidhu, voiced the wishes of many by saying how nice it would be if the puja could be performed in the presence of Mataji. Mataji, to the delight of everyone suggested that since such a wish had been expressed, it could be carried out. Atul Thakur of the renowned Sadhan Samar Ashram was contacted for this purpose. Under his guidance, the puja was performed in a novel fashion. About a dozen men and women sitting in rows behind him participated jointly in the ritualistic worship of goddess Saraswati. As always, Mataji's presence gave it its own peculiar magic, thereby imparting to it an other-worldly character.

During the month of February, Mataji paid short visits to Varanasi and Allahabad but for the rest remained in Vindhyachal till the middle of March. In the first week of March, Prabhudat Brahmachariji came there for a couple of days. His mode of rendering obeisance to Mataji was a mixture of presumptuousness of a favourite child and the respectful attention of a devotee. His liveliness and childlike delight in everything amused everybody. A few days after his visit, Mataji left Vindhyachal for Calcutta. She did not stay beyond a day or two at any place at this time. Bahrampur and Dacca were visited by Her after a long interval. This part of the country being close to the Japanese front was especially conscious of the war but in Mataji's proximity all concerns receded to the background. For the duration of Her sojourn the devotees were able to concentrate on the timeless, forgetting the immediate demands of the moment. Mataji was in Calcutta for the

festival of Holi (March 22th) and returned to Vindhyachal via Deoghar and Varanasi on March 27th. From there She almost immediately travelled to Lucknow and Sitapur and from Sitapur by bus to Naimisharanya on April 1st. Mataji, in general, selected such destinations for Her travels which were reputed places of pilgrimage. On arrival at Naimisharanya, Mataji took up Her seat near the sacred tank and expected Her companions to take this opportunity of visiting all the temples in its vicinity. As may be conjectured, the lure of Her magnetic personality was more powerful than the silent appeal of Her precept. After a little while, Mataji Herself walked to the ancient temple of Siva and taking a garland from a vendor nearby, put it on the *lingam*. Now of course, everybody else wanted to do the same.

On returning to Sitapur it was decided that She would go to Delhi at the insistent invitation of the devotees of that town who were desirous of performing *nāma-yajña* in Her presence. On this occasion many devotees from Meerut, Jullundar, and Dehradun flocked together. Mataji stayed at Dr. J.K. Sen's residence at New Delhi. After these festivities which, as usual in Mataji's presence, assumed grand proportions, She returned to Raipur on April 8th.

In the last week of April, travelling through Haldwani and Bareilly, Mataji came to Almora. Raja Durga Singh of Solon had financed the construction of a beautiful *samādhi-mandir* over Bhaiji's grave at Patal Devi and also of a small cottage nearby. It was a secluded place, nestling at the foot of high mountain ranges. Mataji's companions took up abode in nearby cottages and a house was rented for the womenfolk,

It seemed possible that Mataji would remain at Almora for some time.

Almora then had the distinction of housing the famous Dance-School of Uday Shankar which happened to be quite close to the Ashram. A great bond of friendship was forged between the inmates of both places. Uday Shankar, Amala Devi, Simkie, Prabhat Babu, Sati Devi and others became frequent visitors. On May 3, Mataji's birthday, Uday Shankar arranged for a performance of his famous shadow-play of the Ramayana at his Culture Centre. They professed themselves honoured that they could have Mataji as audience. The precincts of the Centre were very beautiful. There was a Sivatemple on the site. The Siva-lingam had been found in the grounds and been installed by Uday Shankar. Mataji had frequent conversations with him and the teachers of his School on the subject of dance as a mode of *sādhanā*. One day She said, "This body is of course quite ignorant of what you call dance. But, would you believe it Pitaji, that when this body was engaged in the play of *sādhanā* it went through so many of the motions I have seen here, and many more. When this body performed '*ārati*', it would really be like a dance. Bholanath was at times amazed to see these postures which were assumed spontaneously, because he knew very well that even pictures of anything remotely similar were quite unknown here. There is of course a difference between learning and spontaneous expression. After all, the origin of all that exists, is the One alone. There is only the one rhythm pervading everything. If one knows the One, all is known. The One that is Bliss expresses Itself in multitudinous ways and dance is one such beautiful manifestation."

Abhaya promptly asked, "How about the dances which depict moods of sorrow?"

"That also is a form of gripping the attention. If executed perfectly, such dances give rise to a kind of satisfaction which is a quality of happiness."

Mataji at this time received an invitation from Prabhudattaji Maharaj to come to Sahasradhara to participate in the function of Bhāgavata Saptah which was being held under his aegis. Accompanied by Hariramji, Ram Singhji, Hansabhai, Sher Singhji, Govind Pandey and many others, Mataji responded to the invitation. She took this opportunity of visiting Doonga and Nainital as well. After the function at Sahasradhara, Prabhudattaji Maharaj was free to accompany Mataji back to Almora on June 12th. Brahmachariji's robust and lively personality created yet another type of atmosphere in the Ashram. Mataji was always more than a match for all his childlike mischievousness and it was he who enjoyed most Her spontaneous repartees which could silence him effectively. Such encounters ended in his uproarious laughter and the general enjoyment of the audience. Perhaps it is just right that Mataji should endear Herself to all categories of *sādhakas*. The dancer after all was invoking the presence of the same reality with his gentle and refined art as the vigorous worker with his dedication to religious uplift.

On June 25th Mataji went to see Jashoda Ma at Mirtola. This is about 15 miles to the interior from Almora. Arun Babu of Lucknow acted as an escort for Mataji. Jashoda Ma was not at all surprised to see Mataji. She said, "I have just finished reading Gurupriya's books on Ma. Since yester-

day I had an overwhelming desire to see Mataji. I knew that since I could not go to Her, Mataji would surely come to give me *darśana*. Intense yearning must bring about its fruit." Mataji and Her companions were delighted with the ashram and temple. Sri Krishna Prem, Sri Hari Das and Moti Rani became well-acquainted with Mataji.

