

# ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

*A quarterly presenting the divine life and teaching of  
SRI ANANDAMAYI MA and various aspects of  
Universal Dharma*

\* \* \* \*

## *Advisory Editorial Board*

**Dr. Govinda Gopal Mukhopadhyaya**  
**Sri R. K. Banerjee**  
**Sri Jainath Kaul**  
**Dr. Bithika Mukerji**  
**Sri T. Sadasivan Aiyar**  
**Brahmachari Ram**

\* \* \* \*

*Editor : Atmananda*

---

ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ welcomes contributions on the life and teachings of Ma and reflections and personal experiences of Ma's devotees and admirers. Articles on religious and philosophical subjects as well as on lives of saints and sages of all countries and all times are also invited. Articles should as far as practicable be typed with double spacing and on one side of the page.

---

## —: ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:—

*(Postage Free)*

INDIA—	Rs. 12/- only	
FOREIGN—	<i>Sea Mail</i>	<i>Air Mail</i>
America	\$ 4.00	\$ 8.00
Other Countries	£ 2.00	£ 3.50

# ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

\*

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

---

Vol. XXVIII ● JANUARY, 1981 ● No. 1

---

## CONTENTS

1. In Memoriam—Sri Gurupriya Ananda Giri	i
2. In Memoriam—Swami Bhagavatananda Giri	vii
3. Sri Sri Ma's Utterances ...	1—4
4. Recording Sri Sri Ma's Songs and Speech—A. K. Dutta Gupta ...	5—18
5. Mātri Satsang— Swami Bhagavatananda Giri ...	19—26
6. The Divine Beloved—Dr. Prem Lal Shifa	27
7. Our Didi—Anil Ganguli ...	28—41
8. The End of an Epoch with Didi Gurupriya—R. K. Banerjee ...	42—50
9. Sri Chaitanya—A Legend and a Symbol His Relevance Today—Dr. Sudhansu Mohan Banerjee, M.A. LL.B., Ph.D., IAAS, (Retd.)	51—63
10. Revelation—Renu Srivastava ...	64—67
11. Matri Lila ...	68—80
12. Yearly Index ...	81—82

---

---

*“Difficult to understand, nevertheless it is true that by giving away our food we gain more strength : by giving away clothes we gain more beauty ; by founding centres of purity and truth, we gather rich treasures.”*

**Gautama, the Buddha**



*“The impression of ‘I am Brahman’, created by uninterrupted reflection, destroys ignorance and its distractions, as medicine destroys disease.”*

**Adi Sankaracharya**

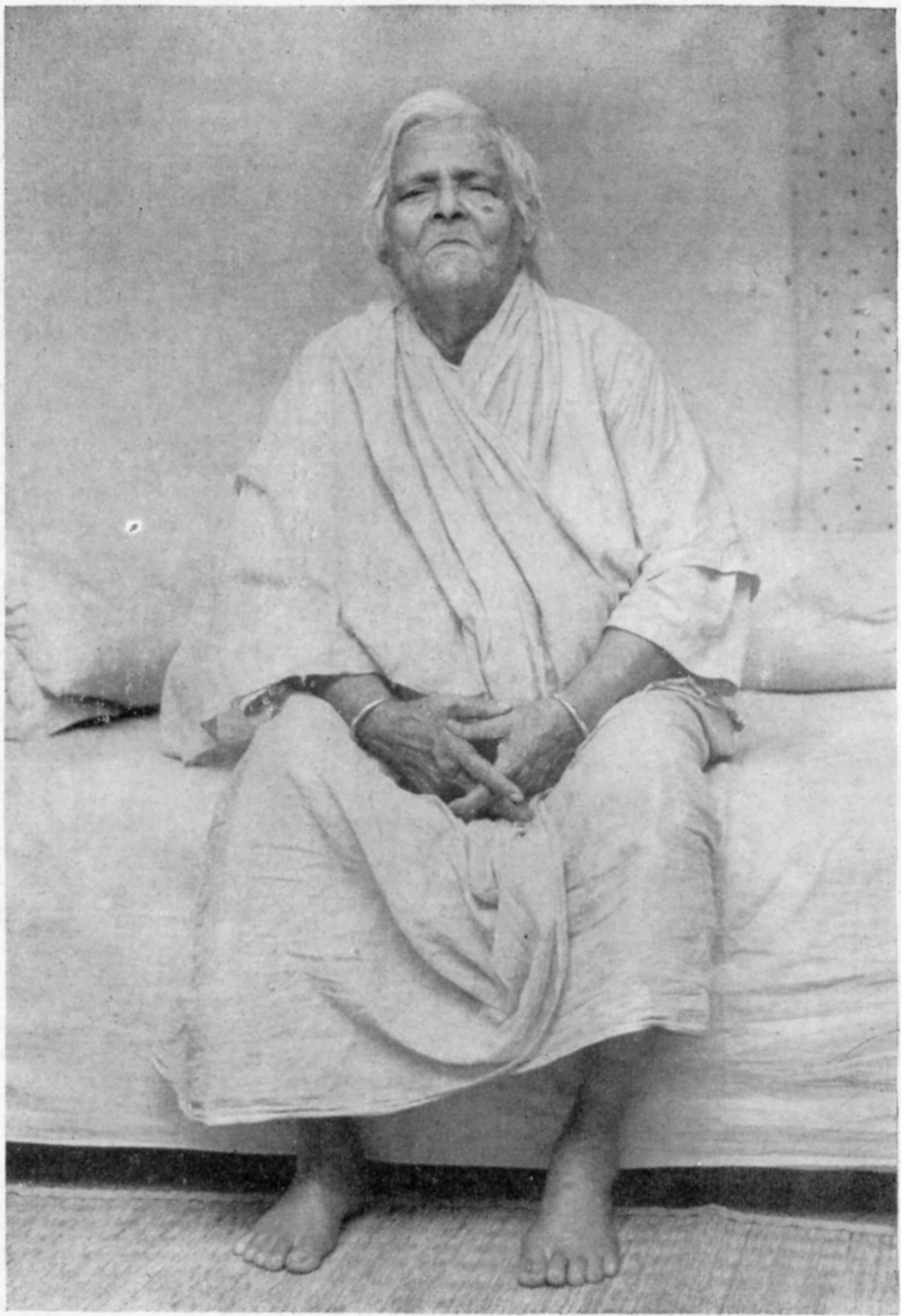


*All that is not One must ever  
Suffer with the Wound of Absence ;  
And whoever in Love's City  
Enters, finds but Room for One,  
And but in Oneness Union.*

**—Jami**

---

---



**In Memoriam**

**Sri Gurupriya Ananda Giri**

**( February 14th, 1899—September 16th, 1980 )**

On Sept. 16th at 8-53 a.m., Sri Gurupriya Devi, the deeply beloved and revered Didi (elder sister) of all devotees of Sri Ma left her ailing body at the age of 81 years and 7 months, in our Ashram at the *Mukti Kshetra*, Varanasi.

Mataji afterwards remarked :

“Didi had completed the work for which she had come, so she has left.” What was this work ? To serve Mataji, to carry out Ma’s *kheyāla*. The following utterances of Sri Ma in different contexts express perhaps most drastically what Didi really was and remains for all times :

Mahavira (Hanuman) said : “He and I are one ; yet He is the Whole and I am a part of Him ; He is the Master, I am His servant.” (“Words of Sri Anandamayī Ma”, P. 148.)  
and :

“The Master and the servant, though separate embodiments, are essentially one. Just as there can be no servant without master, so also the master is dependent on the servant. Thus there is an eternal relationship between the two, so much so that the one cannot exist without the other. The Master is the sole object of the servant’s self-dedication. On the other hand the master relies entirely upon the servant for service. He Himself, when appearing in division becomes the servant ; in other words, the servant is but a partial manifestation of the Master..... Real servants were Hanuman, Garuda etc. who identified themselves so wholly with their masters that they had no independent existence .....” (“Sad Vani”, No. 10)

Many men and women have been and are deeply devoted to Mataji. But Didi was entirely unique. Her self-dedication was spontaneous and total. From the day she set her eyes on Ma for the first time to her last breath she lived only for Ma. She had

no other interest, no other desire, no other consideration. Of her it can be truly said that she had no independent existence. Ma's spiritual family was her family, she was the true "Didi" of everyone who came to Ma. Incidentally, all the members of her own family gradually became Mataji's ardent devotees.

Didi was born on Saturday, *Magh Sankranti* 1305 B. S., (14/15 February 1899) at Silchar, a district town in Assam, where her father, Dr. Shashanka Mohan Mukerji, was posted as Civil Surgeon. Her parents named her 'Adarini Devi'. From her childhood she was bent on asceticism. She dressed carelessly, would not comb her hair, which earned her the nickname of "Sivaji". Although she was determined to remain single, her parents arranged for her marriage when she was eleven years old. Even at that age her will was indomitable. When taken to her husband's home, she sat down, hiding her face with her sari and wept non-stop. She would neither eat nor speak, or listen to entreaties. After a couple of days her parents-in-law were obliged to take her back to her parents. She wrote to her husband asking him to marry again. At home she divided her time between helping her mother with the housework and reading scriptures and the lives of saints.

This monotonous retired life came to an end when she met Sri Ma in Dacca in January 1926. Now her real life and the work for which she had been born began. After some time she and her



father, who later became Swami Akhandananda Giri, came to live with Mataji.

Didi's love for Ma was boundless. She got immense opportunities for her pent-up energies. She literally worked day and night. She had neither the leisure nor the inclination to cater to the most elementary needs of her own body and subsisted on a minimum of food and sleep at irregular times, not to speak of comforts of any kind. Her great joy, her fulfilment she found in looking after Ma. In the early days Ma was mostly in *samādhi* and one could never be certain when and whether at all She would return to bodily consciousness. This was a constant and severe strain on Bholanath and Didi. When Ma began to travel incessantly throughout the length and breadth of India, Didi was Her faithful companion from Kanya Kumari to Mount Kailash, ever-ready to engage in any task required, from the most menial to the most exalted.

Didi kept a diary of Ma's movements and activities ever since 1926 and noted down whatever she heard of Ma's utterances and kept a copy of every letter Ma dictated.\* All this was done mostly at 2 or 3 a.m. after Didi had accomplished her day's work. Whenever Ma ordered Didi to stay in solitude in one of the Ashrams for *sādhana*, Didi seized the opportunity to consolidate and put into shape her diaries, which later were published in many

\* *Mātri Vāñi*, Vol. I is entirely Didi's collection of Ma's replies to letters.

volumes. These are sacred treasures for all devotees and will be invaluable to posterity.

Several ashrams came into existence through Didi's efforts. Ma had the *kheyāla* that women should be taught Sanskrit to be able to study the sacred lore and revive the ancient tradition of the Rishis. So Didi founded a Girl's School, called "Kanyapeeth", based on these lines.

Didi had tremendous, unshakable faith in Ma and carried out every hint of Hers, however hazardous it may have appeared. Her intuitive grasp of the true meaning of Ma's words was truly amazing.

Didi's powerful personality made many people afraid of her, which was a great boon for Mataji as Didi could control the visitors, so that Ma could have a little rest. Until 1952, when the Sangha was founded, Didi almost single-handed organized the ashrams and activities connected with Mataji.

In 1954 Didi injured her back and no cure was possible without lying absolutely still in a mould of plaster over a period of many months. This seemed a hard blow but was actually a blessing in disguise. After 28 years of ceaseless, strenuous activity, serving Ma in the most varied capacities, Didi was forced to lie motionless and to accept every kind of service from others, as well as comforts she had always rejected.

Complete rest made Didi very soon calm and collected. Her back was cured and she could walk again and even travel with Ma quite often, although now in comfort and accompanied by girl atten-

dants In the last few years Didi suffered from various severe illnesses off and on. She bore everything cheerfully, without ever complaining or praying for cure. She accepted all her ailments and infirmities as God's grace. Although physical exertion was out of the question she kept in touch with all activities connected with Mataji, the Ashrams and the Kanyapeeth, and her direction and advice were sought and obtained.

Even when Didi was very ill, the aroma of Mataji's presence was always about her and it was uplifting and inspiring to see her.

Whether in the body or out of the body, Didi remains an integral part of Ma and Her ministrations. As long as Ma is remembered, Didi will be remembered with Her. Didi lived only for Ma, and now that her body is no more, where can she possibly be? She has no separate existence.

---

**IN MEMORIAM**  
**SWAMI BHAGAVATANANDA GIRI**

On Sept. 7th, Swami Bhagavatananda Giri, one of the most popular and active *samnyāsis* of our Ashram, left his mortal coil in Bombay, where he had gone for treatment. He had been ailing for the last few years. His body was flown to Delhi and then taken to Kankhal for immersion in the holy waters of Mā Ganga, in the presence of Mahantaji Sri Girdhar Narayan Puri and all sādhus and brahmacharis of our Ashram there.

We mourn the loss of a loved brother in the spirit, a sincere, one-pointed Truth-seeker with a rare capacity for service. Born in a Brahmin family in Gujarat, his original name was Kantibhai Vyas. As a young man he worked for the Congress.

His first *darśana* of Mataji in January 1942, on the banks of the Narmada, marked a turning-point in his life. Profoundly impressed, he, two months later, gave up everything to dedicate himself to the Supreme Quest at the feet of Mataji and joined our Ashram as a brahmachāri. His devotion for Sri Ma and also for Didima, whom he revered as his Guru, was deep and unswerving. As long as his health permitted, he rendered invaluable service to the Sangha and also for some time as the Vice-President of the Charitable Society, which can never be forgotten.

All along he expounded the Bhāgavata during the morning satsang in any Ashram he happened to be in. For some time he taught in our Vidyapeeth. For many years he was in charge of the programme of every *Samyam Vrata*. Further he took notes whenever Mataji replied to questions. His articles "*Mātri Satsang*" have regularly made Mataji's teaching available to the readers of "Ānanda Vārtā" in three languages. His translations into Gujarati of Sri Ma's words and Her life story comprise several volumes. He also wrote in detail about Giriji's life as well as other articles which appeared in Ānanda Vārtā in Hindi and English.

