
... I am ever present with you all, but you have little yearning to see me. What can I do? Know it for certain I have my eyes fixed on what you do or omit to do

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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Marble statue prepared by the architect Sri G. Pal of Calcutta installed in the new marble temple on her Maha-Samadhi in Kankhal on 1.5.87.

ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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

Vol. XXXV

JULY, 1987

No. 3

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EDITORIAL

Re : SOUVENIR

The following messages from renowned and illustrious personages were unfortunately received too late to send to the printers for publishing in the "Smaranika" made available to devotees at Kankhal by the 30th April, 1987.

So they are being reproduced in the July Ananda Varta with profound apologies to the illustrious writers.



राष्ट्रपति
भारत गणतंत्र
PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF INDIA

MESSAGE

I am glad to know that "Ananda Jyoti Peetham" constructed on the Maha Samadhi of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, will be inaugurated at Kankhal Ashram, Hardwar, on May 1, 1987.

I send my greetings and best wishes for the success of the function.

ZAIL SINGH

New Delhi,
April 13, 1987



Dy No. P129 VIP/MW/87

कल्याण राज्य मंत्री

भारत

नई दिल्ली-110 001.

MINISTER OF STATE
WELFARE

INDIA

NEW DELHI-110 001

प्रिय स्वरूपानन्दजी

मुझे यह जानकर हर्ष हो रहा है कि श्री श्री आनन्दमयी माँ की महासमाधि पर "आनन्द ज्योति पीठम्" का उद्घाटन 1 मई, 1987 को होना निश्चित हुआ है। माँ ज्ञान, कर्म, उपासना की त्रिवेणी थी, जो सदैव प्रेरणा स्रोत रहेगी। समारोह की सफलता के लिए मेरी शुभकामनाएं।

शुभकामनाओं सहित,

आपकी

राजेन्द्र कुमारी बाजपेयी

स्वामी श्री स्वरूपानन्द जी,

आनन्दमयी माँ आश्रम,

कनखल, हरिद्वार,

उत्तर प्रदेश।



No. MEF / 16 / 87

पर्यावरण एवम् वन मंत्री

भारत

नई दिल्ली-११० ०११

MINISTER OF
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
INDIA.

NEW DELHI-110011

10th April, 1987

MESSAGE

It gives me great pleasure to learn that on the occasion of the 92nd Birthday of Shree Ma Anandamayee 'Ananda jyoti Peetham' the newly constructed holy shrine on the Mahasamadhi of Ma at Kankhal Ashram is going to be ceremonially inaugurated on the 1st May, 1987.

Ma was a saint of eminence of our country. She was source of inspiration, treasure of love and apostle of peace to her followers. She had devotees from all walks of life. Her blessings would continue to benefit many of her devotees.

I hope the souvenir being published on this occasion shall be valuable container to the devotees and others.

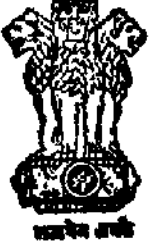
BHAJAN LAL

No. 1261 /MOS (PNG)/87

पैट्रोलियम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस राज्य मंत्री,

भारत

MINISTER OF STATE FOR PETROLEUM
& NATURAL GAS
INDIA



नई दिल्ली

१९८७

New Delhi

1987

MESSAGE

I am glad to know that you are going to hold an inauguration of Maha Samadhi Mandir of Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee at Kankhal.

I send my good wishes for the success of the same.

BRAHM DUTT

Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

(Translated from Sri Gurupriya Devi's
Vol. VII in Bengali)

One afternoon a group of people were sitting round Ma. In the usual course of conversation one of them started to comment that a number of bad people were among those who visited Ma, and since they were never slighted by her, their audacity increased ; that mischief-makers should also receive proper punishment, so on and so forth.

In reply to this Ma said smilingly : "Look, so many of you have given me so much advice regarding this, but I am unable to follow it — what shall I do ? You know what the truth is ? Saintly persons avoid the company of the vicious because it is true that owing to evil company the pious may suffer degradation ; there is another group of seekers who are so elevated that they may not be harmed by keeping company with the impious, yet they keep away from the vicious for setting an example before the people. And here with this body, you know, everything is just topsyturvy — you know what *kheyāla* arises ? Isn't it true that boils appear in the body ? But then, does one cut off one's hand because it has got boils ? Instead, he applies medicines, tries to cure it. Over here, however, there is no *trying* as such — whatever comes to pass ! To whom shall I say,

go away ? and what is there to turn out ? and whither to turn out ? There is verily no second besides the One and only One. "Saying so, Ma smiled as she added, "that is why I say, *where* shall I push out the diseases ? and *whom* shall I push out ? Just as you all come to this body and play with it, similarly, the diseases also come and play with it. Of course, you may complain that the body becomes thin and weak when visited by them ; — that is but natural, since it is their nature or characteristic to weaken the body. Whoever comes must spread his influence."