Mataji remained in Almora for another month. Just when people were beginning to think that perhaps She would make a prolonged stay, She indicated Her *kheyāla* to leave for Vindhyachal. Swami Akhandanandaji had not been keeping good health for some time, so Mataji took him with Her to Vindhyachal at the end of July 1943. However, after about a fortnight Mataji returned to Almora. Durga Puja was celebrated every year at the Culture Centre of Uday Shankar, but this year due to the sudden passing away of their Guru, they could not engage in this festive programme. At Uday Shankar's request the puja was celebrated in Mataji's ashram on his behalf. The worship of the Daughter of the Himalayas in the Himalayas deeply moved the hearts and imagination of all devotees. As is always the case, Mataji's presence imparted to it the touch of perfection which is peculiarly Her own.

This was definitely the year of Almora. Mataji stayed on at the Ashram till the end of the year, visiting Dhawal-china for a few days, and other nearby places. Mataji's prolonged sojourn in this remote hill-town encouraged Parasuramji to hope that perhaps Almora would see more of Mataji if it could be made more comfortable for Her visits. He undertook to construct some rooms and other

facilities for Mataji and all those who may be accompanying Her. In the meantime, on the occasion of *Rasāpurnimā*, the sādhus from the Ramakrishna Mission were invited to come to the Ashram to sing their special *Rāmanāma Sankīrtana* which was greatly appreciated and enjoyed by all. Apart from these special occasions, Mataji every day gave *darśana* to innumerable visitors, and conversed with them on many subjects. One day She was asked, "How is it that no sooner one attempts to sit in meditation than sundry thoughts begin to impinge themselves on the mind?"

"Don't you know why one cannot concentrate? The desires act as repellents. Just as when you enter the sea, the waves keep on throwing you back to the beach; if you persevere and attain a deeper level then the waves cease to hinder," Mataji paused for a while and then elaborating on the same theme She said, "It is necessary to realise that there is nothing but the One alone. Desires are the return-tickets that ensure one's comings and goings in the world of duality. There is after all no duality. If you perceive Siva, you do not see a stone. And if you see a stone, you do not perceive Siva. Further, just as He is known by the name of 'Siva', He and no other is indicated by the word 'stone'. Neither can be extraneous to Him since all expressions and manifestations are His only."

In the beginning of 1944, Mataji at the invitation of Prabhudattaji, came to Jhunsi on the other side of the Ganges at Allahabad. Prabhudattaji had organised an assembly of renowned sādhus at his spacious ashram and gave special prominence to the presence of Mataji in their midst. He

received Her at the station with music and kīrtana and at Jhunsi She was escorted to Her rooms by a big procession. Brahmachariji told Her that he had made provision for more than a thousand of Her devotees if they wished to come to Jhunsi. In fact preparations on a very grand scale were under way. There was spacious accommodation for the housing of hundreds of visitors and a large Satsang-hall where eminent sādhus delivered discourses every evening to a large audience. Brahmachariji himself looked to the comforts of everyone and supervised all arrangements.

Nobody remarked on the fact that Mataji had been given a place of distinction among a concourse of sādhus, because it seemed so natural that this should be so.

( *To be continued* )

If you refrain from looking at  
 This or that or any other thing,  
 Then by that overpowering look  
 Into absolute Being you will become  
 Yourself the boundless space  
 Of pure Awareness which alone  
 Is real Being.

— MURUGANAR



## Mātri Upadeshāmrita

*This body is like a musical instrument; what you hear depends on how you play.*

—Mataji

( *Mātri Upadeshāmrita*, "The Nectar of Mother's Teaching", comprises excerpts from various sources of Sri Ma's spiritual instruction on selected subjects.

Compiled by Sister Uma ).

### On Satsang

To live in the presence of God who is Truth (*satya*)—this is indeed the meaning of *satsang*.

\*

\*

\*

To frequent the company of saints, sages and seekers after Truth is incumbent on man. Association of this kind will help to awaken his interest in That which is Real. The more consistently one seeks the fellowship of the spiritually minded the greater will be the benefit.

\*

\*

\*

When no opportunity can be found for coming into the physical presence of the Holy and wise, it behoves one to contemplate Vasudeva, the Divine Dweller in every human heart. By cultivating His presence one prepares oneself. One should select activities and surroundings that are apt to induce divine thoughts and aspirations (*sadbhāva*).

\*

\*

\*

Divine thoughts and aspirations ( *sadbhāva* ) are the essence of *satsang*; to the degree that we foster these the craving of the heart will be fulfilled and the mind stilled.

\* \* \*

Whatever place awakens *satchinta* (spiritual thoughts) in you, there you should stay. However, keep in mind, wherever in this universe *Bhagavān* may keep you in the measure that the thought of Him gains in intensity, there also is *satsang*. Immerse your mind in *japa* and meditation.

\* \* \*

A man who is well established in his true nature, who in other words knows Himself, who is indifferent to pleasure and pain since he is ever steeped in the bliss of the Eternal, is called a *sādhu*. Filled with universal love, he is free from cares and worries, munificent, of childlike simplicity and contentment. The very sight of such a great person spontaneously suffuses one's whole being with a heavenly joy, and his proximity evokes divine thoughts and aspirations. Just as water cleanses everything by its mere contact, even so, the sight, touch, blessing, nay the very remembrance of a real *sādhu*, little by little, clears away all impure desires and longings. Union with God is the one and only union man should seek. *Sādhus* or saints have had communion with God and hence there is saving grace in their presence. Like attracts like; for this reason, in our times, the company of the holy and wise--*satsang*--offers the most potent aid and inspiration to the earnest seeker. Saints may be compared to trees : They always point upwards and grant shade and shelter to all. They are free from likes and dislikes and whoever seeks refuge in

them wholeheartedly will find peace and fulfilment. When the burning desire to know Truth or Reality awakens in man, he has the good fortune of meeting a saint or sage. The holy and wise must be approached with a pure heart and a steady mind, with genuine faith and reverence. Much greater benefit will be derived by sitting still and meditating in their presence than by discussing or arguing. The behaviour of saints is not to be copied by ordinary people. But one should endeavour to carry out in one's life the teaching or advice received from them. Otherwise it would be like sowing any number of seeds without allowing a single one to grow into a plant; this would indeed be a matter of deep regret.