A *sannyāsī* is dead to the world. His only concern is the contemplation of the Brahman. Swami Bhagavatananda's life and work will continue to inspire all devotees.

# SRI SRI MA'S UTTERANCES

(Reported by Sri Gurupriya Devi in "*Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi*", Vol. I.)

Once the well-known Swami Dayananda asked : "Ma, what are you ? Some call you an *Avatara*<sup>1</sup>, some say you are possessed by a spirit, others say you are a *sādhaka*, yet others say you are human being that has attained to Perfection (*siddha*). I am most anxious to know what you are in reality ?

*Mataji* : What do *you* think, Baba ? Whatever you think me to be, that I am !

\* \* \*

Ma often says : "Through this body comes about spontaneously whatever is necessary for all of you."

\* \* \*

"To attain to the Infinite one must first of all advance within the limitations of the finite—then, by a glimpse of the Infinite, the bondage of limitation will be loosened."

\* \* \*

"Before this body's advent, Father renounced his home. For some time he even donned the robe of a *samnyāsī* and spent his time in singing Hari kīrtana. At that time, when he was filled with the spirit of renunciation, this body took birth."

\* \* \*

When *Mataji* was a small child, when kīrtana would be performed even at a considerable distance, *Mataji* used to go into a kind of *bhāva samādhi*. *Mataji* said :

---

1. *Avatāra* Divine Incarnation.

“This body went into a peculiar state. But the room was dark and so this was not noticed by Father and Mother. Moreover I felt it should not be disclosed to anybody. So it remained secret.”

\*

\*

\*

“Look, I cannot properly distinguish between fire and water. So, if you are able to take good care of this body, it will remain alive; otherwise it will be destroyed.”

\*

\*

\*

At Siddheshwari Mataji once said to the assembled devotees : “Having come here, all of you must try to give up hate, malice, envy and the like. If you are still able to hate and speak ill of others, what have you gained by coming here ?”

A little later, the same day, Mataji said : “Those who have come here must all get ready. Up till now nothing much has happened, the spade has just touched the earth. You will have to endure a lot. Many severe storms will come and sweep away those who are to leave ; but those who are fated to remain will stand firm.”

\*

\*

\*

“All are good –if someone finds fault with me, do not take offence. Everyone comes here just as long as he is destined to give and take. Nobody is at fault. Blame is to be accepted as an ornament : having chosen this path one must consider blame an embellishment. Just as an iron bangle is worn on the wrist of a woman whose husband is alive as a sign of her good luck, so you must keep in mind that blame is a great help on the spiritual

path. On this path censure and reproach are unavoidable. Therefore I say, don't be afraid of criticism, neither must you take offence when it is pronounced.

\*

\*

\*

Once a devotee cried bitterly before Mataji but She walked away quite unconcerned. When questioned about Her strange behaviour, Mataji said : "What to do ? I cannot do anything out of my own volition. It may well happen that a hundred people cry, yet there may be no *kheyāla* to take any notice of it. On the other hand someone may not utter even a single word and I may go and sit by that person. This body behaves as it comes about spontaneously, it cannot do anything deliberately."

\*

\*

\*

Mataji often says : "If you live pure and dedicated lives, I shall keep good health. Your purity is my sustenance. Material food matters little."

Someone asked : "What is the difference between a Divine Incarnation and a *sādhaka* ? How can an ordinary person distinguish between the two ?"

Mataji sat in silence for a little while and then said : "An ordinary person cannot recognize an *Avatāra* for what He is unless He Himself chooses to reveal His identity."

A little later She added : "The *sādhakas* life is bound by self-imposed rules and regulations, while the Divine Incarnation is completely free. Although everything is accomplished spontaneously by Him as it should be done, He is not bound by anything.



Those who are able to discriminate may know the difference. Of course for the average person it is difficult to understand.”

\* \* \*

One day, Mataji said to Swami Akhandananda<sup>1</sup> : “Nobody has ever been asked to perform spiritual practice as you have been. According to their capacity aspirants are instructed to set to work. Not all are of the same calibre.”

\* \* \*

One day a devotee came by horse-carriage for Sri Ma’s *darśana*. He was told that Mataji had just gone out by car. Thereupon he said to his driver : “Ma has left, we shall have to catch up with Her. Make haste !” He was determined to meet Sri Ma. After a while Ma noticed the hackney-carriage racing behind the car, so She stopped the car and waited. The devotee fell at Sri Ma’s feet and inquired where She was going. He at once started for the same place and reached there in time. Sri Ma commented :

“Look, if one pursues one’s goal with one-pointedness, even a car will stop for a hackney-carriage. Then, after getting the necessary information, he could meet us at the place we had gone to. Although we went by car and he by horse-carriage, he was able to catch up with us. By forging ahead with single-mindedness the Goal is reached.”

---

1. Gurupriya Devi’s father.

# RECORDING SRI SRI MA'S SONGS AND SPEECH

**From : In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi**  
**A. K. Dutta Gupta**  
( Translated from Bengali )

*Calcutta, October 20th, 1938*

*( Continued from A. V., July 1980 )*

It had previously been arranged to make records of Sri Ma's songs and speech *today*. Gurupriya Didi had spoken to me about this project. She wanted to place on my shoulders the responsibility of putting questions to Ma during the recorded conversation, but I did not agree. Instead I requested Didi to ask the questions herself. We also discussed what subjects should be raised. Our sole object was to record faultlessly Ma's own words. However carefully we had been trying to note down the nectar of words emanating from Her lips, we had not the slightest doubt that our efforts were just a poor imitation of the real thing. This is why Didi was anxious to take the help of science to record precisely Ma's own words. However, a lot of people, misunderstanding Didi's true motive, strongly criticised such an action on her part.

When it was time to proceed to the studio for the recording, Didi asked me and Bhupati Babu to accompany Ma in the Rai Bahadur's car. But as there was not sufficient room for both of us,

Bhupati put me into the car and left for Calcutta by bus.

On arriving from Dakshineswar in Bow Bazar, Calcutta, Didi first of all did *praṇāma* to Ma. Ma laughed and asked : “Tell me, why this frequent *praṇāma* today ?”

*I* : I suppose Didi is beseeching you again and again to take care that your songs and speech may be recorded in a proper manner.

*Mataji* (laughing) : But nothing is certain with me. Who knows whether words will issue at the required time ?

We all went and sat down in a room of the studio. Just then the well-known blind singer Sri Krishna Chandra De arrived. On request he sang a song in front of Ma. Afterwards all present except ourselves were asked to leave the room.

A machine was placed in front of Ma. A mechanic showed Her two electric bulbs and explained that when the red light would go on, Ma should get ready and as soon as the green light was lit, She should start. The song was to continue for three minutes to complete one side of the record. At the appropriate time he would signal for the song to be discontinued. On hearing all this, Ma started laughing and said again and again : “I cannot guarantee that the songs will come at the exact time.” But Didi firmly declared : “Why shouldn’t they ? They surely will !” Again Didi continued to do *praṇāma* to Ma. A test was made to check the reproduction of Ma’s voice. It was satisfactory. So, now final preparations for the

recording were carried out. Then the red light went on. With expectant eyes we kept looking alternately at Ma and at the lights. The red light was extinguished and the green light went on. We signalled to Ma to start singing. Ma sang :

*“Raghupati Rāghava Rājā Rām  
 Patita pāvana jaya Sīyā Rām !  
 Jayati Śiva Śiva Jānakī kām  
 Jaya Raghunandana jāya Sīyā Rām !!”*

\* \* \*

*“Jaya Rādhe Rādhe Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa  
 Hare Rāma Hare Hare !  
 Oi nām bolo badane śunāo kāṇe  
 bilāo jīver dvāre dvāre !!”*

\* \* \*

Ma sang each line alone and then we repeated in chorus. We were none too experienced in this, we, meaning Sachi Babu, Rai Bahadur Suren Babu, Swami Akhandanandaji and myself. I doubt that anyone of us had ever before sung in public. Fortunately Kumari Buni was with us, otherwise God only knows what a laughing stock our singing might have been! Beneath the sweet tones of Buni's voice and guided by her fine sense of rhythm, our suppressed voices somehow did their duty as accompanists.

After three minutes the song was over. A little later, by signalling again with red and green lights, the other side of the record was completed. Herein Ma sang two songs entirely on Her own :

## 1.

“What is my caste, my name, my home ?  
 Nothing is certain, so how can I tell ?  
 What else can I say ? I don't belong to anybody  
 And in all the three worlds I call nobody my own.

No mother, no father, whether there was anyone  
I don't know,  
 Nobody has told me and I have not heard it.  
 With a husband full of virtues was I favoured  
 What happened at the burning-ghat I do not know.

Forgotten have I all torment, renouncing home  
 Forsaking the world, from jungle to jungle I roam.

## 2.

Who knocked at the door of my heart today ?  
 Whose sweet voice have I heard ?  
 Listening to his words  
 I can no longer remain at peace.

Restless became my heart today,  
 Made me leave my home.

Having drunk the wine of delusion  
 Unconscious did I lie.

Who is it that came to-day to wake me up ?

\*

\*

\*

After the songs a conversation commenced ;  
 Gurupriya Didi asked questions and Mataji replied.

*Didi* : Is it necessary to take on a Guru in  
 order to lead a religious life ?

*Mataji* : One has to accept guidance ; without guidance one cannot proceed. For the simple reason—look, when we are reared from birth, all this cannot be achieved without guidance. For the same reason one has to secure assistance also in the spiritual world from a definite source. Who can be this guide ? God Himself ! It is He who for the uplift of the individual, for his real Good, in order to free him from his conditioning (*sams-kāra*), appears as his helper on the path in the shape that is most beneficial for any particular person. Therefore we need a Guru. Without a Guru, without guidance one cannot proceed.

*Didi* : Many say : “If the Guru himself does not know, what can he teach me ?”

*Mataji* : Well, suppose a small child discovers a seed—it does not know anything, it just finds it and keeps it. If you plant this seed in good earth and tend it with care, a tree will definitely grow out of it. Such a tree will yield flowers, fruit and so forth. Then you will be able to know what kind of a seed you have sown. That is why it is said that if one sets to work with whatever one may have obtained from no matter whom, the fruit thereof will be reaped without a doubt. There is only one God, none and nothing else. Although we, as creatures of the world, do not know, do not understand anything, in reality it is certain that God alone exists and nothing else. So, wherever, and in whatever manner you may receive something, if you make good use of it you will and must get a result.

And you know very well : without a cause there can be no effect. Whatever work you undertake must definitely bear its fruit. Therefore to assist you on this path you must take recourse to some practice and to some helper. Do you know what we have to determine? First of all we must resolve : "I want to realize God." If once you are bent on this 'want' definitely, then whatever is helpful will automatically come your way. Just as for instance, as soon as you decide to give your children proper education, ways and means of doing so and how to get the right company for them will automatically suggest themselves to you. Similarly, if one wants to proceed along the spiritual path, one must have recourse to certain aids such as the company of seekers after Truth, *japa*, discussion on spiritual subjects, *kīrtana*, and so on. This type of aids will awaken the tendencies (*saṁskāras*) or currents that lie dormant within you.

When you let your children study a number of subjects, you will discover after some time that they excell in certain subjects; then if you let them continue their studies according to their inherent inclinations, they gradually become proficient in these subjects. So also, if we make up our minds to realize God, if the keen desire to follow the spiritual path awakens within us, then whatever is necessary along this road will automatically present itself. But one must progress according to one's natural inclinations. To proceed along a line not in keeping with one's innate predilections will not do.

Supposing we are not at all eager to find God—just as children have no desire to pursue their studies—then in order to awaken such eagerness, we have to bind ourselves to a strict timetable. Children, even if they don't feel like studying, have to be compelled to sit down with their books at regular hours. So will you have to engage in spiritual exercises regularly for at least some fixed time, in order to rouse the keen desire to seek God. Do you know what you must resolve? "Whether I like it or not, whether I am able to concentrate or not—out of the 24 hours I will definitely set apart so and so much time for Him."

Further, to bring about this keen sense of longing, you must put your whole heart and soul into whatever spiritual practice you may undertake. To devote merely your mind to this task is not enough. Why? Because although Conscious Being (*chaitanya satta*) is all-pervading yet in order to worship a deity effectively, we, after creating an earthen image, have to ritually instill life into it (*prana pratiṣṭha*). Similarly you must put your whole being into the attempt to realize God. To call forth this whole-hearted effort you have to bind yourself down to a rigid routine. Just as children have to spend a definite period, say from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at school or college, so also if you want to lead a spiritual life, you must devote a definite amount of time daily to your *japa* or similar exercises. If, any day, for some special reason the fixed period kept apart for God cannot wholly be given, then the amount by which it has



been reduced should be remembered and made up the next day. Furthermore efforts have to be made to increase this period of time gradually, as far as possible. The sole purpose of these attempts is to enhance your eagerness to find God. For until you become totally anxious you cannot attain to anything. Not until you are truly agitated can you become tranquil. To realize tranquillity you must first of all become frantic, frantic for Him.

Therefore you have to resort to expedients that will be helpful in this objective. Such a device may be *satsang*. This does not necessarily mean to associate with *sādhus*. The important factor is to cultivate thoughts and aspirations directed to God or Truth. If you sit in the presence of a *sādhu* while your mind is busy with family affairs or something similar, then there cannot be much improvement. Of course, some benefit will be derived from the proximity of *sādhus*; but real *satsang* means to be God-centred in thought, feeling and aspiration. Your whole being, mind, heart and even the body must become absorbed into such self-dedication to the Supreme. Unless this totality is attained there can be no achievement. That is why one must carefully choose the kind of work that is helpful in spiritual life. The I-ness and intelligence that we apply to all our worldly tasks, that very I-ness and intelligence must be used to select the type of work that will be an aid. Since we live in the midst of activity we must advance through action. Action that leads to purity of mind and heart, to concentration of

thought, is the type of action helpful to spiritual life.

Do you know what is essential? God is one. So, in order to realize the One, we must become one-pointed. It is imperative to be single-minded in all objectives.