So often have we heard such words from Ma and have marvelled at them ! What a level of transcendence they manifest ! Only the One who pervades the whole cosmos, the Supreme, Limitless, Eternal, without beginning or end, — only that Being is capable of saying such words. Again we forget all this ; — being tossed and turned in the whirlpool of her *līlā* we fail to retain the memory of all these things. She makes us forget everything — we tiny beings are just tossed about, caught in the mesh of her creation — what to do ?

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Sri Pannalal, the Ex-Commissioner of U.P., asked Ma, "How can one put the mind at rest ? Those who have no knowledge of the spiritual path nor are initiated by any *Guru*, what do they need to do ?"

Ma : "Look, just as you take so much care to make little children study and become educated,

however reluctant they are, in a like manner, try to educate the little child that your mind is. As restlessness is characterised of the mind, tranquillity is also its inherent nature ; it craves for real peace, that is why it can never rest in anything of this world, and runs here and there.

“Moreover, even without *Guru* you can just go on practising whatever spiritual discipline is after your liking — that is the very first step. You make small children study a little bit of so many different subjects ; out of that their special aptitudes are revealed in due time. Then they opt for the subject of their special interest leaving aside the rest, and make progress as they proceed further in there chosen line. It is like that ! At the beginning you also should start your ‘study’ of different subjects, such as *satsanga*, study of scriptures, a little bit of *kīrtan*, *japa*, etc, and by doing all this you will discover in what lies your special interest, which path you should take. Then you will proceed in your proper direction and you will see that all you require is just being provided for you.”

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In a certain context Ma said, “You people accumulate *karma*, that is to say, you book your ‘return-ticket’ — you make arrangements for your return to this world once more.” Saying this, Ma began to laugh.

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A gentleman put this question : “Ma, People talk of *karmayoga*, *bhaktiyoga*, *jñānayoga* ; are they different paths or the same path ?”

Ma replied, “You see, suppose we are going to a temple. It is evident that we know at least something about the temple, otherwise why should we want to go there ? Again, we would not go there if we had no feeling of devotion towards the deity in the temple. And again, you see, the very act of going is *karma* ; therefore, *jñāna*, *bhakti* and *karma*, all of them coexist — they are not segregated.”

It is extremely difficult to come into contact with a great soul and to be benefitted by his company, the influence of such an one is subtle, incomprehensible, and unerringly infallible in its effect.

—Narada Bhakti Sutras
(Aphorisms on the Gospel of Divine Love)

In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Sri Amulya Datta Gupta

(Translated from Bengali)

Wednesday, 17.3.43, Ramna Ashram :

When Sri Monoranjan Roy and myself reached the Ashram early in the morning, we found that Ma had gone to Siddheshwari the previous night, so we also proceeded there.

Many overseas visitors and local devotees had by that time congregated there, and Ma had not yet left her bedside.

When Ma arose, she went to the house of the local priest and Khukuni Didi started explaining the peculiarities of the location to all the visitors. Ma then returned to Ramna Ashram.

Contractor Sri Sachindra N. Ghosh had arrived to see Ma. On noticing something wrong with his foot, Ma asked, "Baba, what is wrong with your foot?" Sachin Babu replied briefly about the malady. Ma again asked, "Are you treating it with any medicine?"

Sachin Babu : No, I don't feel any pain.

Ma : Even if there is no pain now, if you leave it in this condition for any length of time, you will feel uncomfortable. When I was in Wardha, somebody there had voluntarily given me a prescription

for this kind of disease. He had also confirmed at the same time that this medicine was infallible for this purpose, but has to be used for a long time, that is, as long as the disease lasts, it has to be applied.”

“This is the way to prepare the medicine. Take about 250 gm. of mustard oil and boil it. Add about 50 gm. of Akanda (a root herb) juice slowly in the hot oil. If you keep the oil over the fire, than it will kindle, so remove it from the fire and add the juice deep by drop, warming the oil from time to time over the fire. Finally add ground Haldi and boil the whole into a thick paste. If you use this medicine, the disease will be cured.”

Sachin Babu and I heard all this and then went home.

A certain God-intoxicated lady

On reaching the Ashram in the evening, I found Ma sitting on the open ground, surrounded by ladies. Just before dusk a certain God-intoxicated lady together with some of her followers came to see Shree Ma.

I learned that they had come from Siddheshwari Kali Temple ; one of them had a message for Ma, saying “Our Mother has had an inner instruction that on a certain Wednesday she should visit Siddheshwari. That is why she was brought to Siddheshwari Temple today. It is believed that Kali Puja there is not being performed properly. Our Mother came and informed the Pujari of this and instructed him on how the worship should be correctly performed.”