\*

\*

\*

He alone IS, the one Ātmā. Burn away your desires and passions by the fire of discrimination and renunciation or melt them by the flood of your devotion. In order to accomplish this melting process, seek the company of other pilgrims..... Resort to *satsang*, take refuge in mahātmās; that is to say, sit under a tree. Who is a tree? What does a tree do? The tree never invites anybody, neither does it chase anyone away. Thereafter it gives its own self away—it bestows its fruit. Go and seek the shelter of mahātmās.

\*

\*

\*

*Question* : What is the way to Self-knowledge ?

*Mataji* : *Satsang*.

\*

\*

\*

What is *satsang* ? *Sva* (own self) means *Sa* (He), God, Being-Consciousness-Bliss ( *Saccidānanda* ), the Ātmā—call it what you will. *Sva* is *Svayang*—That Itself, He in person.

*Sva-ang* signifies that God is eternally revealed in every part of creation. This is why it is said : *Seek satsang*, so that you may know yourself to be *Sva-ang* ( His own limb ) and know that He is ever revealed in every atom of creation.\*

\*

\*

\*

A man's belief is greatly influenced by his environment; therefore you should choose the company of the holy and the wise. Belief means to believe in one's own Self; disbelief means to mistake the non-self for one's Self.

\*

\*

\*

If you live with things "unpeaceful" how can you hope for peace? People are affected by the things in their vicinity. If you sit near a fire you feel the heat. If you are close to something very cold you feel cool. Similarly if you are living amidst distractions, how should peace descend on you? I do not say that men have to leave the world and stay in forests to find peace. But wherever you are you must live in the company of that which gives peace. I say to you, keep in mind always *God* who alone is Peace. Whether you call Him *Kali* or *Khuda* or *Allah* is immaterial because there is *One* only. The really important thing is to persevere : relentless perseverance brings about the change of perspective which will establish you in Peace.

\*

\*

\*

Why allow yourself to become agitated and excited? This is not the attitude fitting for a pilgrim on the spiritual path. On the contrary, by spending one's life in the awareness

---

\* *Ang*, part, limb. *Sva* and *Sa* are pronounced alike in Bengali.

of God, seeking the company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth, one's hopes and aspirations will be fulfilled.

\*

\*

\*

*Question* : How can the ordinary person acquire faith in the existence of God ?

*Mataji* : By seeking the company of saints and seekers after Truth, by listening to religious teaching, reading scriptures and carrying out the injunctions of the Lord. Are you not the offspring of the Immortal ? The Immortal is Self-effulgent and lets Himself be contacted through the company of saints. By associating with pilgrims on the path to God, the fire of faith will be kindled into a bright flame. Children study with the faith that, like everyone else, they will pass their examinations. Likewise, by watching others, devotees or yogīs, one gains the faith that enables one to tread the path.

\*

\*

\*

*Question* : How can one develop faith ?

*Mataji* : By keeping company with those who have faith. Travel with a traveller on the Path and sit in the shade of a "tree". But you never sit still; your mind strays here and there; even your eyes keep on wandering.

\*

\*

\*

*Question* : Why does the mind wander while doing *japa* ?

*Mataji* : The mind is like a child; it wanders in search of true happiness. If you give it the food of *satsang* it will not wander; therefore keep *satsang*.

\*

\*

\*

Just as after sowing a seed it has to be watered and manured, similarly the seed in the form of a mantra will be made to sprout when provided with the necessary nourishment in the form of *satsang*.

\*

\*

\*

*Question* : Mataji, how can the mind be made one-pointed ?

*Mataji* : Take care of the mind which can be compared to a child. If you serve the mind well it will get into the habit of being calm.....Remember that in order to control their children, parents choose the best company for them, that is to say, *satsang*. If children are given nourishing, wholesome food and are kept in the company of well educated people, they gradually take a liking to their studies. Real sustenance for the mind is provided by *satsang* and by the constant remembrance of God. Give more time to the thought of Him than to anything else. *Japa*, meditation, recitation of scriptures, chanting hymns in praise of God, the repetition of mantras - all these constitute the proper diet for the mind. By partaking of it the mind will gradually calm down and become one-pointed, just as when a small child is given a toy, he will stop crying and start playing with the toy, forgetting everything else. Therefore keep your mind constantly engaged in some pure and holy work. The mind should ever be busy with some God-centred activity. The I-ness with which you perform all your work must, with all its intelligence and energy, be consecrated to actions aiming at the Supreme One. Lay whatever you do at His holy feet. Thereby all your

undesirable tendencies will be obliterated. This is the way to serve your child, the mind.

\* \* \*

For how many more days can you live by external light like that of sun and moon? When your eyes fail, when your body becomes feeble with age and your intellect clouded, you will be left to grope in utter darkness. Set to work while there is yet time and try to kindle the inner light. In the hearth of the mind ignite the fire of Self-inquiry or the fire of God's Name; fan it into a blazing flame by associating with the holy and wise, by prayer and meditation. Little by little this light will grow bright and steady and illumine you both inwardly and outwardly; thereby the path to Self-realization will be made easy.

\* \* \*

"Remember Him, remember Him, day after day, hour after hour, remember Him!" By constantly sustaining the flow of God's Name the days of your imprisonment in this world will expire. That you are working for your own uplift goes without saying. But this is not enough: Wherever you may be placed, call others also to join you. Untiringly entreat those of your fellow-men whose lives are divorced from religion to turn their thought to the Divine. Associate with seekers who with a pure heart aspire towards the realization of God and try to join them in their endeavour; and further, let your life be blessed and fulfilled by the company of those who by first-hand knowledge know the greatness of God.

\* \* \*

Let your thoughts dwell constantly on the Supreme Reality; endeavour to let your mind be absorbed in That. At all times be truthful in speech, uncompromising in self-discipline and devote yourself to the study of books of wisdom and to *satsang*. Cherish the company of those who are helpful in your quest, avoid those who distract you; in other words, hold fast to the good and shun the merely pleasurable. If you live in this spirit, the help you need will come to you naturally, unasked.