*Gurupriya Didi:* Do you maintain that everything is within the One?

*Mataji:* In the One there are many and in the many is the One. We are indeed of the One. There is evidence of this: as for example we eat mouthful by mouthful, we walk step by step. In the One, Infinity is contained. Suppose I were to ask you: "Tell me where your mind has been during the last five minutes!" You cannot even account for the movements of the ordinary mind. You are unable to register your mind's wanderings within five minutes. In this respect there is infinity also in the mind.

Again look, supposing I catch hold of your hand or foot and ask: "Who is this?" You will reply: "It is I!" The Inness is not confined to the body. When saying "I" this refers actually to the Supreme I which is the real I. In order to know, to realize that Supreme I, you will have to start on the task with the self-consciousness and intelligence that you possess. For THAT which we call God or the ONE, is one eternally and in all respects. In order to become aware of this fact one must aspire to one single Goal. What will be the result of this single-mindedness? You will come to understand that you are of the ONE. The proof of this is that

whatever you may undertake, you have to attend to your tasks one by one, you cannot do two things simultaneously. Our prime need is to take recourse to one remembrance, one aspiration—whatever helps us to realize the One must be our constant companion.

*Didi* : You declare that we yearn for never-ending happiness because we know this uninterrupted bliss in our innermost being ?

*Mataji* : If the hidden knowledge of this unalloyed bliss were not within us, why should we seek it ? The consciousness of it is there but it has not manifested. We desire what we have had a taste of. Because undisturbed bliss, undisturbed peace are concealed deep within us, it is the very nature of a human being to yearn for it. Hence nothing finite can give lasting satisfaction. In this wide world, whatever people do at all times is ultimately for the sake of obtaining peace and happiness. In order to find this happiness we must take up the work dictated to us by our true nature. Work prompted by our true nature means action which will ultimately lead us to uninterrupted bliss and uninterrupted peace.

Already before Mataji stopped speaking, the time allotted for recording had been exhausted. Afterwards Dr. Panth asked Mataji a few questions in Hindi and She replied in Hindi.

*Dr. Panth* : Mataji, does the real welfare of the world lie in being well fed and clothed or in remaining hungry and practising devotion ?

*Mataji* : Look, is it not a fact that you are

---

always hungry? Do you ever feel satisfied? If you did, why should you continue to go to all this trouble? But by your endeavours to approach God you will get satisfaction. By stilling 'that' hunger everything will become all right.

*Dr. Panth:* Then it boils down to this that people should remain hungry but worship God?

*Mataji:* Look, when you talk of being hungry, are you ever not hungry? But when you start engaging in some practices for the sake of finding God, and in the process of it you procure some spiritual food to satisfy your inner hunger, your craving for material food will disappear of itself. There will no longer be any need for it. First of all you must realize that in order to get proper nourishment and still your hunger you must take to the path of devotion. Try to reduce the need for material food and sleep. You are a doctor, aren't you? So you know full well that to cure a disease, firstly medicine and secondly a diet are necessary; then the malady will vanish of itself.

There is something else to be said: When falling ill we automatically develop an aversion to material food. Similarly, once we are longing for God, the taste for worldly goods will disappear of itself, and the type of hunger that is necessary will be aroused simultaneously. Nobody can remain hungry. In one way or another one's hunger has to be stilled. Hence remember: "God alone exists. I want peace, I want bliss, so I must do whatever is necessary in order to obtain these." Just as for curing a disease, medicine as well as right diet are

required, so also to approach God you must engage in what is helpful for this purpose. If you take medicine but persist in eating the wrong type of food, will you obtain good results? Once you start advancing along the path leading to God, all the rest will of itself be settled. First of all feel convinced and then resolve firmly: "I must walk in His direction!"

*Dr. Panth*: To realize supreme bliss, which is the best path to follow—that of knowledge, or of action or devotion?

*Mataji*: Whichever is most dear to anyone, whichever he likes best. Keep on walking and everything will fall into place. None of these paths is independant of the others. From the outside it may appear that some are inclined towards devotion, others towards knowledge and yet others towards activity. But in actual fact the three exist side by side. For instance, suppose you decide to visit a temple. Why do you go there at all? To have *darśana* of the Deity. Thus, first of all you have the knowledge that there is a temple with an image of a certain deity at such and such a place. Next you wish to behold the image because of your devotion for it. Finally, in order to have *darśana* you have to walk to the temple—this is action. Hence knowledge, action, devotion exist side by side.

Again, look, those who take the path of knowledge inquire into what is Real, saying: "not this, not that!" But they also have to act and be devoted: just as some aspirants are devoted to their

chosen Deity, so those who advance through enquiry have equal faith in knowledge. To discriminate between the Real and the false is their work. Thus there is knowledge, devotion and action all together.

Furthermore, consider : whatever work you accomplish will undoubtedly have a result. Nothing is wasted. To attain to peace and bliss you must resort to some action or other. Never keep your mouth empty nor take a breath uselessly. (Laughing.) Just as you chew betel while working in your office, so repeat God's name or mantra with each breath. Simultaneously with your worldly duties the Lord's work has to be done.

\* \* \*

In the short interval between the Bengali and Hindi recording, I took the opportunity to say : "Ma, it was my desire to ask you about the real import of the Guru concept and about the potency of mantras."

*Mataji* : It is not possible to discuss these profound subjects in such a short time. These matters cannot be explained within three minutes.

*I* : What is the difference between a Guru and a Sadguru ?

*Mataji* : Guru means Sadguru.

*I* : But I believe the Śāstras make a distinction between the two ?

*Mataji* : Do you know what the difference is ? Like someone starts teaching others only after having passed all his exams, while many who are still studying are teaching others at the same time.

\* \* \*

When the Hindi recording was completed, we got up. All of us performed our devoted *praṇāmas* to Ma. None of us could have foreseen that Ma's songs and words would be so beautifully recorded. Full of happiness, Sachibabu fell at Ma's feet, saying : "Ma, just as you have responded to our request, from now on we shall obey all your promptings."

---

"Is he not a true lover of the Lord  
 Who is so deeply sleeped in His love  
 That he cannot even distinguish between  
                                     pain and pleasure ?  
 All that cometh from the FRIEND  
 Is sweet to him beyond measure."

Rabia

# MĀTRI SATSANG

Swami Bhagavananda Giri

( Translated from Bengali )

In 1958, Sri Sri Ma's birthday was celebrated in our Ashram in Agarpara, Calcutta from May 1st to 7th. Every evening from 9 to 9.30 there was Mātri Satsang when Mataji replied to question.

*May 1st, 1958.*

*Question :* Why does the mind get restless ?

*Mataji :* Baba, has the mind become really restless ? Where is the agitation that will lead to real restlessness ? Where is the genuine restlessness that comes when you feel you can no longer remain without God ? At the moment all sorts of desires and cravings make your mind restless. *Vāsanā* means to dwell where your true Self is not revealed. (Ma and everyone laughs).

You are learned, yet you listen to this little girl's childish talk !—At first you desire to accumulate plenty of wealth ; next you want a house, a car, prestige and high position. In this way craving keeps on growing. This kind of restlessness is the restlessness of the realm of want, of the world. When you are in its grip, the sense of want awakens. Whereas when your true Nature (*svabhāva*) awakens, then this restlessness disappears. You are the embodiment of Truth, Bliss and Knowledge, that is why you want to attain to Knowledge, to Peace. This desire is your true Nature. You are



*Āsmārāma*, tranquil and calm. Further, there is also a state where there is no question of happiness or unhappiness.

God Himself is father, mother, friend—He is all in all, pervading the whole world, He is the one Self, the Self of the Universe (*Viśvatmā*). *Sakha* (companion) means someone with whom one is very friendly. *Swami* means “I myself”. (*Swa*-Self, *ami*-I.) So long as you are wedded to sense objects your mind is bound to remain fickle. When true restlessness for God supervenes, then the mind will become calm. Mind is that which believes, accepts, obeys. Suppose a boy from somewhere and a girl from quite a different place get married. Thereafter they share each others joys and sorrows and are grieved when separated or when one of them dies. This is a state of lasting bondage.

Mataji then related that after Gandhiji’s death, Sri Birlaji took Her to Birla House where Gandhiji had breathed his last. She was shown the words “He Rāma” written on the spot where he died. At that time it was discussed that one party who looked upon Gandhiji as their enemy rejoiced at the news of his death, whereas another party who looked upon Gandhiji as their friend, philosopher and guide were plunged into deep grief. Some people even expired at the shock of hearing the sad news. Thus Gandhiji’s demise was a single fact which reacted quite differently on different people according to each one’s attitude of mind. What is the true reason for this? Some people looked upon Gandhiji as their enemy and others as a dear friend.

This is an act of the mind. So long as one resides in the domain of the mind, there will be the experiences of the opposites of happiness and sorrow, joy and grief, since the world (*duniya*) is based on duality. As long as you live in the world, enjoying relative happiness—some are happy with their husband, others with their money—so long will the mind remain restless. You may sit down to meditate, but the mind will wander hither and thither chasing after those things.

Remember, the mind is like a child. Scholars hold learned discourses about the mind—however, the mind is a child. Just as an infant waking up from slumber starts crying at not finding its mother and searches for her so that even when another woman takes it into her arms, the child recognizes that she is not its own mother and refuses to be quiet until its own mother arrives ; so does the mind seek *ānanda*. It just cannot remain without *ānanda* and therefore continues to wander all over. Thus its agitation goes on increasing.

Another important factor ; just as a child cannot distinguish between good and bad but smears its body equally with excreta or sandal-paste, so does the mind-child absorb whatever is fed to it. You take good care of a small child, teach it and provide it with pure, wholesome nourishment ; similarly give your mind-child only the best food. The best food for it is satsang, the study of sacred scriptures, meditation, japa and the like.

So long as the mind does not receive such wholesome nourishment, it will remain restless. Try

to pacify the mind. To the extent that it becomes calm you will progress on the path to Self-realization. Idleness is a big impediment to Self-revelation. So long as you do not set out on the pilgrimage towards Self-revelation, the restlessness of the mind will not be banished. "I cannot remain anymore without God!" As long as you are not tormented by such intense yearning, genuine restlessness has not even commenced.

*Question* : How can such intense restlessness for God come about ?

*Mataji* : Give proper food to your mind-child ! You are absorbed in the world which consists of the "two", that is why you are subjected to sorrow. To depend on anything for one's happiness creates misery, while there is happiness in being self-contained. If you hanker after sense objects—sense object (*vishaya*) means poison (*vish hai*)—by eating poison one dies there and then, but the poison of sense enjoyment is slow poison, it leads to repeated births and deaths. This is why one should relinquish sense enjoyment and adopt what is for one's highest Good. Try to keep your mind reposing in that which develops devotion for God. Do not allow too many doubts to creep into your mind : "*Saṁsayātmā vinaśyati*" ("the doubting self goes to destruction" says the Bhagavad Gītā.) Forge ahead confidently on the road to Self-realization !

May 3rd, 1958.

*Question* : Are mother and child one ?

*Mataji* : Are father and mother two persons or are they one ? Certainly they are one. The son

later becomes a father and the daughter a mother. All this is part of the continuous flux of the world. You alone exist and no other.

*Question* : You must be weary of all these intellectual and argumentative discussions.

*Mataji* : He is ever eternal, complete and undivided. He never gets weary.

*Question* : Please forgive us ! Even in your presence we indulge in sophisticated arguments. Does this pain you ?

*Mataji* : (Laughing ) Listen ! You have asked whether I feel pained. Pain of what and why should it arise and who is it that suffers the pain ?

In all forms it is you alone that exists, no one else. In the guise of arguments are you and in their solution are also you. Questions arise only where there is ignorance. Where the Self stands revealed there is no such thing as feeling hurt or not.

*Question* : You are so fond of us, yet why do we not have equal love for you ? Please tell us the truth !

*Mataji* : Who loves whom ?

*Question* : We like to believe that you have affection for us.

*Mataji* : Where the sense of "I" has remained, there is belief.

*Question* : Why do so many people come to you ?

*Mataji* : They come to their own self. They come to the one whom they consider as their own.

*Question* : How can we find God easily ? Please be merciful and tell us !

*Mataji* : Proceed exactly according to your Guru's instructions.

*Question* : What can those do who have not yet obtained a Guru ?

*Mataji* : All forms are God's forms, all names are His names. Repeat in japa any name that you like best. If by repeating His name your eagerness to realize Him increase sufficiently, then God will appear to you in the shape of the Guru.

*Question* : In the Bhāgavata and also in other Purāṇas it is said that to utter God's name even once is highly beneficial. But we do not seem to get anywhere in spite of repeating God's name daily.

*Mataji* : Do you repeat His name in real earnest ?

*Questioner* : We try to do so.

*Mataji* : So you try. Where there is steel effort, the NAME will not manifest. By the continuous repetition of the name, the name will become the NAME. To perform the practice of the repetition of God's name is one thing and for the NAME to blossom forth spontaneously is quite another matter. So long as the NAME does not take shape, never give up the practice of the repetition of the name. Is it not said : "Sustained effort must lead to success."

*Question* : We do adhere to the name in this fashion, but here the question was asked, what results can be obtained by pronouncing His name even once ?

*Mataji* : It is not right to look upon all this as a business. "I have done so much, but what have I achieved ? To harbour the desire for a result in this manner is not fitting. If you perform *japa* for its own sake, the Lord is bound to reveal Himself.

*Question* : If all names are God's names, can we be successful in choosing any one of them ?

*Mataji* : It is true that all names are God's names, but the necessity of a special name is there. He does exist in all forms since He is all-pervading. But to get hold of Him one has to resort to a particular name. In the shape of the Guru He will bestow this name. Ordinarily the whole world is one's Guru. When questions arise to a child, he or she asks everybody and takes instructions from them. All are his Guru. What you have studied so far is the science of making money. The real Guru is He who will divulge to you the profound mysteries of Supreme Truth. My Guru is the World-teacher and the World-teacher is my Guru.