The asana of the enlightenment lady had been placed very near Ma. When the former sat down, Shree Ma lovingly exclaimed, "Ma, Ma", and observing a large bundle of matted hair under the sari covering her head, she felt it with her hands, and said, "Oh, so this has also grown! How many of them are there?" The lady remained silent: Bhupati Babu explained to Shree Ma what he had previously learnt about the exalted condition of the lady. He said, "Previously regular worshipping of Shree Dakshina Kali used to be carried out in her house, when their household circumstances were affluent. Lately this puja had been discontinued. Since then all sorts of disasters started taking place. One day this lady beheld the figure of a young girl sitting on their fence, and lost consciousness. Thereafter she is in this condition, every morning she gets into a trance, beholds this murti and speaks with her. She remembers what they then talk about. At other times when she experiences this exalted condition, she does not behold anybody and does not remember what has been talked about.

Ma : What murti do you behold ?

Lady : A girl aged 8-10 years.

Ma : Do you not behold any other murtis ?

Lady : Yes, I do.

Ma : What do they look like ?

Lady : They are similar to the girl, although they assume different forms.

Ma : Do you feel anything special in seeing the murti ?

Lady : I feel full of joy.

Ma : What kind of joy ?

Lady : (Pointing to her devotees), when I see them, when they call me "Ma, do I not feel exultant ?"

Ma : (Smiling), "You are a mother, so you have spoken like one." After a while Ma again asked her.

"During the trance, do you hear or understand any questions asked ?"

Lady : No.

Ma : Then how do you reply to them ?

Lady : I do not exactly realise what then happens. I do not know what questions are asked, or what replies are given.

A Devotee : Even if the question is not asked audibly, but only mentally, the answer can be heard.

Ma : That is possible (addressing the lady). Do you not remember the instructions that are given during those bhavas ?

Lady : If anything is said to me pertaining to Sadhana, I do remember this.

As night was approaching, the lady devotees wished to take her home, as she had a number of small children. When Ma asked about the number of children involved, the devotees replied to Ma. When the lady was about to rise, Ma laughingly remarked, 'I will not allow my mother to depart.'

The lady replied, "I will again come tomorrow".

Ma : When will you come ?

Lady : In the afternoon, say after two or two-thirty.

Ma agreed and allowed her to depart. After she had gone, Ma said, "All this is the manifestation of sudden power."

The Ancient Sadhaks of Ramna Ashram

After a meal, Ma started walking round the compound. We also followed suit. The question arose of who were the sadhus who had inhabited this Ashram previously, and whence did they come?

Ma said, "Of course there were many Bengalee sadhus here, in addition there were sadhus from the south and the west. From the tombs of the sadhus that are found here, their origin can be clearly ascertained. In this Ashram, there is samadhi of Golap Giri, in the Ramna Kali Bari there is Harachandra Giri's samadhi, and in the Government House there is the samadhi of a Chinese sadhu of the Giri sect."

"When this body lived at Shahbagh, we used to visit the Kali temple here for evening Arati. At these times, I used to lie on the ground on my stomach for hours. Then I used to behold these sadhus. Some were sitting on the ground. Others were seated in an Asana above the ground, I used to perceive all this clearly. In particular I used to behold four distinct sadhus.

Moreover, in the Ashram there used to be a mango tree which used to bear fruit out of season, and whose fruits were different from the others. When I went on a pilgrimage in S. India to Madras, I behold similar trees there. That is why I believe some Madrasi sadhu had bought the seeds from

his land and planted the tree here. There were no railways in those days, so you may well ask how did the sadhus travel such long distances? The belief is prevalent that the sadhus used to travel by air."

I: Whenever I went to visit Swami Vishuddhanandaji (Sri Gopinath Kaviraja's Guru) he used to ask me about the ponds and jungles of Ramna. It is said he was taken from here to Vindhyachal by air.

Ma: In those days there used to be a dense forest here.....

Why can instructions issued during a trance be fallible?

Thereafter a discussion started about the God-intoxicated lady that had visited us. Sri Surendra N. Banerji recounted to Ma that in her obsession she could bring forth various prasads. He said, "Ma, during her trance on request she can bring forth various kinds of prasad, including Khichuri, Sandesh etc. I had asked her for some fruit for two days, but only on the third day did she produce an apple for me without my asking for it.

Swami Paramananda: The fact that she can not remember anything that she said during her obsessions is probably not true, since she distinctly remembered about your previous request for fruit."

Ma: How much prasad does she exactly bring forth?

Jatin: Two or three handfuls.

I demonstrated this with my hands that this would amount to about 1½ poas (about 375 gm).

Ma (to me) : Have you actually seen her do this ?

I : Yes.

Ma : How does she bring it out.

I : She brings it out from underneath her clothes.

Kedar Babu : Can prasad ever be brought out like this ?

Ma : Why not ? If somebody can bring forth prasad from another place in a subtle form during an obsession, can she not bring fruit along with her ? But it needs a very special power to produce this in solid form.

Suren Babu : During her obsessions she can prescribe medicine for any disease described to her. She can also inform you of whomsoever you wish to know about somewhere else. Of course everything does not always turn out to be correct.

Swami Paramananda : If she answers these questions due to some special powers within her, then why can't they always be correct ?

I asked *Ma* the same question as *Swamiji*.

Ma : I can not debate on such topics, with regard to any particular person, because such incidents have not directly been observed by this body. Furthermore, there has been no such obsessions within this body so that it can speak authoritatively on this subject.