\* \* \*

To associate with pilgrims on the path to Self-realization means to open oneself to good sense, to right discrimination. But taking a wrong path leads to distraction and restlessness.

\* \* \*

By prolonged residence in a *satskhāna*, in other words, a place dedicated to the Divine and the search after Truth, and by *satsang*, *sadbuddhi* (true understanding) will be awakened.

\* \* \*

To some people the remembrance of God comes easily, they cannot remain without it. In this way they keep *satsang* with God. When repeating a mantra or one of God's names, He is present as that mantra or name; one should bear this in mind. Some say they go on repeating "Rāma" but to no effect. *Jemon bhāva temon lābh* : The benefit derived from one's practice depends on one's sincerity and fervour. *Kirtan*, *satsang*, listening to religious discourses and so forth, are only the means of sustaining the remembrance of God. When one speaks about Him or sings His praises, He Himself is present.

\* \* \*



What this body says is "Keep *satsang*". *Satsang* in reality means the revelation of What Is (*sat svarūpa ka prakāśa*)! Remain in the shade of trees, trees meaning mahātmās, seekers after Truth—those who do not call anyone nor send anyone away. Listen to them! Who can tell when you will learn how to listen and then you will hear the *Śabda Brahman* so that there will be no more listener and no listening. A similar thing holds good for what is called *darśana*. People come, have *darśana* and go away again. But real *darśana* means that one can never be apart from the vision anymore.

\* \* \*

*Question* : Many come to enlightened sages. Some make progress, others go downwards. Is this due to their actions in previous lives?

*Mataji* : If one approaches an enlightened sage, there is no such thing as "going downwards". Can you expect to go near fire and not be scorched even a little?

*Question* : What does it mean to approach an enlightened being?

*Mataji* : For a sage, "near" or "far" does not exist. If you think of distance you have not really approached him.

*Question* : If one comes to you even partially, does one stand to gain?

*Mataji* : If you come to your Self even partially you stand to gain. To come frequently to enlightened beings has for purpose deliverance from the round of births and deaths, release from coming and going. To really come signifies not to go away anymore.

\* \* \*

*Question* : What is the meaning of your birthday ? According to the Vedanta Śāstra, nobody is born and nobody dies.

*Mataji* : This body says that it was not born. Sri Krishna had no birth, yet people are celebrating His *Janmastami*. By celebrating such occasions there is an increase of devotion, true knowledge and *satsang* among devotees, and therefore I do not object to these activities. I enjoy them as others enjoy them. It is a similar function as on *Ramnavami*\* day. On such occasions saints and devotees gather together, have discussions and many questions are solved. Therefore, the level from which the birthday celebrations are viewed must be taken into consideration.

\* \* \*  
*Question* : The scriptures say that a few minutes of *satsang* can free the *sādhaka* from the sins committed in millions of his former births.

*Mataji* : How well said ! To engage in *satsang* is the straight, simple road.

*Question* : Can one attain Supreme Bliss (*Paramānanda*) through *satsang* ?

*Mataji* : *Satsang* opens the way that leads to Supreme Bliss.

*Question* : Only just opens the way ? Does it not accomplish the objective of bestowing Supreme Bliss ?

*Mataji* : (smiling) : Oh well, first let the road be clear, only then can there be attainment !

\* Sri Rama's birthday.

*Question* : For the last thirty years I have kept *satsang*, yet my mind is not at peace. Like an ox that turns the wheel of an oil mill I revolve and revolve. How can I find peace ?

*Mataji* : You have indeed kept *satsang*, but you have not reflected upon what you have been told. You have listened to words of wisdom, yet you have not acted according to the injunctions of the wise; you have not thought deeply, not contemplated as advised. How will you win the Guru's grace ?

*Question* : Why should the wise not let me have a share of what they have earned ?

*Mataji* : So you wish to enjoy the fruit of another's labour ? So long as you do not meditate and act upon what you have been told, how can the path open out for you ? If you practise whatever *sādhana* that suits your temperament and is within your capacity, your inner power will develop and increase. God is the Life of life, the Self. There is only one Life, one Self. In order to realize, to know It, you must resort to the spiritual exercise that appeals to you from deep within you. What have you done to find Him ? How much work you do for worldly ends; how much trouble you take ! But you sit down idly over the fact that you have forgotten your true nature - that you are the *Ātmā*, that your yourself are Peace.

\*

\*

\*

It lies in the nature of the mind to accept, to react in a particular way. Some events make the mind happy, others render it disconsolate.....All this is merely the play of the mind. As a rule the mind conceives physical attraction; true love does not exist between individuals. When a human being

(*jīva*) is consumed by true love for Śiva (God) then his essential Being becomes revealed. The Self alone exists. Just as a son is looked upon as having originated from one's Self, so also a true disciple. This body says that the mind constantly roams about everywhere; therefore, sit under a tree, in other words, at the feet of a mahātmā. Just as you find shelter and peace when sitting under a tree and the tree gives of itself in the shape of fruit, so when you take refuge at the feet of a mahātmā he bestows on you peace of mind and the realization of the Self. God is what you imagine Him to be. What does mere physical attraction lead to from the worldly point of view? To death. While if you fix your mind on God's lotus feet you become a conqueror of death, you receive the nectar of true love and God's living Presence will be revealed in its effulgence.

*Mataji* : .....When you are ill, do you not consult a doctor and carry out his prescription? Do likewise here.

*Question* : But I do not understand that I am ill.

*Mataji* : Have you any comprehension at all?

*Questioner* : I have not.

*Mataji* : Then why do you ask questions? Those who do not study have nothing to ask, and those who have passed their tests have no more questions. Since you have come here expecting an answer, what is the right course for you to take? Seek the company of pilgrims on the Path.

*Question* : By cultivating their company will I be able to understand?

*Mataji* : Most certainly.

*Question* : Is there no other way ?

*Mataji* : Will you listen to what I tell you ? Go to the doctor and take his medicine. Then you will come to know that you are ill. Go to the doctor and obey him in whatever he says.