Who am I ? What actually is the world ? This must become known. To realize God is to realize one's own Self. In the Bhagavad Gītā, the Lord Himself declared : "Of trees I am the peepul tree, of waters I am Gangā." The fact that you exist as the peepul tree or Gangā in the hearts of everybody establishes a relationship. There "I" and "mine", "you" and "yours" have remained. But where He alone exists, there is no question of duality, there is freedom from controversy. In the absence of Self-awareness there is a sense of incompleteness and everyone keenly desires to get over this want (*abhāva*). In the guise of want are you and true Nature (*svabhāva*) are also you alone.

In the state from which you have asked questions, this sort of questions do indeed arise. It is you yourself who have asked the questions and you

yourself have listened to the replies. The infinite many are contained in the One, and the One is concealed in the many. Just as an infinite number of seeds and an infinite number of trees are potentially present in a single seed of the peepul tree. Everything is present in everything. You are the epitome of Knowledge, hence you desire to know. You are the embodiment of Truth, so when you tell a lie or hear an untruth spoken by others, you feel uneasy. You are the essence of Peace, therefore you dislike restlessness. You are eternal, pure, enlightened, free, hence you want to know your own true Self and finally you do realize it.

All are manifestations of yourself or of myself—according to your angle of vision—be it that of bhakti or of Vedanta. Someone once told this body : “My *kunḍalinī* has not been awakened.” This body replied : “So long as the sense of “I” prevails, *kunḍalinī* cannot awaken.” “I” mean ego. The ‘I’ness is of two kinds—immature and mature. The worldly I is immature and the I that is seeking enlightenment is mature. God is whatever you consider Him to be. All forms are His, all names are His.

---

# THE DIVINE BELOVED

Dr. Prem Lal Shifa

( Translated from the Original in Urdu by Jainath Kaul )

Why anyone should say there is wisdom in me ?  
And who can believe my mind isn't deranged ?  
For I am deeply in love, ever pining for Him,  
Whose face till today my eyes hav'nt seen.

In them that are handsome, is seen His reflection ;  
In the sun and the moon, His light doth appear ;  
In flowers I have seen His colours and fragrance ;  
But this all is not He as He really is.

From the wise and the learned I have heard about Him ;  
The mind does wonder at everything they say.  
Of both worlds the Creator He is I have heard,  
Yet Himself, indeed, no work does He do.

He has no ears, but everything He hears,  
Though He sees everything, He has no eyes,  
Wherever you go, you will find Him there,  
Yet strange it is, He never moves about.

Whenever a grievance I air against Him,  
It is I who am always held blame-worthy,  
For Love Personified they say that He is,  
And no real longing is there in my heart.

Whenever some news about Him I receive,  
It's my incompetence that is then revealed,  
Only I hav'nt seen Him in the least so far,  
No veil is though there covering His face.

Look ! how utterly helpless my love is for Him,  
For, though I am thinking of Him each moment,  
With His Grace, it is only, that He is ever seen ;  
To order Him about, no right do we have.

I have no demands, no objective in view ;  
Why then, if at all, have you fallen in love ?  
If He comes and asks, "What it is that you want ?"  
No thought have I given to what I would say.

While here, without union, I pine every day ;  
There, the indifference is the same as ever, today,  
Someone else O'Shifa I would certainly have loved,  
But what can I do, for, Like Him there is none.



# OUR DIDI

Anil Ganguli

Gurupriya Devi was respectfully accepted as a loving Didi (elder sister) by millions of Ma's devotees and admirers all the world over. After her exit from the stage of life it transpired that years ago, she had formally become a *Samnyāsī* and earned a name and a title befitting a *Samnyāsī* namely Gurupriya Ananda Giri. So, she is to be known as Swami Gurupriya Ananda Giriji Maharaj. The title Giri is a recognition of Didi's rightful claim to be in the *Dasanāmi Sampradāya* of *Samnyāsīs* founded by Shankaracharya. According to grammar and convention among *Samnyāsīs*, the two words—'Gurupriya' and 'Ananda' are supposed to be joined so as to read as 'Gurupriyananda'. Pronounced separately and treated independently, they have a special message—Gurupriya and Ananda—represented by one sound-symbol in which the two meet, Didi Gurupriya and Ma Anandamayi in one breath, as it were! The name 'Gurupriya', meaning one who has received the Guru's grace, is true to the letter in the case of Didi—she was without an equal as the recipient of profuse grace from Ma, at once her Guru, *Iṣṭa* and Mother. Didi's maiden name at home was Adarini (darling), her nick-name being Khukuni (a coinage of endearment, meaning a female child).

---

By reason of her genuine warmth of heart and selfless service, Didi had endeared herself to all she came into close contact within Shree Shree Anandamayee Ashram. Her imposing appearance, her frowning eyes, queer dress and dishevelled hair, her loud voice and brisk movements proved to many forbidding at first sight. And she continued to be a terror to some for her pronounced personality, outrageous outspokenness and apparently uncompromising assertiveness. But the awe-inspiring trait of her character can be explained and justified, by the circumstances in which she had been placed. Complete was her surrender to Ma and the one mission of her life was to serve Ma. Her most important duties included :—

looking after Ma : arranging for the requirements of Ma's body—timely meals and some chance to rest for a little while ; protecting Her from being mobbed by frenzied devotees vying with one another in disturbing Ma for their selfish ends. Entrusted with such onerous duties and sincerely devoted to Ma, Didi, knew no compromise and refused to propitiate self-seeker by concessions. To be lenient or indulgent in these matters was foreign to her nature and opposed to her principles. Ma's *kheyāla* was the only guide line for Didi. In her scale of priorities for private *darśana* she was relentless except in the case of devotees admitted through Ma's *kheyāla* or those who promoted the cause of the ideals Ma stood for. No wonder, Didi incurred the displeasure of many disgruntled devotees who accused her of

discrimination. There was some propaganda of calumny against her. But Didi never bore ill-will towards anybody. She stuck to her guns—service of Ma.

In the service of Ma, Didi aimed at nothing short of perfection. Obviously it was not easy for her associates to keep pace with her and Didi would not forgive anybody who failed to do so. She made no secret of the fact that she could not tolerate slackers or shirkers, nor could she brook delay in the discharge of duty. She would suddenly flare up if there was remissness on the part of an Ashram girl but would subsequently make sufficient amends so that the person rebuked would eventually feel more than compensated. Generous at heart and princely in her bearing, Didi was accepted by all the Ashram girls as their redoubtable leader. Addressed by them as *Dadabhai* (meaning elder brother), she was the most dreaded person and at the same time the most beloved one. They believed that Ma's *kheyāla* flowed through her. Some of them were almost ready to die at Didi's call.

Didi had an intuition for sensing—sometimes anticipating—Ma's *kheyāla* and she spared herself no pains in implementing it. Anyone who stood in her way would know to his cost that he was playing with fire. But in her heart of hearts Didi was full of sympathy and consideration. She genuinely felt for the suffering of others and her hospitality was unequalled. Once I expressed my gratitude to her for the tender care received from her during my

---

stay at the Ashram. She bluntly dismissed my compliments as being mere verbiage and snubbed me by making it perfectly clear that her one object was to serve Ma by serving her "children" in general and that she did not appreciate formal thanksgiving. Basically Didi was full of compassion. Her unpolished exterior can be explained by the fact that she was transparent and she refused to be artful. She was like a cocoanut with a hard outer shell and soft and sweet substance within. Our loving Didi was the universal Didi. Even Ma used to call her as such, although it is anomalous for a mother to address her daughter as 'Didi'.

Daughter of Dr. Sasanka Mohan Mukherjee, an eminent Civil Surgeon during the British period, Didi was born with a silver spoon in her mouth and brought up in plenty and in prosperous surroundings. In accordance with the social custom, her parents arranged her marriage with a suitable bride-groom worthy of the Mukherjee family. But the life of a householder was not in Didi's line. From her childhood she sedulously avoided society. A recluse by temperament and having no interest in things worldly, Adarini was almost a problem to her parents. They failed to reform their daughter's unsociable nature. Later events showed that the girl was destined not for the hearth but for the cloister. The home of a householder could not contain her. The transition suddenly took place in December, 1925. Didi was then in her mid-twenties. The subsequent period of her existence in the world witnessed a wonderful drama of Didi's

life—not as the daughter of Dr. Mukherjee, nor as the wife of the gentleman to whom she had been married but as our Didi; and as Ma's "Didi", too.

Wonderful was the prologue to this drama. Since Didi has written about this in the first volume of her book, *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi*, let her speak for herself. The following is a translation of Didi's own words :—

"It was in Shahbagh, Dacca, in the month of *Paush* 1332 B.S. (December 1925—January 1926) that I had my first *darśana* of Sri Sri Ma. She was then known as Nirmala Sundari and Her husband who was Superintendent of Shahbagh Gardens, as Baba Bholanath. My father had heard about Sri Ma from the late Pramatha Nath Basu, Dy. Postmaster General, and had been to see her twice before taking me with him.

As a rule, then, I did not go out of the house. I felt extremely shy to talk to strangers, whether men or women. My parents used to scold me for this but in spite of my best efforts I could not bring myself to look at or talk to people who were not members of my family. Also, it was completely against my grain to approach any *sādhu*.

However, as soon as father told us about Sri Ma, I seemed a changed person. I became desperately keen to go to Shahbagh and meet her. Yet, I did not tell my father about this, and so the next day he again went alone for Ma's *darśana*. As soon as he had left the house I started crying disconsolately. How very strange! I had never met Ma, I knew practically nothing about Her, so

why did I shed bitter tears because I could not go to see Her? Even to day, when I think of it I am dumbfounded with amazement. But of course, now I do understand why I wept and what it was that attracted me so irresistibly.

As soon as father returned from Shahbagh I pestered him with questions about Ma. He told me a few things but this did not satisfy me in the very least. However, father said that Sri Ma had asked him to take me along with him on his next visit to Shahbagh. Very likely my father had talked to Sri Ma about me.

The next afternoon, after completing my housework, I hurried to Shahbagh. As soon as I beheld Ma I went near Her without any hesitation as if She were an old, intimate friend. The fact that I had never before seen Her did not make me at all shy. I eagerly gazed at Her and did *pranāma*. How can I describe what I saw? One look at Her radiant countenance and my head spontaneously bowed down to the ground in adoration.

Sri Sri Ma wore a *sari* with a broad red border which partly hid Her face. A large vermilion mark was on Her forehead. Her face shone with extraordinary brilliance, both Her eyes were red and moist with tears as if She were immersed in *bhāva*\*. Her words were indistinct and almost inaudible. I was told that She had only recently begun to speak after having maintained silence for three years. Later I found out that this was not the only

---

\* *Bhāva* Spiritual ecstasy, generally emotional in nature. *Bhāvas* usually occur at elevated stages of the path of *bhakti*.

reason for Her being unable to speak clearly and loudly. If She remained quite still for a short time, Her whole body including Her tongue would become stiff.

Three relatives were staying in Shahbagh with Sri Sri Ma and Bholanath: his widowed sister, Matari Pisima, his brother's son, Ashu, and his sister's son, Amulya. When Ashu came home from school, Ma would serve him his meal. But Her hands were almost benumbed. With great difficulty She shared out the boiled rice and then came and sat near me. She offered me a betel roll. I declined, saying: "I am not used to *pān*". Ma replied: "I am taking *pān*, so I also give it to you." To my own surprise, I said: "All right, since you are offering it to me, I'll also take it."

I noticed that Ma was so immersed in *bhāva* that She could hardly keep Her eyes open. I had never before seen anything of this sort. I gazed at Ma utterly enchanted and the thought came to my mind: "This is what I've always wanted and now I am fulfilled, nothing more remains to be desired!" I cannot clearly recollect what else transpired. Very likely we exchanged a few words which I have forgotten now. When was the formality of addressing Sri Ma with "*āpni*" changed into the familiar '*tumi*' and when did I start sitting very close to Her? I have now not the faintest recollection of all that.

The room in which we sat served also as a kitchen store. Adjacent to this was a larger room where Ma used to rest during the night; another

smaller room accommodated Matari Pisima and the two boys. The whole house consisted of these three rooms and a veranda only. Two brick-built thatched huts at a little distance served as kitchens, one for preparing vegetarian food and the other for non-vegetarian dishes. I was told that the food was always offered to the Deity before being served.

After speaking to me for a short while, Ma closed the door to the room in which Bholanath and my father were sitting. And now She began to talk to me like an intimate friend. Suddenly She exclaimed : "Where have you been all these days ?" Ma smiled and gazed at me intently. While speaking, She again got immersed into some sort of *bhāva*. Suddenly She said : "Just sit here, I'll be back very quickly." "No, no", I objected, thinking that She wanted to leave me". "I have come to see you, please don't go away !" But Sri Ma lay down on the bare floor quite close to me. I had read the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and therefore thought that this might be a state of *samādhi*. So I also shut my eyes and remained sitting close by Ma's side. After a good long time She sat up. Her whole body seemed as if benumbed. The thought occurred to me that man has to practise so much *sāadhanā* to gain even a little steadiness and concentration, while Sri Ma seems to be always absorbed in exalted states.

Ma gradually regained outer consciousness and began to utter a few unintelligible words. By and by Her language became distinct and we conversed for a long time. I lay down with my head in



Sri Ma's lap and listened spell bound to everything She said.

In the adjoining room, Pratul, the son of Pramatha Babu, both great devotees of Sri Ma, had just arrived and entered without knocking. Father called me, saying, "come let's go home. Some other *bhaktas* have arrived for Ma's *darśana*." The door was now opened. We did obeisance and Ma told father to bring me again.

I was as if intoxicated. The next day I went to Ma again and came home after some time. But my heart was restless. Once a day at least I had to go to Ma. All the rest of the day and night I was pining for Her *darśana*. Sometimes I became so anxious to see Ma that I went to Shahbagh twice in 24 hours.