I : Even without referring to any particular person, one can discuss these topics. There may be a lot of curiosity on the part of many people about such miraculous exhibitions of powers by a

simple minded lady. But of course, if you have never experienced such obsessions, then how can you know anything of such matters ?

Ma : This body often refers to subjects which you later affirm are true according to the shastras. How does this body say these things ? This body has never studied the shastras !

I : And you have also mentioned that there is no such state during sadhana that you have not personally experienced. Then why cannot you explain these obsessions ?

Ma : (Laughing) Yes, but in discussing such topics, there can arise a pointer towards a particular individual.

Anyway, as such a topic has arisen, then let us clarify it. It is true that if somebody is infused with special powers, and answers a question put to him or (her), then the answer must be correct. If all the inner knots of the body are opened up, and if an answer to a query emanates from somebody in this condition, then it is bound to be true. But it may also happen that same knots only have been opened, not all, under such condition whatever forecast comes forth may not be correct. Because in such forecasts could be mixed up some of the particular person's own preinherited instincts of which he may not himself be aware.

And also remember another aspect. Because in all beings subtly exist the germs of praise and ambition. These are not to be renounced easily, although sometimes one is not even aware of their existence. Hence, unless the body is absolutely

purified, these hidden instincts get mixed up with the powers exhibited before being manifested. Suppose you wish to benefit somebody, and do not harbour any evil thoughts about him, under this condition if any power arises within you, prompting you that there will be no benefit accruing to your friend, then this fact will not be uttered from your lips as "No". Your own internal instincts will inhibit you from doing so. The result will be that the manifestation of the temporary power within you will be negated.

Furthermore, remember that the exhibition of power may be of various kinds. If some spurious powers possess you, then is it not surprising that they will prove to be ineffective ?

This is yet another aspect. There are a lot of outward signs of manifestation of pure power. If you see that true divine power is being manifested within somebody, then you will find that his personal urge to follow his previous instincts is correspondingly diminished. One has to judge these things carefully according to their symptoms."

After this Ma returned to the Pancha Bati. A mosquito net had been hung over her bed there. Ma lay down.

The next day there would be Akhand Nam Kirtan from sunrise to sunset. Adhibas kirtan for the purpose was commenced.

(To be continued)

The Name

M. P. Jain

The Name is indeed the sweetest
Of all the sweet things on earth
It's not merely initiation of the subject
It gives him verily a new birth.

A birth that has no death,
That provides berth on high altitude—
An entry into the infinite ocean of love
A promise for the Soul's beatitude—

The Name takes us into realms
That are beyond mundane approach
It lays open before us rare gems
Lying hidden within unexplored.

The buzzing of the mind slows down
At the sight of the Name.
Fortune's favours and frowns
Become meaningless and lame.

And then begins the flow of the grace
Revealing the secrets of life's background—
A feeling of fulfilment and a peace
A new awareness and an understanding around.

The Name is indeed the sweetest
Of all the sweet things on earth
It's not merely initiation of the subject
It gives him verily a new birth.

In Her Net

Barry Maybury

(Contd. from previous issue)

As is frequently the case with Westerners, I had been highly identified in an infantile psychological way with my car. The fact that it was a complete write-off thus seemed somehow important. I was soon to realise to what extent.

At that time I was the manager of a tourism organisation in Paris, a post I had held for 15 years. For the last 2 years I had had the impression of going around in circles, the job had lost its challenge and I my freshness.

A change in the senior management at head office was not at all to my liking, and I became unhappy and seeking new directions. But where to go and what to do? I just didn't know. What I did know was that I couldn't stay and retain my self-respect.

Since Blandine's return from India I had wanted to visit with her the high spots of her prolonged stay of the previous year. I also badly wanted to see Ma and have her darshan. We had thus planned a 4 week vacation which was to take us to Ma, Varanasi, Calcutta to visit Mother Teresa's homes, Madras to visit friends, and Kahangad to visit Swami Ramdas ashram, Anandashram, where

we wanted to have the darshan of Mataji Krishnabai.

We departed from Paris to Delhi on August 15, 1982. Over lunch in the plane Blandine suddenly said to me 'Why don't you leave your job and set up your own marketing and public relations company?' At once it was clear to me, and so obvious. Of course, yes, that's exactly what I should do. The venture was decided there and then, en route for India.

* * *

The day after our arrival in Delhi we set out for Ma's Delhi ashram to see where she was so that we could be in her presence and have her darshan. As Blandine couldn't remember the route we headed to the same Post Office from where she had been accompanied the previous year. One of the employees knew the ashram and took us a part of the way.

For me it was my first experience of one of Ma's ashrams, and thus a very special moment. In the cool of the small office just inside the main entrance we were told that Ma was in Dehradun, and that she hadn't eaten anything for three and a half months. We would however, we were assured, be able to have her darshan.

After sitting for a while with a small group singing kirtan, we were shown around the ashram with great kindness by one of the members.