\* \* \*

To listen to discourses on God or Truth is certainly beneficial provided one does not allow oneself to be moved by a spirit of faultfinding or disparagement should there be differences of outlook to one's own. To find fault with others creates obstacles for everyone all around : for him who criticizes, for him who is blamed as well as for those who listen to the criticism. Whereas, what is said in a spirit of appreciation is fruitful to everybody. For only where there is no question of regarding anything as inferior or blameworthy (*asat*) can one call it *satsang*.

\* \* \*

*Question* : How, in your absence, will the devotees derive the greatest benefit from this spiritual gathering (*satsang*) ?

*Mataji* : Mā Kālī, Gopal and Lord Śiva have their abode in this Ashram.\* If you wish to benefit by their nearness, you must keep in mind that they are actually present here. Every day remember this at some time or other. They never stop giving *darsana*, as it were. Practise their presence all the time. You may not hear or see them, yet you will receive the blessing of their *satsang* from this. And whenever

---

\* Shree Anandamayee Ma Ashram in Ranchi.

you feel the urge, sit in meditation near the image of Kālī. The more you meditate the better for you. Mā Kālī is here for your good. In dream or during meditation She sometimes speaks to one or the other. There is another thing to be remembered : Whatever exists, exists in your mind. Therefore try to see Him within your mind as much as possible.

\*

\*

\*

*Question* : In *satsang* who keeps company with whom ?

*Mataji* : You keep company with your Self.

*Question* : To what purpose ?

*Mataji* : So that Truth, Supreme Knowledge may be revealed. You should seek *satsang* in order to attain to Self-realization.

*Question* : Which aspect of my being associates with what other aspect ?

*Mataji* : Your being has innumerable aspects; you in your aspect of ignorance associate with yourself in your aspect of Knowledge. In other words, your outer self concentrates and makes contact with your innermost Self.

*Question* : Is it right to have faith when seeking *satsang* ?

*Mataji* : Certainly. It is you yourself who exist also in the form of faith.

*Question* : It is surely appropriate to seek *satsang* with full consciousness.

*Mataji* : The objective of *satsang* is to awaken to full consciousness, to progress from unconsciousness to consciousness.

\*

\*

\*

*Question*: Does the repetition of God's Name also amount to *satsang*?

*Mataji*: Most certainly! For He is present as the Name. Verily, the essence of Truth (*satya*) is He; the essence of the mantra is He. The significance of the Name is that its constant repetition will make it easy for the aspirant to advance towards God. It is He who is present in the form of the Name, the letter (*akṣara*) and the mantra. Therefore to be with any of them is also *satsang*: You have found Him in the guise of the Name.

—: o :—

**I've had a wonderful darshan to-day**

(A devotee)

When Mataji graced Dehradun with Her divine presence at the end of April, a blind boy from the Training Center used to visit Her every evening. He would place his offering of a magnolia flower at Her feet, do obeisance and then sit down quietly. Ma would talk with the children or tell parables and stories which helped the spiritual upliftment of the people present. When the meeting was over, all left reluctantly but with full hearts. On the way back to the Blind School, the blind boy would invariably say to his companion. "Today I've had a wonderful *daršana*!" His words show that *daršana* is not with the eyes but is elation felt in the heart while in the presence of a divine Teacher.

## Homage to Rāma Tīrtha

Narayan (U. S. A.)

Like a shooting star appeared Svāmī Rāma Tīrtha at the beginning of this century. Of an ordinary brahmin family and common upbringing in Punjab, the boy was quiet, obedient, unassuming, studious, but possessed of a will undeterrable—the will to complete Knowledge. So from childhood on he was the bold architect of his own life—day by day building, building—as if he saw in his mind's eye the mission awaiting him. Early in life he threw aside any fears of self-overcoming, and despite all obstacles created his own inner environment of highest ideals and arranged inner satsang with master-minds and rishis. As his *sādhana* intensified he sought to verify every teaching by his own experience. He used his life as a testing ground for *bhakti* and *jñāna*. After years of anguishing separation from the Mahā-Beloved, years of attentiveness to Gurudev, years of close analysis of Upanishads and saints' lives, the ego-cocoon broke open and Rāma emerged in Liberty.

Before the age of thirty Svāmī Rāma was preaching the science of divine life around the planet and finding response particularly in America. Here in the forested Sierran foothills of Kalifornia he passed some of his happiest months. Most of the day would find him sitting on a rock in the rapid stream—reading, submerging in Stillness, emerging to study, poetize—and laugh. His self-caused, unbounded laughter could be



heard by friends long distances away over the rushing water's constant AUM-ing. Then back in India he plunged more and more into Himalayan solitude. Interest in reading and writing fell away. He no longer needed to communicate face to face with audiences--blessings would flow into the world of troubled fellow-beings less from his activity than from his increasing absorption in silent Oneness. "Though Rāma may not seem to finish the tasks at hand," he would tell anxious inquirers, "the renaissance of practical Vedānta will prevail in its own time. The ideals that have animated Rāma's life will some time be propagated by hands more capable than his." At thirty-three he left his body while swimming in the turbulent rapids high up in river Gangā.

*Sarvam khalvidam brahma* (Here-there-everywhere One Spirit) was his unbroken ecstatic experience. His vision - everything is holy; his feeling - all are my very own; his *Ista - Ātmādeva* (Self-Light).

Rāma Tirtha taught through image and story rather than through doctrine. His words flow out of perfect knowing and perfect loving - but as poet-philosopher he never bothered to polish his writing. Transcriptions of his lectures, some letters and poem-fragments were published mostly posthumously. So a few lines, tossed off probably in California, impregnated with his typical *bhāva* of fiery and uncompromising Advaita, have expanded 75 years later on the Sierran spring winds into the following song.

Pranāms to Swami Rama !

### Vedantin to Battle

( recitation )

Hidden Vedantin continually chants in secret :

1. Foes contend, mates befriend in Me,  
serene beyond chains of relation am I,  
Seeker-Sought, in silent sound, mystic might,  
guise of pleasure, torture...alone I—I.
2. What Is begins and ends in Me  
each creature's primal seed am I,  
Planets float as joyful bubbles in Me,  
stars wink close by, ensphered in I-I.
3. Infinite-finite as if at odds pose,  
yet One evolving-dissolving am I,  
Myriad beads my whole mala compose,  
call it He-She-That—alone I-I.