Gradually our intimacy kept on growing and I began to help Ma with Her housework and serving of food to guests. I came to know that many devotees used to visit Ma regularly with their families. However, they could not help Ma with cooking etc. as they had to attend to their own professional work and household duties. So Ma was happy to have me as an assistant and exclaimed full of joy. "God Himself has brought you here. Nowadays this body is unable to accomplish all the work as it should be done, so God has sent you to make it easy for me".

Gradually I spent more and more time with Sri Ma. By and by father and I became, as it were, members of the Shahbagh family. The number of newcomers increased steadily, but Ma

did not discard Her veil. She met visitors only at Bholanath's bidding or request and spoke just a few words to them whenever necessary. When the crowd had dispersed, Ma sometimes talked to us very animatedly and joyfully although there were occasions when She could not utter a single word, Her vocal chords seemed jammed.

Often Ma related to me Her past experiences and I always listened enchanted. Never before had I heard such wonderful things. Probably I was then Ma's only constant companion and listener, so Ma spoke to me very freely and happily. I was of course deeply delighted.

Once, father invited Sri Ma, Bholanath and a few devotees for *bhoga*\*. This was Ma's first visit to our house. She went to every single room and when She entered the veranda overlooking the road, She said : "Soon after coming to Dacca, I went for a walk on this road and specially noticed this house. It was then being built. I thought it must belong to an important person. I was not wrong since Dr. Mukherjee was then the Civil Surgeon of Dacca." We were happy to hear that Ma's attention had been attracted to our house even before we had met Her.

A little before food time, Nishi Babu came in great agitation. He did *pranāma* and then beseeched Ma to come at least for a few minutes to see his grandson who was suffering from mumps and was in a very critical condition. His house was quite

---

\* *Bhoga* Food offered to a Deity. In a Hindu religious family food is always offered to God before being served.

near. Father wanted to call a carriage, but compassionate Ma at once started on foot for Nishi Babu's place and returned after a little while. What happened there, I do not know, but in any case the boy soon recovered.

Before going to see the patient, Ma had asked me, "Well, what do you think, will the boy get well?" Without hesitation I had replied "Since you are going there he will certainly get well." Ma repeated Her question three times and every time I replied in the same manner with firm conviction. Ma laughed and told everyone : "Since she says so, he will no doubt recover."

On returning from Nishi Babu's house, Ma said to Bholanath : "Please have your dinner, I shall eat later." It was Sri Ma's day of eating three morsels. After Bholanath had taken his meal, Ma said, pointing to me : "May I eat with her?" He replied : "All right. But this is your first visit to the doctor's house and he has taken much trouble over it, so please eat of everything that will be served." As far as possible Sri Ma used to obey Bholanath even to the extent of disregarding Her self-imposed restrictions. Ma laughed and clasping my hand, She said : "Come, we shall eat together. Since this body is in its present state I don't eat with anyone. But I made an exception in the case of my sister-in-law, and today I shall eat with you !"

I had given up meat long ago and had not taken fish for about two years. Even before that I had taken fish very rarely. But Sri Ma's *bhoga* included fish which I could not refuse when eating with Her.

---

Ever since I had met Ma I felt like obeying Her implicitly, not with reluctance but whole-heartedly and most gladly.

In those days Ma still ate with Her own hand. After tasting a little of the food, Ma fed me. I said : "Whatever you give me I shall eat." My relatives requested Ma : "Please tell her to eat fish from now on !" But Ma laughed : "No, I won't. Only when eating with me she may take fish, otherwise not". I was then living mostly on rice and boiled potatoes, but Ma made me eat so much fish and vegetables that everyone thought I would fall ill. They knew Ma only very superficially and had no idea of Her power. I was amused and said : "Ma, you are not eating at all, you are only feeding me !" Ma smiled and said : "Today I have fed you ; in future you will feed me !"

\*

\*

\*

Only much later, when Ma stopped eating with Her own hand, the meaning of Her words became clear when Ma announced, "From today Khukuni will feed me". This sacred duty, thus assigned to Didi, was faithfully discharged by her for several decades until she became disabled on grounds of health.

Thus, Didi started with household chores and then made herself quite indispensable as Ma's personal attendant, nurse, companion and friend. Later, her sphere of activities became much wider—foundation of some of our Ashrams and administration, for several years, of the Anandamayee organisation, including religious and charitable ins-

stitutions. Notwithstanding so many commitments, Didi managed to snatch at least some time almost every day for writing her voluminous diary which has since seen the light of day in the form of the encyclopaedic series entitled *Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi*. This monumental work has made Didi immortal. Her great contribution to the cause of spread of Ma's message will be remembered by posterity with gratitude and reverence.

The last few years of Didi's life happened to be years of acute suffering from incurable physical ailments of a serious type. On the top of excruciating bodily pain there was the pang of forced separation from Ma, which was unbearable for Didi at the earlier stage. As years rolled by, Didi seemed to have been reconciled to her lot and was blessed with the realization that Ma was constantly with her, though physically far away. Intensity of physical suffering consolidated her faith in Ma, her only refuge. She accepted with a smile whatever happened to her, treating everything as a gift from Ma (to Didi, Ma was no other than God Almighty), even unbearable suffering from acute maladies.

In August, 1980 Didi engaged Ma's special attention. Evidently Ma had visualized that Didi's end, put off from time to time, was at last drawing high. Ma sent her to Bombay for treatment at the urgent request of Dr. Seth who in person escorted Didi from Delhi. Soon thereafter Ma herself hastened to Bombay and brought Didi to Varanasi, since no medical treatment was possible anymore.

Incidentally, Varanasi happened to be the centre which had witnessed Didi in action in the best of her years. Thus, she had to her credit great achievements such as establishment of our Ashram at Bhadaini, founding the Kanyapeeth, etc.

On the 16th September, 1980, Didi breathed her last in the sanctuary at Sri Sri Anandamayi Ashram, overlooking the sacred Ganga—a cherished end for a Hindu. On receipt of the news, Ma, who had just arrived at Vrindaban, rushed back to Varanasi. Following Ma's instructions and under Her inspiration arrangements were made for *salil samādhi* (immersion into the waters of Ganga) of Didi's body, befitting a *samnyāsī*.

In the first scene of the drama of Didi's *Mātrisanga*, Ma was in *Samādhi* and Didi was the witness. In the last, Didi was in *Māhāsamādhi* and Ma, as ever, was in the role of the "Seer" for whom death is no mystery. Death is related to time. For Ma, there is only Eternity—a continuous flowing current. Time unrolls its scroll before Her transcendental vision and Ma easily reads all that had happened in the so-called past, all that is now happening and all that is destined to happen in the future.

On Her return to Vrindaban from Varanasi, Ma announced: "So the immersion of the Pratima\* has been accomplished". This profound *Mātri Vānī* is a grand commentary on a great life.

*Aum Śantih, Śantih, Śantih.*

---

\* *Pratima* Image of a deity.

# THE END OF AN EPOCH WITH DIDI GURUPRIYA

R. K. Banerjee

During Mataji's sojourn at the Dacca Shahbagh gardens, Dr. Shashanka Mohan Muckerjee, the eminent Civil Surgeon, was destined to be attracted to Her and it was thus quite natural for his daughter, Khukuni (or Adarini) to come within Ma's orbit. And so Didi's first *darśana* of Sri Ma took place in Dec. 1925 or early Jan. 1926, when Ma was not yet 30 years old and Didi nearly 27.

This memorable association was to last for almost 55 years. Hailing from a distinguished family of Dacca, Didi soon became the focal point through whom members of other distinguished families of East and West Bengal came to know Sri Ma in subsequent years.

As an intimate confidant of Ma in those formative years, Didi was in an unique position to know first-hand of Ma's inspired spontaneous utterances, meetings with luminaries, and inexplicable incidents in Ashrams, private homes and public places. So it is to her that we owe the first authentic recording of Sri Ma's life as it unfolded itself in its unparalleled glory throughout the length and breadth of India. These are upto-date, composed of seventeen volumes in Bengali and twenty volumes in Hindi translation. Research workers can keep themselves

fully occupied by pouring over their contents which include Ma's words, doings, teachings by personal example and exhortations, so faithfully and lovingly recorded by Didi over the years.

No doubt as time goes on her life of dedicated service and unswerving loyalty will be given due recognition. This article will be mainly concerned with her last few days on earth and Sri Ma's strange movements over this period.

During the last few years, Didi was spending a large portion of her time in Bombay under the personal supervision of Sri B. K. Shah's well-known Physician, Dr. Seth, who was in charge of Didi's treatment all through her illness and was always consulted even when Didi happened to be elsewhere.

It was Ma's *kheyāla* that Didi should be present near Her whenever possible. So Didi was in Kankhal with Ma over Gurupūrnimā and during Brahmananda's Bhāgavata Saptah in July this year. It was however apparent that Didi's condition was deteriorating and so she was sent to Delhi under strict medical supervision while Sri Ma proceeded to Kuchaman for a Bhāgavata Saptah. But Didi's condition became worse and so Ma rushed to Delhi on August 22nd, a few hours after Her arrival in Vrindaban, where She had been expected to spend the Jhulan festival. Dr. Seth arrived by plane from Bombay and was anxious to take Didi back there for treatment. He himself escorted Didi and her attendants by train. Even Dr. Priyaranjan Ghosh, who had been attending Swami Paramananda daily, was included in the party.



Sri Ma personally saw Didi off at the station. Didi had been arguing and grumbling, but during the last few minutes before her departure, she became entirely docile and, like a child, asked Ma : "What shall I now do in Bombay without you ?" Mataji replied : "Just listen to the doctors and obey then implicitly."

Ma spent the night of August 25th, *Jhūlan Pūrnimā*, in the Delhi Ashram to enable the devotees assembled there to meditate in Her presence at midnight, the time when Her self-initiation had taken place in 1922, and left for Vrindaban on August 26th.

Two Bhāgavata Saptahs were held in Vrindaban, the first from Sept. 11th to 18th and the second from Sept. 21st to 28th. The dates are important to understand Ma's subsequent movements.

Meanwhile Didi's condition in Bombay got from bad to worse. Swami Bhagavatananda a very senior Ashram samnyāsī and Ex-Vicepresident of the Charitable Society, passed away on Sept. 7th in Nanavati Hospital, while everybody was deeply concerned with Didi who was staying in Sri B. K. Shah's house next door. Dr. Priyaranjan wrote on Sept. 10th from Bombay that Didi was lying quietly with her eyes mostly closed or half-open in a coma, and no longer responding to drugs and injections.

Sri Ma of course knew exactly what Didi's condition was at any moment and did not require any medical reports from Bombay for Her to decide on Her next course of action. She was only waiting to inaugurate the first Bhagavata Saptah at

Vrindaban on Sept. 11th morning. After midnight a message was received from Bombay that Didi's condition was hopeless. On the 12th morning Ma boarded the train to Bombay with only Bhaskaranandaji and Udas in attendance, disregarding Her own condition of health in view of Didi's urgent requirements.

The doctors in Bombay could not, from the point of view of medical science, advocate another long train journey for Didi. Nevertheless, Ma travelled all the way to Varanasi by train on Sept. 13th night with Didi attended by doctors and nurses in a separate compartment, reaching in the early morning of Sept. 15th.

It was Ma's *kheyāla* that Didi should leave her body on the banks of holy Ganga in *Kashi dhāma*, in the Ashram Didi had done so much to bring into being, where her beloved Kanyapeeth had been established and where so much service had been accomplished by her.

It was entirely due to Didi's heroic work prompted by Ma's *kheyāla* that the Varanasi Ashram had come into existence. When it was completed with its beautiful terrace above the spacious satsang hall right on the bank of Ganga, with *Yajña Mandir* and *Viraja Mandir* protruding on each side, Didi had turned round, looking at Ma for some token of appreciation, Ma had laughed unnaturally loudly (*attahasye*) and exclaimed : "For how long do you want this Ashram, can it last for ever ?"

Sure enough, a few years later the hall and most of the beautiful terrace had to be demolished, and

the danger of the very foundations being affected by the continuous erosion of the ever changing river was somehow only just arrested.

On Sept. 15th, Ma stayed at Varanasi only for a few hours before returning to Vrindaban, knowing full well that Didi had only a brief period of precious life left. It was not Ma's *kheyāla* to remain physically with Didi, but She must have been in constant yogic communion with her.

Didi's condition grew steadily worse. The senior girls of the Kanyapeeth, who remained with Didi all the time, were amazed to behold that from 10 p.m. on the 15th, Didi's eyes were open and fixed in unblinking gaze on a picture of Ma conveniently placed near her bedside. Didi maintained this intense concentration for nearly eleven hours until she released her spirit at 8-53 a.m. on Sept. 16th.

Back in Vrindaban Ma knew exactly when the expiry occurred. She was heard to mention to Udas and others : "Your Didi is now no more !" Ma was present in Vrindaban for the description of Sri Krishna's birth which ended at 11-30 a.m. and at 12-30 Ma boarded the train to Varanasi, reaching the Ashram in the early hours of the 17th morning by taxi from Moghal Sarai where She had to negotiate the very high railway overbridge with no apparent difficulty on emerging from the Station.

Meanwhile the Ashram authorities had reverently prepared Didi's body for the final journey. It was Ma's order that the body should be buried

in the deep waters of the Ganga as is the custom for *saṁnyāsis*.

Didi had been invested with the sacred thread in 1936 at Tarapith along with Maroni, Bholanath's adopted daughter, and had to all intents and purposes been looked upon as a brahmachāri in the Ashram. In fact she was called "*Dadabhai*" (elder brother) by the Kanyapeeth girls. Some time ago, Mataji had conferred *saṁnyāsa* on Didi who was seen to wear saffron robes.

From the moment of Didi's arrival in the Ashram on Sept. 15th morning until after the immersion, continuous reading of the Gita, singing of kīrtana and uninterrupted *japa* had been performed near Didi by the Ashram girls. 28 kg. of ice had to be procured to preserve the body pending immersion after Ma's arrival.

It is remarkable to note that on reaching the Ashram Mataji went straight to Her room on the ground floor of the Kanyapeeth and never once emerged from it until the last rites had been completed by about 7 a.m. on September 17th.