The very next morning we went by coach to Dehradun and installed ourselves in the same small

hotel where Blandine had stayed the previous year. In the afternoon we took the local bus out to the ashram in Kishenpur, expecting to find many people there. It was not the case. We were told that we could probably have Ma's darshan, and to wait. We didn't dare ask where Ma was. Blandine thought she might be at Kalyanvan, further up the hill, where she had seen her the previous year. We sat in silence in the downstairs temple, and then kirtan were sung.

Soon afterwards Swami Atmananda joined the assembly and quickly took us in hand. Full of gentleness and love, she spoke to us about Ma's doings since Blandine had been in Dehradun the previous year. She told us that Ma was in a room upstairs.

Around 6 P.M. she escorted us up to the verandah on the first floor, where a number of people were sitting, propped against the wall, waiting for Ma's darshan. Here and there conversations in soft voices were engaged in, and the warm, friendly atmosphere was tinged with a strong sense of expectation.

After perhaps an hour, darshan was announced, and took place on a verandah leading to Ma's room. Ma could be perceived through the open door of her room lying on a bed, back towards us. At last, there she was, and it was a marvellous moment albeit rapidly over.

After we had gone downstairs, a man with whom Blandine had spoken while we were waiting on the verandah, told us that Ma had now turned

in the bed, and was lying on her back. We sped upstairs again and had a glimpse of her profile, before being chased away by the brahmins.

A young French woman from Nice told us that it was the last day of a 6 week stay she had done at the ashram, and the first and only time she had seen Ma in profile.

After purchasing photographs of Ma, and a number of books on her life and lila, we went back to Dehradun. The following afternoon we returned to the ashram again and installed ourselves on the first floor verandah. A swami who had been there the previous day was again the first person called to have darshan. His face lit up with an irradiating joy and we shared his delight.

Then all those waiting were invited in one after the other, and we were thrilled that this time the pranam could be done just outside Ma's room. Again Ma was on her back enabling us to see her face.

Since the beginning of the day, when a chance meeting with an English woman in the State Bank had permitted us to visit the Cheshire Home where she was working, I had for the first time felt Ma's presence strongly in my life. The visit to 'Raphael', the home in question, had been a powerful and moving experience for me.

We did a trip to Mussoorie on the third morning of our Dehradun stay, before once again going out to Kishenpur. This time, unlike the previous days, prasad was distributed. It was to be a farewell present for us from Ma as afterwards

it was announced that there would not be a darshan that day.

Before taking our leave we spoke with Atmananda, about Ma, inevitably, and about the rest of our trip. We told her that after travelling in the north we were going to the south where we would be visiting Anandashram. Atmananda spoke with great love of Ramdas and Krishnabai. Krishnabai, she told us, 'had no ego'.

Atmananda had been a blessing to us throughout our brief stay. We had visited her in Kalyanvan, and she had answered all our questions. She had spoken of Arnaud's visits, and showed us where he used to set up base camp in his Land Rover when he visited Kishenpur with his family.

After buying some more books on the life of Ma from Atmananda we left the ashram for the last time on this trip.

The next day we visited Rishikesh, before boarding the night train at Dehradun for Varanasi.

Train travel in India is a marvellous experience for a Westerner, a total immersion into the great moving flux of life itself. The large stations (such as Dehradun) are crowded to overflowing as the time for the arrival of a long-distance train approaches, with red uniformed porters threading their way here and there through the mounds of luggage and the squatting multitude. Once aboard, and on the way, the train takes on its own life. The kilometres roll rapidly by to be followed by long inexplicable halts in the middle of nowhere and the night ; brief stops occur at stations where hawkers

offer fruit, rice and tea served in exquisite small earthen cups — disposable works of art eons away from our western paper cups ; friendly discussions are held with attentive fellow passengers.

After settling into a small hotel and passing our first night in Varanasi, we went to Ma's ashram early the next morning. Sailen Brahmachari greeted us warmly and was very interested to hear from us recent information about Ma. He then asked a man who was in his office to show us around the ashram, which he lovingly did. On the first floor of the inner courtyard we were enthralled to see a small, stooped bearded old man performing intricate rites in an enclosed chapel dedicated, we understood, to the Goddess Annapurna. There is a small photograph of Ma beside Annapurna, and a large photograph of her on the wall, her thick plait falling on her left shoulder. Also a tiny dolls bed where she sleeps. The old priest wakes her at 4 A.M. when he begins the ceremony.

We were then taken to the temple dedicated to Gopalji a short step along the ghat. By good fortune a swami was performing a puja, and we were given prasad. We also saw the sacred fire which was first lit during a ceremony to the Goddess Kali in the presence of Ma in 1925 and which has been kept going ever since. Before leaving we sat for a while in meditation on the exquisite first floor terrace.

The following morning when we returned, some young girls were chanting in Sanskrit in front of the 'Annapurna' chapel. When we came downstairs

we went to see Sailen Brahmachari and at once he asked us how we had 'discovered' Ma and how we had come to know that she had entered our lives. Continuing, he said that for certain Westerners this had come about in strange ways. He handed us a copy of what I think must have been Ananda Varta, and told us to read an article written by an American of Chinese descent.