Hidden Vedantin throws aside cares and fears,  
explodes forth to fight, claims Liberty by right :

(bhajan)

4. AUM... AUM...

Non can dissuade me, say, what can stop me now :  
Hah ! wheel of birth-death smashed at my feet !  
I come ablaze in light, all shadows must flee !

Jai Ho... Jai Ho...

My candle lightning, thunder my bell—  
The Unknown's thousand terrors i count *prasād*.

5. AUM... AUM...

None can dissuade me, say, what can stop me now :  
I sail thru the tempest astride on the gale,  
No cyclone of *samsār* shall cause my aim to fail !

Jai Ho... Jai Ho...

Hey, raging ocean, trouble not, be still—  
Or by fiery eye scorched up, be dried up to nil.

6. AUM— AUM—

None can dissuade me, say, what can stop me now :  
I yoke to my chariot fates, titans, gods.  
Shake off delusion, wake up, be Free !  
Light ends confusion, i am that I AM !

Jai Ho... Jai Ho...

Roar O winds roar, blow bugles blow—  
Cosmos vibrates Liberty, Liberty—OM !  
Liberty, Liberty, Liberty OM—Śiva !  
Mokṣa, Mokṣa, Mokṣa OM—Kālī !

By Narāyan

Copyright 1978 Matri Satsang

"This body always says ; where have I got a place to stay  
except in the hearts of you all."

Anandamayi Ma

## Mātri Līlā

( April 10th to July 10th, 1978. )

Swami Muktananda Giriji's ( Didima's ) year long centenary celebrations culminated on April 16th, the last day of *Chaitra*, with great pomp and ceremony. From a few days earlier ending on Sunday, April 16th, a very special *Rudrabhishekha* was performed in her memory by expert priests, led by Pandit Ranganath Tripathi, the renowned Acharya of Kashi.

On April 14th, Didima's *sannyāsa utsava* was commemorated by a concentrated programme commencing at 6-30 a.m. with *Mangala Ārati* in front of Didima's life-like statue, followed by *Usha kirtana* and *Nagar Sankirtana*. The singing continued right through the pūjā up to 10-30 a.m. Then all the leading Mahātmās of the locality assembled in a pandal erected for this occasion under the spreading banyantree between the *Yajña Sālā* and the sādhus' building in our compound. As many as sixteen Mahamandaleswaras were present including Swami Brahmananda of Sannyāsa Ashram, Swami Prakashānanda of Jagatguru Ashram, Swami Girdhar Narayan Puri of Nirvani Akhāra, Swami Purnananda of Sri Krishna Nivas Ashram, Swami Govindananda of Bholagiri Ashram, Swami Raghunath Giri, Swami Divyananda, Swami Akhandananda of Sanskrit Vidyalaya Uttarkashi, Swami Vareshananda ( in charge of Ramakrishna Mission Hospital, Kankhal ), Mahanta

Swaran Puri of Kurukshetra and others. Impressive speeches were given by most of the mahātmās on Didima, her life and relationship with Mataji. Mataji was present from early morning and also at the feast which was served to about 180 sādhus and mahātmās in our spacious hall. At 5 p. m. satsang took place in the hall and at 7-30 p. m. evening ārati was performed in front of Didima's statue in Mataji's presence. After the usual evening kirtana the ladies started an all-night singing of *Mahāmantra* to herald the Bhāgavata Saptah, commencing on the 15th morning.

Mataji received frequent visits of mahātmās passing through Kankhal, such as Swami Sri Hansa Prakash, successor of Sri Govinda Prakash of Ramatirtha Ashram on the 12th, Swami Amar Muni, President of the same Ashram on the 13th, together with Swami Akhandananda of Uttarkashi; on the 17th the venerable 95 years old, blind Swami Gangeshwarananda of *Udasin Sampradaya*. The Mahantās of various *Akhāras* came off and on.

On May 7th, General Raina, Chief of Staff of the Army and Sm. Raina, accompanied by Swami Madhavananda of Sivananda Ashram Rishikesh, Lt. Gen. Chitter, Maj. Gen. Bakshi, Brigadier Sabharwal and other senior Army officers paid a visit to Mataji and took part in a memorable satsang from 6-7 p. m. in the hall.

On several occasions, Mataji followed the invitations of local mahātmās to grace special functions. On April 13th She was present at the opening of a Sanskrit College by the Avadhuta Mandal, composed of Mahamandaleshwar Swami Gurucharan Das' disciples. On the 16th, Mataji attended the opening of a hospital by the Udasin Sampradaya.

April 15th was an auspicious day, on which Annapurna Pūjā is celebrated in our Kashi Ashram. Many lady devotees took the opportunity of worshipping Mataji that morning. Just as the pūjā of a Calcutta devotee was completed, the pandits who were performing *Rudrabhishekha*, suddenly turned up and started reciting *Devi Sukta* before Mataji in sonorous Sanskrit.

On April 12th, Sm. Tarulata Chatterji had arrived from Calcutta with eleven family members to institute a *Bhāgavata Saptah* from 15th to 22nd in the sacred memory of her husband, the late Rai Bahadur Debendranath Chatterji. On the 15th morning the holy Bhāgavata Purāṇa was ceremoniously installed amidst kirtana and chanting and at 5p. m. the *Mahātmya* (glorification) was narrated in Bengali by the erudite and eloquent expounder of the Srimad Bhagavata, Professor Sri Narayan Goswami of Calcutta. On the next seven days, he gave detailed discourses from 8-30 to 10-30 a. m. and 4-30 to 6-30 p.m. on the Bhāgavata, while the original Sanskrit text was chanted in a separate room by a set of pandits from 7-30 a. m. to 12-30 p. m.

By the same Bhāgavata Saptaha the mother of Brahmacharini Pushpa was commemorated by her, her father Swami Krishnananda Giri, his son and daughter-in-law, while Sm. Kanti Dutta of Delhi commemorated her deceased parents.