Under Ma's instruction Didi's body was taken downstairs from her room above Gopal Mandir and placed in front of Chandi Mandap in exactly the place where, after the yearly performance of *Vasanti Pūjā*, the image of Durga is placed before being taken out for immersion. One of the teachers of the Kanyapeeth, who had been brought up there from her early childhood and is now an *achārya*, performed Didi's puja. Swami Chinmayananda

did *āratī* before the body was carried out amidst chanting of hymns and Vedic prayers.

Beludi (Didi's youngest sister and an inmate of our Vindhychal Ashram) who had been Didi's constant bedside companion during the last hours was heard to remonstrate with Ma in despair : "But Didi has served you so well for so many years, yet you did not feel inclined to look at her face for the last time ?"

Sri Ma whom we know to be inscrutable and beyond the reach of emotions, must have felt the need of providing solace in the face of Beludi's intense grief. So She replied quietly : "She was my friend and companion (*sakḥa*) for a life-time, don't expect me now to look at her in this condition."

A brahmachari of the Ashram asked Ma why She had travelled all the way back to Varanasi just to spend Her time in Her room. Mataji replied : "Do I ever come out for the immersion of a *Pratima*\* ?"

To the Kanyapeeth girls who were crying in their deep bereavement, Mataji said : "Your Dadabhai is now enshrined in each of you as she has brought you all up. Do not mourn for her now, she is living within each one of you."

Thus history repeated itself : When *Dada-maśaya's* (Ma's father) end came in Calcutta, Ma was also not present by his bedside, although she had travelled all the way from Tarapith to see him beforehand. Later, when the time came, Ma left

\* *Pratima* Image of a Deity.

Tarapith for Calcutta but broke journey at Asansol to entrain for Varanasi, knowing that Her father would not last out the night. It is clearly quite unnecessary for Ma to be in the physical proximity of a person with whom She has the *kheyāla* to be in communion.

Ma now let it be known that Didi was to be remembered as “*Sri Gurupriya Ananda Giri Maharaj*” and that any pūjā for her should be performed on the Śiva Linga.

Ma did not linger at Varanasi. True to the tradition of service set by Her, She left the same day to be present in Vrindaban for the conclusion of the Bhāgavata Saptah on Sept. 18th.

In accordance with the customs for *saṁnyāsis*, Ma declared that Didi’s *Śoḍaś* rites were to be performed on the 16th day after death. Consequently, on Oct. 1st at Varanasi as well as at most other Ashrams, *bhandāra* was performed in Didi’s memory with veneration and solemnity.

At Agarpara (Calcutta) Swami Chinmayananda personally led the Pūjā on the Śiva Linga, pūjā of 5 kumāris, the reception and garlanding of 5 sādhus, 5 brahmins and batukas amidst kirtana, and *bhandāra* for all devotees present. The menu for the day consisted of all the dishes that had been Didi’s favourites on the innumerable occasions when she had presided over similar functions at Ma’s request.

Thus passed away a great soul who by her selfless service to her chosen Guru over more than five decades has given an unique example of unswerving

loyalty and devotion that would be hard to emulate. To mention only a few of her achievements : the Kanyapeeth, the Savitri Mahayajña, the coming into being of the hospital at Varanasi—all these owe their success to Didi's selfless work behind the scenes, inspired by Ma.

It had become evident for some time that Didi's time on earth was drawing to its end. But Her apparent suffering during the declining years was not due to any *prārabdha karma* (effects of one's deeds during this and earlier births). This important fact Mataji took pains to clarify during one of Her utterances about Didi after death. Ma also said : "Now that Didi is gone, people are beginning to find out what she was in reality."

It is quite clear that Didi is beyond all human afflictions and her immortal soul merged for ever with the Supreme Paramātmā.

Jai Paramahansa Sri Gurupriya Ananda Giri Maharaj.

---

"The greatest error of a man is to think that he is weak by nature, evil by nature. Every man is divine and strong in his real nature. What are weak and evil are his habits, his desires and thoughts but not he himself.

— Ramana Maharshi

# **SRI CHAITANYA—A LEGEND AND A SYMBOL HIS RELEVANCE TODAY**

**Dr. Sudhansu Mohan Banerjee, M.A. LL.B., Ph.D.,  
IAAS, (Retd.)**

There is nothing that people will not believe now-a-days if only it be presented to them as science and nothing they will not disbelieve if it be presented to them as religion. These are lines from George Bernard Shaw, which set me thinking and took me back to the wild and stirring days of a few centuries ago, when under the impact of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's movement, this part of Eastern India was literally deluged by emotional fervour. Sri Chaitanya and his compeers and disciples became the symphony of India, a consummation of two thousand years of spiritual life of three hundred millions of men and women, to quote a Romain-Rolland simile (which he had applied in the case of Sri Ramakrishna). Chaitanya was also like him, in the Isherwoodian phrase, a phenomenon. Here was a scholarly boy, a God-drunk youth almost out of tune with his surroundings, rolling and rollicking in Krishna-Radha consciousness, behaving like an unbalanced one and yet he was a stark reality, a definite historical personage, who lived, died and had his being and becoming, only the other day, not a phantom figure



in the limbo of oblivion whose life-details we have to pick up from traditional lores, historical tit-bits or epigraphic records. We have here ample evidences and reliable biographies such as Krishnadas Kaviraj's 'Chaitanya Charitamrita', 'Chaitanya Bhagavat' of Brindaban Das, Murari Gupta's 'Kadcha', 'Govinda Bhasya' of Baladeva Vidyabhusana. Mahatma Sisir Kumar Ghosh or Trindadi Swami Bhakti Hriday Ban Maharaj follow the older standpoints. Are the incidents reported there acceptable in toto, are they reliable and can they be depended upon as truthful accounts of the Master and his times? It is a matter of great pride and satisfaction that some of our eminent historians like Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Dr. Ramesh Chandra Mazumdar, Dr. Bimanbehari Mazumdar, Dr. A. K. Mazumdar and others have taken pains to analyse and dissect the huge mass of materials at our disposal and tried to put Sri Chaitanya on his real pedestal and assess his relevance to modern-day conditions. To quote one of them : Sri Chaitanya was not merely an apostle of life, but also of basic human dignity to whom humility was as natural as an iron will which never compromised on essentials, though he was a super-elite of the emotional world.

I am not one of those who believe that history is determined only by blind economic and political forces which control society and individual. Even if there is no conscious purpose in the evolution of the world and everything in nature is relative, changing and transitory, there is Man's creative genius

which has played and does play a crucial role in historical developments. The role of the subconscious and the unconscious on our behaviour pattern has also to be taken notice of. If the modern psychologists would accept their impact as valid, then why not we postulate a super-conscious force also acting on us. God is not a deity, all powerful and oligarchic sitting on a high throne in heaven, dispensing favour and punishment at His sweet will, but He is within me, my own humanity growing into divinity, like Dawn taking birth as a brilliant orb from the depths of Inconscient Night. It is neither a mystery nor a mystic concept. Man has yet to be. It is the process of evolution. As Sri Aurobindo says—The animal is a laboratory in which Nature has worked out man, man may very well be a laboratory in which she wills to work out superman, to disclose the soul as a divine being, to evolve a divine nature. When a Buddha, a Jesus, a Shankara, a Chaitanya, a Ramakrishna or Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi, appear on the scene, they are the disclosed models of the Divine, in different disguises and any individual can place them before mind's eyes and proceed on the path of progress. There is nothing irrational or unscientific in that concept. Religion, looked at from this angle is really super-science. To take another exemple Ma Anandamayi is a representative of the Eternal Motherhood concept of supra cosmic consciousness. Love, affection, simplicity, magesty and purity are personified in her.

From the purely historical standpoint, there is no question that the impact of challenge, response and assimilation of the forces generated by Sri Chaitanya's movement and the ideas and ideals they preached had been socially significant in the Eastern region of India, particularly in Mithila, Gour-Banga and Orissa though not so much in North Bengal and Kamrupa, where another variant of Vaishnava cult was being preached with almost similar effect by the Mahapurusas led by Srimant Sankardeva and Madhavadeva. In any case, the degenerate Tantrik ritualism of both the Hindus and the Buddhists crumbled before this onrush. A new rejuvenescence came over the land, a miniature renaissance so to speak. Preachers preached, poets sang, social reformers tried to bring a milieu. A new code of conduct was evolved, a new behaviour pattern. Thinkers forged new links, philosophers created new dimensions of thought, novel havens of rehabilitation. Upanishadic mysticism apart, there were the Buddhist Sanghas, the Tantrik chakras, the Vaishnava Goshtis, even before Mahaprabhu's advent, where caste, creed or birth was never allowed to stand in the way of spiritual seeking. Ibn Batuta who visited 'Benjala' in the 14th century when the liberal minded Fakhruddin was the Sultan of Gaur, saw one hundred and fifty seats of Muslim Fakirs and Pirs from Pandua to Sylhet. Jalali Pigeons (of Nizamuddin Aulia fame) were the signs of an unseen bond. Mymensingh Ballads and Kavi Ramchandra Bharati's poems show abundant feel-

ings of amity and fellowship for the common man. Hindus would talk of Allah and Mecca, Muslims of Siva and Jagannath and during the reign of Hussain Shah, Hindu-Muslim relation took a definite turn towards a new cultural synthesis. Sri Chaitanya's appearance on the scene at this stage of Bengal's history definitely fulfilled a historical purpose and a social and cultural role of vital importance. Questions are often asked in good faith—Are Sri Chaitanya's tenets still valid in the last quarter of the twentieth century? What is his relevance to the modern day conditions? Dismiss him as an exploded idol, a myth that has spent itself. Such irreverent talks are often paraded in the name of logic, progress and sanity, in the name of scientific obscurantism. Life progresses, society leaps from phase to phase, science and technology have done wonders. Accepting all these as valid, why should we, even if we are not as much devotees as our forefathers were, and even if we have not that fiery faith of submission to the Lord, why should we assume that there is nothing in Chaitanya's luring messages from which we can still gather some solace in the dark days of the soul. Is he to be consigned to the lumberroom of the past as of no significance to the modern man except as a classic exhibit in a museum of mummies? No, definitely no. Even if one is not a bhakta or a believer, his life shines as a beacon-light to all and sundry, and is still a living force. He is relevant even today, because we can make a conscious analysis of his life and thought process without the

bias of an overwhelming devotion. Reject his so-called fancies if you like, but accept his truths, the primeval verities of life, which contribute to the grand synthesis of an activistic structure. This quest is all the more necessary today in a world full of hate and spite, in a social periphery where cut-throat methods are being applied without rhyme or reason, where Man is man's enemy, where to speak of unselfish love is to show your particular stupidity, where life is all agog with excitement and frustration. In this mental anguish, we have to go back not only to the old Masters but also modern spiritual leaders like Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Raman Maharshi or Ma Anandamayi for faith and inspiration, to collect materials for the construction of an Integral Future because all Life is a process in continuity. Sri Chaitanya may or may not be the incarnation of Divinity, but to men of today like us he is human and divine combined and our adoration to him is to that humanity in divinity, and that divinity in humanity.

The life story of the Master is briefly told. It covered only a span of 48 years. His father was a Vedic Brahmin—Jagannath Misra originally of Sylhet who had settled at Navadwip and his mother, Sachi was the daughter of the reputed professor Nilambar Chakravarty. He was their tenth progeny and was named "Viswambhara". His immediate elder brother was "Viswarupa" who took to *Samnyāsa* in his 12th year. Other 8 sisters had predeceased the brothers. He was nick-named "Neemai", a man of no longevity as a sort of an

insurance against short life. He was also called Gouranga for his fair complexion. It was the full moon Falgun day of Sakabda 1407 (March 1485 A.D. or according to some February 1486 A.D.) Sri Adwaitacharya was then having his evening kirtan in Srinivas's house. Suddenly he sensed a great presence—a descent to be more correct, a saviour. As a householder, he was an eccentric one no doubt, but gay and colourful, a keen student, a loving son, a dear husband, a free lance logician, a master of dialectics, a teacher of repute—qualities which mark him at once from the ordinary rabble. He had married twice. His first wife Lakshmi, a daughter of Vallabha Acharya, died of snake-bite and he married Vishnupriya. At Gaya, he met Iswarpuri, a Vaishnava monk of the Madhwa School. From that time, when he became formally initiated into the Krishna cult, the arid *Jñāni* in him completely merged himself into the emotional *Bhakta*—a seeker and a singer, who was out for his Holy Grail. He had also met Keshab Kashmiri already.

“Purnimar chand sane, chandan batiya go  
Ke garila Gourtanu khan”.

(Who had created this body of Gour with the white rays of a beaming full moon, mixed with sandal paste).

The next six years were spent in travelling, teaching and preaching, the missionary activities being left to Nityananda in Bengal. The third phase arose when he settled at Puri in company with associates under the royal patronage of

Pratap Rudradeva, King of Puri and where he got among his companions, the famous Vedantist Vasudeva Sarvabhūma, who gradually hoped to bring Sri Chaitanya to his mode of worship as he had done in the case of many others. But the conqueror became conquered. It was he who had advised him to meet Rai Ramananda. The last phase of Sri Chaitanya's mortal life was his absorption in the life of Inner Being, secluded from others and what is known as "*Gambhīra Vāsa*" and his disappearance one day in an ecstatic mood. All these episodes are recorded in *Ādya*, *Madhya* and *Antya* Lila. Some say that he disappeared in the sea. The rumbling waves took him over. Others opine that he went into Gopinath's temple and was never seen thereafter. There is also the story of his having merged with Jagannath. Incidentally, I may here record a piece of evidence, more modern from a petition submitted to the Hon'ble the Governor General Lord Wellesley after the second Mahratha War which is recorded in March 1804, Proceedings No 48, paras 6-12, "that the Brahmins of the Holy Temple had consulted and appealed to Juggernaut to inform them what power was now to have his temple under its protection and that he had given a decisive answer that the British Government was in future to be his guardian". Comment is superfluous. The personality of Sri Chaitanya then was such that he could not suffer the anguish of separation from his Divine Beloved any more. The witnesses were not only Nilachal or Jagannath Swami but disciples like Swarup Damodar, Sikhi

Mahanti, Madhavi, six other followers and six Goswamis. We hear also of five friends, Ananta, Achyota, Yasovant, Balaram and Jagu in Orissa. I am reminded of that beautiful Sanskrit stotra, "Jagannath Swami, Nayanpatha gami, Bhavatu me" etc.