This American described in the article his first 'meeting' with Ma. It was during a severe car accident where he just had time to think intensely about her before losing consciousness. Ma came clearly to him in a vision (his first 'sight' of her), and although badly injured he recovered very quickly.

On reading this Blandine and I were flabbergasted, and looked at each other in amazement. We too had been through a car accident and came out safely the other side with the certitude that it was thanks to her. And for me, my first 'meeting' with her had been in that accident, just like the American.

The next day, August 24, was our last one in Varanasi. Blandine had decided that we would take an offering to Gopalji, small cakes and a garland of flowers. It was a religious feast day of some kind, and the street leading to the ashram was filled with people, mostly women. We didn't find garlands on sale until just before arriving at the ashram. On the spur of the moment we bought two, one white and one yellow.

We thought that the Gopalji puja was at 9-30 A.M., but it was an hour earlier, so to our dis-

appointment we had missed it. However one of the ashram members accompanied us to the temple, and reaching his arm through the bars he placed our yellow garland on the offering tray. After a short time the swami who had devoted the puja to Gopalji the previous day arrived and performed a small service, we think out of kindness for us. At the end, to our joy, he took our garland from the offering tray and placed it around Gopalji's neck.

Next we went to the Annapurna Temple to offer our white garland to Ma. The old man was in the midst of his puja so we made our offering to Ma and placed the garland outside the door on the ground. We meditated, and after a while Blandine stood up, and through the bars watched with great intensity the old man's beautiful and complicated ritual. I thought irresistibly of a line in J. P. Donleavy's novel, 'The Ginger Man' — 'Please God, let me in'.

She then sat down again with me, and suggested that we give the garland to the old man. The same idea had occurred to me but I hadn't dared to put it into practise. At that moment the old man arrived at a pause in the ceremony where he was preparing various items prior to continuing. I made a sign to him, he passed behind the altar, and I knew he was going to accept our garland. I handed it to him through the bars. To our immense joy he hung it around a photograph of Ma, with the bottom half touching her feet.

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The night of August 24-25 was spent on the train en route for Calcutta. In Calcutta I had the pleasure of visiting with Blandine the places she had worked in the previous year with Mother Teresa — Kali Ghat, Prem Dam, and Shishu Bhavan.

We checked out of our hotel on the morning of August 27. It was to be a day of seemingly strange 'coincidences'.

At the French consulate, while waiting to see the consul, to my great surprise a consul employee approached me and asked if I were Monsieur Maybury. He handed me a letter which was from an Indian friend who I didn't know was now living in Calcutta. He had heard through his son-in-law that we would be in Calcutta and wrote on chance to me at the consulate. He said that his daughter was living with him, who I knew very well, and they hoped very much to be able to see us. He left a telephone number where we could reach him.

As the wait continued Blandine decided to try and see a friend she had met the previous year who was teaching at the Alliance Francaise, in the same building as the consulate. She returned saying that he was off duty but that she had taken his address.

We finally left the consulate without seeing the consul (through no fault of his) and went to visit the dispensary where Blandine had spent most of her time the previous year — at Sealdah Station. Afterwards we searched for a telephone to speak to our friend but without success.

Time was passing, as we were leaving Calcutta that afternoon, so we decided to take a taxi back to our hotel. There we would telephone to our friend, and collect our luggage. No luck with taxis either, so in desperation we headed back towards Sealdah Station, where to our relief we found one.

At the hotel I left Blandine to pay the driver while I headed rapidly to the reception and the telephone. The receptionist was speaking on the phone and I hoped it wouldn't be a long call. To my astonishment he handed the receiver to me and said 'it's for you'. It was my friend, who told me that he had been trying desperately since yesterday to track us down. He invited us to lunch with himself and his daughter, and we took the same taxi to the address indicated, in Wood Street.

As my friend hadn't yet arrived home (he had called me from his office) we installed ourselves on the steps outside the apartment building. Blandine then thought that she might have the time to visit quickly her friend from the Alliance Francaise, who also lived somewhere in Wood Street. She took the address from her handbag to discover that he lived in the same building as my friend ! So she was able to see him and renew acquaintanceship.

My friend Z and his daughter A soon arrived, and we had a most delightful lunch and get-together with them, all too quickly over as they had to go back to their respective work. We remained in the apartment, having decided to seek a taxi for the airport at half past three in the afternoon to give

us plenty of time in case it started raining. In Calcutta, as elsewhere in the world, taxis are hard to come by when the rain starts to come down.

Sure enough, at three o'clock it started raining ! Heavier and heavier. At twenty past three we were looking out the window into the street, watching the rain fall, when an empty taxi stopped in front of our building and parked. It was for all the world like a radio-taxi arriving to pick up a client.