On the 17th morning Mataji was present from 7 a. m. onwards at the adjoining Daksheshwar Mandir to grace a special pūjā and Rudrabhisheka by Sri and Sm. Lahiri of N. Delhi.

Mataji could not be present throughout the rendering of the Bhāgavata, but She continued to inspire Sri Narayan Goswami at critical moments, as for instance at the start of his talk at 8-30 a. m. on the 18th, when She appeared like a radiant celestial vision at the ventilator on the 1st floor overlooking the hall.

Sri Krishna's birth was related on the 19th evening and celebrated by the blowing of conch shells, recitation from the Vedas and by songs and hymns led by Br. Pushpa.

On April 20th at 7-15 a. m. Mataji left by car for Dehradun following an urgent invitation to Ramatirtha Ashram at Rajpur, where a new temple was consecrated in Her presence. Mataji then paid a flying visit to Her Ashram at Kishenpur, where She and Her large party partook of their midday meal and devotees of Dehradun had a short *darśana*. By about 3 p. m. Mataji was back at Kankhal and came to the hall for the later part of the Bhāgavata session, remaining seated till 7-30 p. m. to everyone's great delight.

Mataji as well as Mahant Sri Girdhar Narayan Puri were present at the impressive ending of the Bhāgavata rendering in Bengali by 6 p. m. on the 22nd. The next morning, between 8 and 10 a. m. the purnāhuti of the Bhāgavata was celebrated by a *yajña* in the open courtyard beside the *yajña-śālā*. The day was cloudy and a few auspicious raindrops fell. Mataji was in an excellent mood, distributing *prasāda* right and left and allowing photos to be taken of Her with the Bhagavata performers, their relatives, friends and even outsiders.

The same evening at 7-30 p. m. *adhivāsa kirtana* of a

*Nāma yajna* commenced in the presence of Mataji and a large crowd. Devotees from Calcutta and Delhi had constructed a beautiful *mancha* (*circular altar*) in the centre of the hall. The singing of "Hare Krishna" etc was taken over by ladies at 11 p. m. and continued till 5-30 the next morning, when the menfolk resumed the singing for the whole day on the 24th. Mataji took part in the *kirtana* briefly at 10 a. m. and at 5 p. m. After the *Nagar kirtana* and the conclusion of the *Nāma Yajna* at 7-30 p. m., Mataji was persuaded to sing very softly "Dhara lao" and after 8 p. m., *prasāda* was distributed to the entire assembly in Mataji's presence.

The Bhāgavata party returned to Calcutta the same night, while Mataji stayed on quietly for a few days and then motored to Dehradun on April 29th. There She spent four restful days and nights at "Panchavati", Her cottage in the compound of Mr. and Mrs. Khaitan, next to Kalyanvan.

Mataji gave *darśana* daily from 6 to 7 p. m. on the open terrace which commands a magnificent view on the surrounding hills. Swami Prakashananda would give a short talk and then Mataji Herself would tell stories according to Her *kheyāla*.

On May 2nd, *Akhaṇḍa Rāmāyana* was started at the Kishenpur Ashram and Mataji graced the completion (*ṣurnā-huti*) in the early morning of May 3rd for a short while and then motored straight back to Kankhal, where She alighted by 10 a. m. The same evening She visited the Sannyāsa Ashram of the late Mahamandaleshwara Swami Maheshwarananda on the occasion of his *Tirodhan Utsava* (*Mahāsamādhi*).

That night, the 19th of Vaisakh, Mataji's birthday pūjā was performed on Mataji's portrait inside our Siva temple by



Br. Nirvanananda from 3 a. m. on May 4th, accompanied by sweet songs of the Ashram girls until 4-45 a. m. when *Mangal Ārati* was performed in Ma's presence, as She had been lying all night inside Didima's temple. This was followed by *Usha Kirtana* and *Nagar Kirtana* before the crowd dispersed.

Mataji then shifted to the 1st floor room of Her old abode opposite Didima's temple, but continued Her *lilā* from the window of Her veranda, throwing fruit and sweets to the congregation gathered below in the courtyard for *darśana* mornings and evenings.

Mataji now turned the full focus of Her attention towards the installation of Adi Sankaracharya's statue along the west wall of our hall. She therefore moved to Her ground-floor room of the Guest - House on the 6th night. Work had earlier been hampered and restricted by the unavoidable late delivery of materials, but Sri P. L. Varma, the retd. Chief Engineer of Chandigarh, with the rich experience of building our Kashi Gopal Mandir and Didimas' Samādhi Mandir at Kankhal behind him, together with the resources of the indefatigable Panuda, a special crew of marble masons from Vrindaban and an erecting gang from Delhi, accomplished a near miracle by finishing most of the marble work by the 6th. The prefabricated ornamental brass canopy to serve as the roof of the temple was hoisted in place the same day with all available skilled and unskilled labour. The five Karauli stone sculptured motifs serving as the base of the mandir depict the four main Sankaracharya *Maths* (monasteries) at Dwarka, Sringeri, Jyotir Math and Govardhan (Puri), flanking the central theme of Sankaracharya's birth place at Kalladi. Four *Mahā-*

*vākyas* are inscribed below the four Maths, while Sankara's main edict is below his birth-place.

On the 8th there were elaborate rituals in connection with the new temple and the main *sankalpa* was read out. The same evening the statue which depicts Sankaracharya as a young ascetic of the age of 16 or so, of inspired and noble mien, was enclosed in rice to the accompaniment of ritual mantras. On the 9th morning, after purification by *ghee*, the statue was bathed in the waters of 108 pitchers of Ganges water fetched from the nearby Ganga by twenty-one Brahmins after straining through muslin. The statue was then wiped dry and clothed in saffron robes. The same evening the *murti* was put to bed by a very impressive ceremony, to be given rest before the arduous programme on the next day.

On May 10th at 6.15 a. m., Sri Sri 1008 Swami Shantananda Saraswati Maharaj, the Sankaracharya of Jyotir Math, arrived by car directly from Prayag and was met by Mataji in person in front of our Ashram. The long procession that started soon after was headed by a jeep with banner, then came two bands ( one of brass and the other of bagpipes ), Ashram Brahmacharis with tall flags, then devotees walking in rows of twos, thereafter Adi Sankaracharya's *murti* in a special chariot drawn by devotees. This was followed by an open cart with Ashram girls singing kirtana and then came Mataji and Swami Shantanandaji in a large limousine flanked by Ashram guards and finally private cars and senior lady devotees in a bus.