Oh ! Lord of the Universe,  
 Let my eyes feast on Thy shining face  
 I do not want riches, gold pearls or emeralds,  
 Nor am I enamoured with any sweet ravishing  
damsel,  
 Thou, Thou, only, O Lord of compassion and  
faith

Thee only I want to see,  
 Thee, Thee, alone.

Here, there is no material or moral incentive, as the socialists' jargon would put it but pure spiritual yearning, a hankering, an awakening in other dimensions—to lift oneself to something higher, nobler and purer, call it God or the Principle of Life, to transcend oneself over the limits of body, intellect and mind into a supramental existence. We shall be told that this is all bunkum, illogical and irrational. It may or may not be so. A religion in its widest sense, has to be lived and experienced. It is not a thing to be brought from outside, but has to be sought from within and realized in intuitive mentality. There is the evidence of Christian mystics and Islamic Sufis too. In his book on Mysticism, Underhill on page 157 while speaking of St. Catharine of Siena (1347 A.D.) and St. Teresa and others, writes—"Those



for whom mysticism is above all things an intimate and personal relation—the satisfaction of deep desire, will fall back upon imagery drawn largely from the language of earthly passion”. She describes this as (1) Recollection (2) Quiet (3) Union (4) Ecstasy (5) Rapture (6) The pain of God (7) The Spiritual Marriage. Does it not remind us of Purvaraga, Milana, Viraha, Sambhoga Milana ?. Narahari, who was believed to be an incarnation of a Gopi who loved Sri Krishna, records as follows—“The highest stage of spiritual love has assumed a material form before me today and I find the rapturous ecstasies of love attributed to Radha in you, Oh my Master.”

We know that in the famous dialogue which took place between Sri Chaitanya and Rai Ramananda it explains step by step the stages of bhakti and how to attain it. Ramananda at the bidding of the Master first speaks of *Sadhya Bhakti* or that faith which has for its goal the carrying out of the duties prescribed for each caste by the Śāstras and he refers to verse VIII, Chapter 8, Part II of Vishnu Purāna which speaks of *Sadhya Nirnay*. The Lord was not satisfied and asked him to go deeper. He referred to verse XXXVII, Chapter IX of the Gita which prescribes that one should work without a thought of the results or consequences that might follow. “Whatever your action food or worship ; whatever the gift that you give to another, whatever you vow to the work of spirit, O ! son of Kunti, lay these as offerings before me.” The Master’s admonition was : “go

deeper still". Ramananda now refers to the utter resignation to the Divine Will which verse 67 of Chapter XVIII of the Gita and verse XXII of Skanda Purāna and Chapter XIII of Srimad Bhagavata represent. "No, no," the Master nods—"proceed." Ramananda speaks of *Bandha Bhakti*, the ever-growing new babe of humanity—*Vatsalya Prem*. Then he goes to the spiritual summit—*Kanta Prem*, *Prema chiddapandipanam*, the merger of the Eternal into the Eternal, of the One into the One, of Radha and Krishna, of Raga-Anuraga. Srila Rupa Goswami's *Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu* narrated the full Vaishnavite ritual in this respect. This narrative has still a meaning for the modern man, in that we have to realize the wholeness of Spirit to quote Radhakrishnan—it is not necessary to follow the traditional path, for the path of devotion is trackless.

There are many other incidents in that great life which shine as messages of truth and humanism and are still relevant in the present day. Take the case of *Pasanda-dalan*, how Jagai and Madhai were won over or Kazi's submission and subversion.

"Śiva, Śiva, nache Viswambhar

Ati-Sumangalam Śiva, Śiva, Acharanam"

"Viswambhar dances the rudra-dance of Śiva to chastise the Kazi but out of evil cometh good".

Siva's benevolent aspect also manifests. Kazi or the Muslim Judge became a *bhakta* of Sri Chaitanya. As a matter of fact, there were others too, like Chand Kazi, Thakur Haridas (not

the junior one), several Pathan chieftains, many of other sects such as Pratap Rudra of Puri or Vasudeva Sarvobhauma or Baba Chaitanya, Kesava Chaitanya, Raghava Chaitanya (all of Maharashtra vide references in the Poems of Tukaram vol. I edited by J. Nelson Fraser), Venkata Bhatta of Srirangam, who used to see before his eyes the figure of Shyamala-Sundara on the chariot whenever he would recite the Gita. The priests of Bhattamani sect of Kerala also came to be followers of Sri Chaitanya. I am not talking of his numerous Bengali followers, such as Adwaitacharya, Nityananda and others. When he went to Ramkeli, Sakan Mallick and Dabir Khan (o.e. Sanatan Goswami and Rupa Goswami) of the Pathan Sultan Hussein Shah joined him and with Jiva Goswami were instrumental in founding the Vrindaban school of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, the finest literary fruits of which were, *Vidhagda Madhava*, *Lalit Madhava*, *Ujjal Nilmani*, *Bhakti-Ratnakar* etc.

You are the same Radha and I am the same Krishna and we meet. But I am not happy. My heart longs to go back to the banks of Yamuna and meet you all in the midst of our former unsophisticated lives.

The relevance of Sri Chaitanya today to life as we live in is not in the romantic exuberance typified by his anguish for his Divine Beloved but in the release in that process, of the forces of liberation, freedom of thought, equity and equality for all to serve the Divine in his own way. Man, however bad he may be, is not an unredeemable person and

in Sri Chaitanya and his followers we see the resurrection of the old *Narayaniya* section of *Mahabharata* (See Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's famous work) and the *Pancharatna* texts which perhaps refer to a non-vedic cult. Man's highest aspiration has been always a seeking for God, perfection, freedom, absolute truth and bliss, immortality. A direct contradiction exists between this aspiration and his present state of mortality, imperfection, bondage, necessity, ego and animality. Man's attempt has been to remove these bondages i.e. to evolve into being more and more perfect. At this level works a Chaitanya, a Ramakrishna or a Sri Aurobindo or a mother in the shape of Sri Sri Anandamayi Mata. Their life-legends are mere symbols of deeper penetration into the realization of the Self through disinterested work, or rapturous devotion or through all-pervasive knowledge. Any of these paths—as a matter of fact all paths meet in Him, the synoptic one—the First Causation—call Him by whatever name. This is why a devout Vaishnava would sing—

Utter the name of Krishna, worship Krishna  
 Krishna is mother, Krishna is father,  
 Krishna is wealth and Life.

For you Krishna was born as an incarnation.

Give up all unworthy activities

Worship Krishna.

And all work is worship and that carried out without a hope for any return takes you to the Divine i.e. makes you more sublime, more resplendent, more self-effacing.

# REVELATION

Renu Srivastava (B.S.C. II)

It was not love at first sight, neither any miracle that attracted me to God (MA). It started as a challenge. When I was five years old I heard that there was a saintly lady whose hair was still black in spite of her advanced age. So I got interested : my first attraction was just Ma's black hair.

When I was studying in class 5, we were transferred to Lucknow. I went to my nani's (Lilavati Sahai) place to attend Saraswati Puja in Ma's presence, but I was more interested in the people than in Sri Ma, and so lost another opportunity. Later I came to Hardwar and visited Her ashram at Kankhal. For the first time in my life I felt at peace and Ma attracted me. I liked the place and its atmosphere.

Finally, on Oct. 25th, 1977, the birthday of my aunt Meenakshi, the daughter of Sri and Srimati Sahai who are very old bhaktas of Ma, Ma was passing through Lucknow by train. I went to the station. I remember that I entered Her compartment with my shoes on (I had been operated upon recently), because I was afraid I would be left behind if I took off my shoes. When coming down from the train, I longed to see more of Ma. I felt Her grace for the first time.

We were standing at the back and many people were blocking our view. Suddenly we noticed that

the train was moving. We started walking with it. When I had a full view of Ma the train stopped and I caught hold of the bar of the compartment window and gazed at Ma for at least 15 minutes. When we returned from the station I was eager to know all about Her. My aunt related to me many of her experiences, telling me of Ma's grace and Her love for all human beings.

Even then I did not start doing pūjā. Later I thought, my aunty worships Her and is loved by Ma very much. So I will also do pūjā and win Her affection. Without having any prior knowledge of the technique of pūjā, I started engaging in it. Slowly my attitude changed : I now wanted to do pūjā not to win Ma but because I loved Her and wished to express my love in some form. I think it was Ma's grace that transformed my attitude of challenge into love and which is the correct way of worshipping. I knew that my faith was impregnable and it was this that prompted my action.

I have observed a peculiar thing : you can always feel life in Ma's photos and Her presence if you only think of Her. You can easily converse with Her though She may not be present physically. Whenever doubt assails your mind, it is going to be effaced in some way or the other. Ma's līlā is very unique and incomparable. Sometimes you feel that you are being ignored and Ma is not seeing you or has not even recognized you. It is not actually so, but She is not concentrating on you. This is understandable, as She has to think about

the whole world. There are so many people remembering Her at the same time.

It is useless to fight with Her. I have seen that I have certain fights with Her, but in the end She wins and I have to admit, "Yes, Ma, I was wrong." She is not going to get angry, that is why one can quarrel with Her. Where else can we find such a friend who will always listen to us, forgive us and accept us with all our faults? It has been my experience that whenever I have asked Ma for anything with full faith, She has always granted it. Just say in your mind: "This thing has happened, Ma!" and She will know.

Hers is the kindness of Rama and the diplomacy of Krishna. I have overcome many difficult situations in my life just because I have Her by my side and can feel Her presence. An incident which happened in summer 1978 convinced me that She knows people's minds. I was unable to attend Her birthday celebrations in Bangalore, but I was anxious to receive something which Ma had worn. I got a towel and a mala. I was disappointed because I thought Ma had not sent me what I wanted. After some days I saw a photo in which She was wearing the very mala I had received. My happiness knew no bounds.

Similarly, recently at Vrindaban, when I was sitting near Ma, She gave an apple to a lady. After a little while She gave her another apple. I thought to myself: "This is very bad. You are giving two apples to her and not thinking of

me.” Then Ma started talking and I forgot the whole thing.

After some time, my cousin Gopi came and gave me a packet. I opened it and found Ma’s kurta. I was speechless. I felt Ma was telling me: “I have given you something that you wanted.” I said in my heart: “Yes, Ma, I am blessed. I have got a thing which is hundred times more precious than those apples.”

How wonderfully gracious God is! We have to give just 20 minutes out of our busy schedule of 24 hours and we gain so much that nothing can equal it.

---

An ailing devotee wrote: “Circumstances make it extremely difficult for me to avail myself of Mātri Satsang. How can I feel your presence here?”

*Mataji*: By the constant thought of God. The more consistent your effort to engage in japa and meditation the more will the power generated by it help you to become aware of the Divine presence.

\* \* \*

In all circumstances the remembrance God must be sustained. Without this one cannot advance towards Peace. The heart’s prayers and petitions should be addressed at every moment to one’s own *Iṣṭa*. Endeavour to avoid negligence in your duty. Pray to God for the power to remain aware of THAT in all conditions and circumstances

*Sri Anandamayi Ma*



# MATRI LILA

(July—November 1980)

Mataji arrived in Kankhal on June 27th afternoon. The next day, the widow of Sanjay Gandhi came to Ma in procession with her husband's ashes, before they were immersed in the Ganges. Compassionate Ma gave Her blessing by putting flowers on the casket and then embraced the young widow. For the next two or three days Ma had high fever.

From July 14th to 21st a special Bhagavata Saptaha was held for the good of the soul of Brahmachari Brahmānanda (Vibhu) who had passed away in a tragic manner just a year ago. The well-known Bhāgavata Acharya Sri Brij Kishore Shastri of Vrindaban in his lucid manner, related the Bhāgavata in Hindi daily for six hours to the ever increasing audience in the hall, while the Sanskrit recitation was performed in another room. Mataji was present for long spells every single day with one exception only. For the last few years Ma had never attended any Bhāgavata Saptaha as much as this one. On the day when Sri Krishna's birth was described, Mataji sat in the hall for 1½ hours in the morning and 3 hours in the afternoon. On the last day She again was present for long hours.

For the next few days of course, Mataji needed rest and hardly left Her cottage. In connection

with the Saptah, sādhus and brahmins were entertained on several days.

On July 23rd evening, another big function started. A famous Rāmāyana party, consisting of fifteen members, had arrived from Bareilly. They sang the whole of the Rāmāyana, repeating each line in chorus after the leader, in ever changing melodious tunes. Our own guests and some Rāmāyana experts of Kankhal joined at intervals. The beautiful singing continued day and night without any interruption until the evening of July 26th, when Ma left Her cottage to be present at the *Pūrnāhuti* (completion).

Later in the evening *Nāma Yajña* was started by our Delhi Kīrtan Party, this also specially for Br. Brahmananda. Ma came to the hall for *adhivāsa*, and when the men started circumambulating round the *mancha* (altar), Mataji joined them for three rounds and then walked one round with the women, led by Kumari Chhabi Banerji, when they took over for the night.

On July 27th, Gurupurnima, Mataji was simply indefatigable from early morning till late at night, with very scanty intervals for food and rest. Didima's Pūjā was celebrated in her *samādhi mandir*, Śiva Pūjā in the Śiva mandir, Padmanābha, Vyāsa and Adī Sankaracharya Pūjā in the enclosed portion of the hall. Mataji for some time graced every one of those ceremonies. In the late morning Mataji sat down on the veranda of the guest-house (since *Nāma Yajña* was going on in the hall) and every single person who lined up in two endless

queues, was given the chance to offer *pranāma*, garlands and gifts and Ma presented fruits, flowers, cloth, etc. with full hands to each one. A veritable Goddess of Plenty Ma was overflowing with Grace.