Blandine said jokingly 'there's our taxi !' Then, not for a moment thinking that I would do so, 'go down and tell him that we're ready'. Taking her to her word I obeyed on the spot ! I told the driver that we were going to the airport, would be ready in 5 minutes and could he take us ? He replied with the side to side head movement used by Indians, the meaning of which is never really sure for Europeans. Yes or no ? It was yes !

At half past three on the dot we were in the taxi and pulling out en route for the airport and Madras where we were expected by friends.

A mere string of coincidences all of this ? Perhaps.

We were collected by our Madras friends at the airport, and taken to their house where we were to spend the next few days. The following morning when we came down to breakfast our friend informed us that Ma had departed her body the previous evening. The day of the 'string of coincidences' in Calcutta.

We considered that we had been blessed with great good fortune to be in her presence, and to

have her darshan, during the last days of her earthly stay. She has subsequently never ceased to overlook our paths.

Ma is quoted, in a book in French about her teachings, as saying that once one has come in contact with her one is in her net for eternity. This is our strong conviction.

Epilogue

We weren't in contact with Bernard Pernel until three years after the car accident with which this story begins. He then told us that when we got home the night of the accident he discovered that a mala which Ma had presented him with, and which he was wearing at the time, had burst apart.

So something had been broken after all in the crash! Bernard's strong feeling was that through the mala Ma had absorbed the full shock of the accident. Amen.

ERRATA

In the April '87 issue of Ananda Varta, on Page 108, the second paragraph should begin :

“Arnaud Desjardins was not unknown to me.”

The contemporaries of Sri Krishna Chaitanya and their Successors

R. K. Banerjee

Shree Jahnava Ma :

The story of Jahnava Ma is unique in the annals of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, inasmuch as she wielded more influence as Acharya of the Bengal Vaishnavs than any other in her lifetime, particularly after the passing of Sri Advaita shortly after Sri Nityananda's death.

In Gaur-Ganodyesh-dwipika Jahnava Ma is known as the incarnation of Ananga Manjori.

Shree Jahnava Devi was born on 1510 A.D on Shukla Navami Tithi of Baisakha, as the second daughter of Suryadas Pandit, the elder brother of Gauridas Pandit, who founded the Mahaprabhu temple of Kalna.

Jahnava was two years younger than Vasudha, and when Suryadas moved to Kalna to be near the Mahaprabhu temple, both the daughters accompanied their father, met Sri Nityananda there, and both fell in love with him. Suryadas was advised by Sri Chaitanya to allow both his daughters to marry Nityananda, but there was a strong objection in the family, since Nityananda had lived the life of an Avadhut for several years. Later Sri Advaita reminded Suryadas of Mahaprabhu's wishes, and Suryadas eventually willy nilly arranged for

Vasudha's marriage after returning to his village home. But there was still a strong objection to the marriage from the local Brahmins, who insisted that Nityananda had lost his caste, and did not even possess a sacred thread! So Nityananda, after travelling to Suryadas's house for the marriage, had to leave the place.

Eventually Vasudha fell mortally ill, and the Brahmins agreed to the wedding provided Nityananda went through the process of another sacred thread ceremony. This was done and the marriage was solemnised. It is said that Sri Uddharan Dutta of Adi Saptagram, one of Sri Nityananda's closest disciple and one of the 12 Gopals, spent Rs. 10,000/- over the festivities, which took place in 1521 A.D, when Jahnavā was 11 years old. A few days after his marriage to Vasudha, Nityananda was being fed at his In-law's house, and Jahnavā Devi was serving him with food. At this juncture, her veil slipped, and since both hands were occupied in holding dishes, two extra hands suddenly appeared to pull the veil back to place. Sri Nityananda thus recognised who was to be his spiritual consort in future, and carry on the Vaishnav tradition from where he left off.

He then asked for his sister-in-law's hand as part of his dowry, and the marriage was duly solemnised. Both the brides were taken to Sachi Devi at Nabadwip, and then to Shantipur and Adi Saptagram before proceeding to Khardah, the abode of Sri Nityananda.

In due course Vasudha, after losing a number of sons due to a strange fate, eventually gave birth to Virchandra. The story goes that Sri Abhiram, a very powerful Vaishnav and one of the 12 Gopals, used to do pranam to Vasudha's issues after birth and thereafter the newborns would die. The same thing happened after Virchandra's birth, but the child remained unaffected and Abhiram recognised the future leader of the Gaudiya Vaishnavs in him.

Jahnava Ma herself took over the duties of educating Virchand, who however remained ignorant of his foster-mother's true identity.

As he grew up Virchand felt restless and wanted to have his diksha (initiation) from a suitable Guru. Sri Nityananda had passed away and Virchand proceeded to Sri Adwaita at Shantipur. Sri Adwaita advised him that it had already been ordained that Jahnava Ma was his Guru, so why was he wandering all over instead of approaching her ?

When Virchand returned home, chastened and contrite, Jahnava Ma was at her prayers, and her veil had slipped from her head. When Virchand appeared to convey his pranams to her, he beheld two other hands appear to move the veil back to place, and then disappear. The last of Virchand's doubts were resolved, and he fell on the ground to beg for his foster-mother's forgiveness and his diksha.