Amidst great ceremony and fanfare the procession slowly moved its way reaching Brahmakunda by 8 a. m., stopping briefly at certain points for various *akhāras* and institutions to

pay their homage to Adi Sankaracharya's *murti*, to Mataji and Sri Sankaracharya of Jyotirmath. It halted for some time at the top of Brahmakunda ghat before returning via Mayapur (Bholagiri Ashram) by 10 a. m.

By 10.30, Sankaracharya's *murti* was raised to its full height and an hour later the entire work of installation by Swami Shantanandaji, Mataji and several Mahamandaleswars present was completed. An elaborate *pūjā* and *homa* (sacrificial fire) followed.

At 5 p. m. Sri Swami Shantanandaji Maharaj gave an eloquent lecture on Adi Sankaracharya's earlier life and his Brahma Sutra. He spoke again at 11 a. m. the next day, departing at 3.30 p. m., personally seen off by Mataji and all senior members of the Ashram.

That very day ( 11th May ) another Bhāgavata Saptah was inaugurated with the narration of the *Mahātmya* in Bengali by Sri Narayan Goswami. Mr. and Mrs. Chinmaya Ganguli of Bhadreswar and Sm. Basanti Maitra had arranged the function for the good of the souls of their deceased relatives.

Mention should be made here of the hurricane visit of Sri and Sm. Gopal Mitra, who are disciples of Thakur Sri Sitaram Omkarnath, with their friends on 11th and 12th of May. The menfolk gave eloquent testimony of their prowess by singing the *Mahāmantra* in between other hall functions whenever the opportunity arose.

On May 12th, Adi Sankaracharya's birthday was celebrated throughout India. An elaborate *pūjā* was per-

formed of the newly installed Sankaracharyaji in our hall. Twelve Mahamandaleswaras had been invited and were presented with holy scriptures and rosaries by Mataji in public and then entertained to a sumptuous feast.

Five Mahamandaleswaras delivered interesting speeches suitable to the occasion, and Swami Swarupananda performed *ārati* before the mahātmās on behalf of the Ashram.

The Bhāgavata Saptaha was completed on May 18th and on the 19th Mataji and Her entire entourage moved to Sri Krishna Nivāsa Ashram Kankhal where at the invitation of Mahamandaleshwara Sri Sri 108 Swami Purnananda Giri Maharaj of Sri Panchayati Akhāra Mahanirvāni, Mataji's birthday was celebrated until May 26th.

Mataji's birthday celebrations always mark a climax in the lives of Her devotees. The atmosphere of *ānanda* and extreme sanctity that prevails is bound to uplift everyone present to heights of harmony and universal love difficult to reach at other times. Men, women and children flocked from far and near, increasing to over a thousand in the last two days. Mataji was quite indefatigable giving attention to every single person throughout the day and half the night. She was present almost daily for some time for the Rāsaliḷā or Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Liḷā that was performed from 7-80 to 10 a. m. with great artistic skill and religious feeling by Sri Har Govinda's party from Vrindaban. Then She attended part of the satsang held up to midday and again in the late afternoon and at night She replied to questions for half an hour or more in Her own unique, lively and witty manner. In between She received any number of visitors and granted

private interviews. So many Mahamandaleswaras and Mahatmas assembled on the dais for the Satsang that each speaker, however brilliant, had only 10-20 minutes at his disposal. On the last day Swami Akhandananda Saraswati of Vrindaban arrived and gave a speech.

All arrangements were excellent and everything proceeded smoothly without a hitch. An enormous pandal erected over the Ashram lawn had been joined to the hall so that there was ample space for the large congregation. Several spacious Ashrams in the close vicinity of Sri Krishna Nivas Ashram provided accommodation for all who could not be given space in this Ashram itself. A large pandal spread over a courtyard served as dining hall. All the functions observed yearly during Mataji birthday celebrations were of course kept up. There was uninterrupted japa day and night from 3rd to 26th May, kirtana, recitation of Vishnu *Sahasra Nāma*, *Chandi Pātha*, *Kumāri Pūjā* and feeding, etc. etc.

One evening Mataji, with a large concourse of Her devotees, attended Ganga *Āratī* at Harkipauri. On the last day She visited our Ashram for a couple of hours where some functions took place as well.

For the *tithi pūjā* the hall was beautifully and tastefully decorated. The entire pūjā, performed by Br. Nirvanananda, was accompanied by sweet, melodious songs, sung by the Ashram singers; at the time of Mataji's advent on earth, half an hour's silent meditation was observed.

In the morning, Mataji could be carried to Her room already at about 8.30 a. m. and devotees who had to leave were allowed to see Her briefly in the afternoon.

In the evening Mataji and Her people returned to our own Ashram at Kankhal. At night *adhivāsa kirtana* was performed in Mataj's presence followed by *Nāma Yajña*. The ladies sang all night and were relieved by the men who continued until the 27th evening when the function was concluded in the presence of Mataji, a fitting climax to Her birthday celebrations.

On June 2nd Mataji left by car for an undisclosed destination which turned out to be Narendra Nagar, where She enjoyed a few days' rest in delightful, pleasant and quiet surroundings. On June 8th Mataji came to Kankhal for a few hours to grace the sacred thread ceremony of a few boys from Calcutta. On the 14th She again visited Kankhal remaining till the 18th. During Her sojourn, Ganga Dasserah ( the descent of Ganga to earth ) was celebrated. Only three more days were spent in beautiful Narendra Nagar. On June 21st Mataji alighted at Kankhal and remained until July 10th when She boarded the night train to Delhi, en route to Vrindaban, where Gurupurnima was celebrated on July 20th.

Durga Puja is to be held from 3rd Oct. to 11th Oct. in Mataji's presence at Gondal, Gujarat and the Samyam Mahavrata at Naria, Gujarat from 7th Nov. to 14th Nov.

---