At 3 p.m. at last, Mataji partook of *bhoga* behind the curtain in the hall and had a little rest. After sunset, Sri Ma was again present for the completion of the *Nāma Yajña* in the packed hall. She walked round the *mancha* for nearly ten minutes with the men before they left the hall for *nagar kīrtana*.

Needless to say that devotees had gathered for Gurupūrnima in large numbers even from far off places like Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, not to speak of nearby towns such as Delhi, Dehradun, Lucknow. A number of Westerners had also come.

The few present in the early morning could not believe their eyes, when they saw Mataji come out into the courtyard at 6 a.m. the very next day, to sit and walk about in the open air. She was obviously not exhausted after the strenuous exertion of the hectic day.

Mataji was expected to leave for Naimisharanya on the 28th night. Due to flooded roads this had to be cancelled at the last moment. To the great joy of the Dehradun devotees, Sri Ma motored to the Kishenpur Ashram with a very few companions on July 30th afternoon and remained there until August 6th. Everyone was delighted to have Ma in that Ashram for a whole week after an interval of several years when Mataji had paid only flying

visits at long intervals. The people of Dehradun were very considerate and came only in the evenings for *darśana*, "private", etc. So Sri Ma had ample time to rest in the day and recoupe from the exertion at Kankhal. During Mataji's sojourn, *Akhaṇḍa Rāmāyaṇa* was held twice (28 hours each time) in the hall. Mataji did not come downstairs at all, but after the completion of the Rāmāyaṇa everybody was allowed upstairs where *ārati* was performed before Ma and *prasāda* taken to Her to be blessed.

Upstairs, in the Kishenpur Ashram there is a *dhyāna mandir*, which has been reserved exclusively for silent meditation since the Ashram was built in 1936. Not a word has even been spoken there and only one person at a time is allowed inside. It therefore has a specially hushed atmosphere. During the last few years it had been used more for storing carpets and other things than for meditation. Now Mataji Herself got it cleared and regular meditation by turns of one hour each, for twelve hours every Sunday, has been started and people have been encouraged to use it on other days as well, one by one.

On August 6th, Mataji returned to Kankhal by train as motoring was not quite safe due to heavy rains. From Hardwar She proceeded on the 9th night via Delhi to Kuchaman in Rajasthan at the invitation of H. H. Raja Pratap Singh. A Bhāgavata Saptah was held there which had been postponed twice due to Mataji's indifferent health. On August 20th or 21st Mataji went to Bharatpur and

from there to Vrindaban where She reached on August 22nd morning. Sri Ma alighted in front of the temples. She refused to be carried in a chair and climbed up the stairs supported by two of Her girls. After *darśana* She was taken to Her cottage. Since news had been received from Delhi that Gurupriya Didi was in a bad state of health, Mataji left for Delhi that very day at 2 p.m. During the *Jhulan* festival which was to be celebrated in Vrindaban in Sri Ma's presence from 22nd to 26th August, Mataji thus remained in our New Delhi Ashram. Didi's health improved visibly after Ma's arrival. Dr. Seth came by plane from Bombay and in person took Didi there for treatment. Mataji returned to Vrindaban on the 26th (*Rakshabandhan* festival) at about 7 p.m. Some devotees offered *rākhis* to Ma late in the evening. Janmastami was celebrated by solemn *pūjā* in the night of September 1st at Vrindaban. Mataji was present till 2 a.m.

We quote from a letter received from Vrindaban :  
 "...Ma looked well when She returned from Delhi. Yet daily *darśana* was only from the roof. But yesterday we were fully compensated. I think this was the most wonderful *Nandotsava* I have ever known. The usual dancing of cowherds and milkmaids, enriched by Anil Ganguli who play-acted an old "*Brajawala*". Dasu had dressed up several little boys. For a long while Ma circled round with the men, occasionally "dancing". Then they were all sent away and Ma "danced" with the women ; then sitting down touched all their heads.

Ma sang with us for twenty minutes. She was in a great mood, laughing merrily and swinging Her arms most lively. Finally She threw curds into everyone's mouth and all over them. In the evening Ma gave *darśana* sitting on the steps of Her house, with us down below. From 8—8.15 p.m. there was meditation on the roof. We hope this will be repeated every evening."

On the day after Nandotsava, Sept. 3rd, Mataji sent several brahmacharinis and relatives of Didi to Bombay to help with Didi's nursing.

On Sept. 11th a Bhāgavata Saptah started, arranged by three devotees combined. Ma was present for the starting of the Bhāgavata and when Swami Akhandananda delivered a talk, Ma was in an excellent mood. In the evening She gave *darśana* for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour in front of Her cottage and later there was collective meditation on the roof for 15-20 minutes, which had been observed daily since Janmastami.

After midnight a message was received from Bombay that Didi's condition was alarming and no treatment could be given anymore. Mataji left the next morning for Bombay accompanied only by Bhaskarananda and Udas. Before leaving She assured the people who were responsible for the Bhāgavata, that She would return very soon. On the 13th morning Mataji reached Bombay unannounced. She thanked everybody for their devoted service to Didi during her prolonged illnesses, especially Sri B. K. Shah and his wife, and said that She was now taking Didi to Varanasi

since treatment was not possible anymore. Ma with Didi and attendants thus left the very same night, reaching Varanasi very late at night on the 14th. Mataji saw to it that Didi was comfortably settled and attended to in her room upstairs above Gopal Mandir. She told Narayan Swami and Panu Brahmachari that She would not be present when Didi would leave her body and asked them to make arrangements for her *Jala Samādhi* (immersion in Ganga) as Didi was a *saṁnyāsī*.

In the afternoon of Sept. 15th Ma boarded the Ganga-Jamuna Express for Mathura, reaching Vrindaban the next morning in time for the description of Sri Krishna's birth which She attended. Before the news of Didi's *Mahaprayan* was received by phone Ma said : "It is all over with Didi." At 12-30 p.m. Ma started again for Varanasi reaching there at 3 a.m. on the 17th.\* The same afternoon Mataji travelled back to Vrindaban reaching there on the 18th morning in time for the *Pūrnāhuti* of the Bhāgavata.

Thus Mataji spent six consecutive nights travelling. To contemplate Ma's *lilā* from 11th to 18th September is deeply moving and revealing. Her solicitude for those who have taken refuge in Her is simply breathtaking. Regardless of Her age and fluctuating states of health, Mataji not only went to any amount of trouble and did everything for Didi at the end of her life as perfectly as only She can, but She also satisfied those who were

---

\*"The End of an Epoch with Didi Gurupriya" contains a detailed description of Didi's end and after.

holding the Bhāgavata Saptah by attending the main three functions. She completely ignored Her own convenience and comfort.

Mataji remained in Vrindaban until October 6th. On 4th & 5th Oct., *Nāma Yajña* was held in the hall. As usual ladies sang kirtan all night and men all day. Mataji was scheduled to leave for Bombay on Oct. 9th. Later She decided to leave only on the 11th and all reservations had to be cancelled. Suddenly She left on the 6th morning for Udaipur, where She remained for one night in response to the Rajmata's repeated invitations. The next day Mataji proceeded to Nathadwara, also in Rajasthan, which is famous for its very special *vighraha* of Sri Krishna holding Mount Gowardhan, called "Sri Nathaji". It was originally found buried underground in Gowardhan and then kept in Vrindaban and later installed in a temple in Nathadwara. It is said to be a *Jāgrat mūrti* (living presence). Pilgrims flock there by the thousand.

Mataji's party returned to Vrindaban and on the 11th morning boarded the train to Bombay. But Mataji said She was not well enough to travel and remained for three nights in the temple guest-house. Later She remarked, Her indisposition was all due to Srinathaji's līlā, as He wanted to keep Her there for some time.

There is no direct train from Nathadwara to Bombay. With great difficulty a coupe was somehow secured for the train leaving for Ahmedabad on Oct. 10th. Mataji spent the day there at



Sri Nanubhai's residence, reaching Bombay, as scheduled, on the 12th morning, even earlier than the train from Mathura by which most of Mataji's party travelled.

From October 14th to 19th Durgā Pūjā was celebrated in great style at the invitation of Sri B. K. Shah's sons, Sri Sudhir and Sri Sanjay Shah and his daughter Sm. Sunayana Mehta at their residence in Vile Parle. The Shah family are well known for their sincere devotion and generosity. Not only did they spend lavishly but they spared themselves no trouble to make all arrangements as perfectly as possible.

A very large number of devotees gathered from all over India and everybody felt as if coming to their own home. The venue of the celebrations was very near Sri Ma's pagoda in Sri B. K. Shah's compound so that Ma could easily walk to and fro and there was no need for Her to be carried in a chair. Mataji was in great form and in an excellent mood. Joy and harmony pervaded the atmosphere throughout and everything was accomplished without a hitch.

Mataji had been expected to spend a couple of days in Pune between *Vijaya Daśami* and Lakshmi Pūjā, which was performed on Oct. 23rd, but She chose to remain in Bombay all along, leaving on Oct. 24th by the Frontier Mail for Mathura from where She motored to Vrindaban for a few days of rest and quiet.

At Vrindaban also Ma kept fairly good health. Collective meditation was observed every evening

for 15 minutes on Her roof. One day Sri Thakur Sitanath Omkarnath paid Her a visit, another day Prabhudatt Brahmachari came. There were other visitors as well.

On Nov. 5th morning, Mataji left by car for New Delhi where She graced the inauguration of a devotee's new house and spent the night there. On the 6th morning Mataji proceeded to our Ashram at Kalkaji, halting at two other places on the way. In the night of Nov. 7th Kālī Pūjā was celebrated with great solemnity and the next day *Annakūt* with kirtan and 108 different dishes offered to Annapūrṇā, the Goddess of plenty. Everyone present partook of the *prasāda*. That morning the world-renowned musician Ravi Shanker paid a visit to Ma and played to Her.

The same night Ma boarded the train to Hardwar, alighting in Kankhal on the 9th. That very morning the Prime Minister came to see Mataji and to perform a special pūjā for the welfare of the whole country at the adjoining Daksheshwar Mandir.

On Nov. 13th afternoon Mataji drove to Rishikesh for the 31st *Samyam Mahāvratā* which was held from Nov. 15th to 22nd at the invitation of Mahamandaleswara Sri Swami Vidyananda, as a part of the Centenary Celebrations of Kailash Ashram, one of the most important Ashrams of India.

About this *Samyam Mahāvratā* one can only speak in superlatives. How to find words that will convey even a faint idea of the magnitude of this

unequaled function? Its impact was simply shattering. We were transported to a world of joy, harmony and universal love. The pettiness of humdrum existence was left behind and forgotten. We experienced how blessed life becomes when spent in the choicest satsang and in concentrated spiritual endeavour. So-called hardships faded into insignificance.

About 800 devotees from all over India and over 60 from foreign countries took part, besides many sādhus and sādhakas from various local Ashrams. The spacious pandal, all in orange and white without decorations or buntings, seemed an ideal site for this austere and concentrated gathering. The large dais was very high so that even from the furthest corner of the pandal one could have a full view of Mataji at the extreme right, whether She was sitting or reclining, and of the galaxy of Mahātmās seated in three rows. The sight itself was elevating. About fourteen Mahamandaleswaras and heads of Ashrams occupied the front row, delivering highly interesting and inspiring talks, with short interludes of exquisite music at intervals. Sri Swami Vidyanandaji daily in person expounded the Isha Upanishad and Swami Harihar Tirthaji, also of Kailash Ashram spoke about a purāna every afternoon. Every one of the speakers seemed at his best. Swami's Chidananda and Madhavananda of Sivananda Ashram spoke partly in English. A new feature were short talks in fluent Sanskrit delivered on two days by girl Acharyas of our Kanyapeeth.

Mataji was amazingly active – just untiring. She remained on the dais for eight hours on the first day and for eight hours on the last day ; on other day for 4 to 6 hours. After the morning satsang the gate of Her residence was besieged by people anxious for personal *darśana*. During “Mātri Satsang” Mataji daily replied to questions, told amusing stories and once or twice sang. Just before midnight meditation in the last night Thakur Sri Sitaram Omkarnath paid a visit to Ma and sat by Her on the dais with his attendants.

On Nov. 22nd, *havan* (fire sacrifice) in front of the pandal, marked the completion of this unique *Samyam Saptah*. It was not possible to go near Ma to do *pranāma* as all had to depart soon after midday. But Ma had repeated again and again : “God is everywhere, nothing exists besides Him, so wherever you may be you can bow to Him—where is He not ?”

One felt reluctant to leave and to return to one’s normal surroundings. Mataji admonished everyone to set apart certain days for *Samyam* and meditation etc. and to try to reproduce the enchanting atmosphere of this extraordinary gathering.

On Her way to Kankhal Mataji halted at Sivanandashram, Sri Sitaram Omkarnath Ashram and two or three other places. Two packed special buses and several taxis and cars took a large number of devotees to our Kankhal Ashram, where *Nāma Yajña* started at 9-30 p.m. in Mataji’s presence. Ma remained in the hall until 11-30 p.m. She walked round the circular altar once with the

men and once with the women before leaving. The attendance was very large. The next day Ma came at about 2 p.m. for bhoga and again in the evening for the *pūrṇahuti*. She sang “*Dhare lao*” and at the end threw batasha (sugar puffs) in all directions with sweeping gestures, laughing heartily and loudly, making fun like a child. Every one was electrified. Another climax after the incomparable *samyam* week. Mataji remained in Kankhal until Nov. 30th when She boarded the train for Varanasi accompanied by a large party.

A Bhagavata Saptah is to be held in Varanasi from December 12th, with Swami Visnuashram expounding in Hindi. Mataji is expected to be in Bombay in the second week of January.

Durga Puja and the *Samyam Mahavrata* in 1981 are to be observed in Kankhal.

“O Divine Beloved, I have nothing to offer Thee,  
For all things are Thine.  
I grieve not that I cannot give,  
For nothing is mine, nothing is mine.

Here I lay at Thy feet  
My limbs, my life, my thoughts, my speech—  
For they are Thine, for they are Thine.”

—Paramahansa Yogananda