Soon Jahnava Devi established herself as the first lady Acharya of the Vaishnavs and took the lead in all matters even beyond Bengal.

For instance, she sent Parameshwar Das to Vrindaban to install Sri Radha's Vighraha next to Sri Gopinath.

She adopted several promising Vaishnav lads as her sons, the foremost being Kanu Thakur, etc.

She visited Sitadevi at Shantipur after Sri Adwaita's death to console her.

Subsequently she paid three visits to Vrindaban, the first being round about 1562 A.D. when she met Sri Rupa and Sanatan, Gopal Bhatta etc.

In 1583 we see her journeying from Khardah, her home, to Saptagram, Ambika Kalna, and or to Sribas Angan at Nabadwip etc. After three days she journeyed to Katwa, and or to Kheturi on the Padma, to see Sri Narottam Das Thakur.

In 1583 during Dol Utsab she was again at Kheturi with Acharya Srinivas, before proceeding once again to Vrindaban for the second time, in 1584.

This time she met Sri Jiva Goswami, Lokenath Goswami (the doyen of all Goswamis) etc. Thereafter she was responsible for cooking and offering Bhog to the leading deities such as Govinda, Gopinath, Madanmohan, Radha Damodar, Radha Raman etc.

The installation of Sri Gopinath's consort as Sree Radha has always been credited to have been organised by Jahnava Devi.

On the way back from Vrindaban, she visited Boru Gangadas, her cousin, to pay her respects to her uncle Gauridas's Samadhi.

She returned home to Khardah via Ekchakra, the birthplace of Sri Nityananda (near Tarapith), Kantik Nagar, Nabadwip and Kalna.

In 1585 she paid her 3rd and last visit to Vrindaban after completing her household duties, and arranging the marriage of Virchand to ensure continuity of the line.

In this final visit to Vrindaban, when she was nearly 76 years of age, in 1586, she suddenly vanished in the Vighraha of Gopinath, similar to Sri Chaitanya at Puri and Sri Nityananda at Khardah or Ekchakra.

She left behind her well-knit growing band of devoted Gauriya Vaishnavs, who were intent on carrying on the message of Sri Chaitanya and Sri Nityananda all over Vrindaban and Gaudiya Banga.

She had supervised the gradual coming into power of the 2nd generation of Acharyas, e.g. Sri Srinivas, Thakur Sri Narottam Das, and Sri Shyamananda, and had ensured that the Gaudiya Vaishnav tradition and learning were safe in the hands of these very able and inspired successors to the Sri Chaitanya cult.

Ma, We Remember Thee So Much !

A. P. Dikshit, I. A. S. (Retd.)

(Translated from Hindi by Prof. G. D. Shukla)

(*Continued from Previous issue*)

The mystery about an Aonla tree at Naimisharanya

One day Ma herself threw light on the mystery associated with an Aonla tree. Ma said, "Once this body was resting in a certain cottage. It was noticed that two ethereal bodies had gone out of that dry, withered Aonla tree. Next morning I asked Prayag Narayan to water that tree hoping that it might come back to life." Prayag Narain, struck with surprise, said that the tree had completely dried up. But Ma repeated what she had said. So Ma's instructions were carried out and the tree, after some time, revived and became green. Ma showed that tree to us herself and we were wonderstruck. The tree, right down to the trunk, was altogether dried up and hollow on one side, but on the other fresh and green and laden with small fruits.

Ma does not ordinarily reveal her limitless powers, but sometimes the vessel filled with nectar upto the brim does spill a few drops, and lucky are those who receive them. She does not show any miracles. But at times to pull us out of the

darkness of ignorance she does allow a ray of divine light to flash upon us. This incident is to be viewed in that light. Otherwise, for her the entire creation is Brahmamaya (steeped in Brahma) and all the mystery surrounding it is known to her. The living and the lifeless, the animals, the man, the birds, the trees, the plants and the creepers are just all one and the same for her.

In this context another incident has come to my mind. It is related by a devotee who lives at Unnao, and I have got it from the man himself. Pt. Shankar Dayal Dikshit was a well known advocate at Unnao. He had built a new house, but it was haunted by a spirit. Slashing of clothes inside the box, shower of brickbats, and the house suddenly catching fire were common phenomena. He told his woes to Ma and requested her to visit his house. After Ma's visit, the spirit was laid to rest and silenced. Possibly, in the same context when Ma was going from Lucknow to Unnao, she asked the car to stop at a lonely, deserted place. She got down, walked up to a tree at some distance and it seemed she talked to it. It was not an unexpected thing to happen for Ma, for all forms of creation, animate and inanimate were the recipients of her grace. Sometimes the ignorant ones charged her with favouring particular persons, but the truth is that for Ma there was no difference between a mere ant and a Prime Minister. This is how I feel.

When Ma is present at a certain place the devotees there experience an ineffable kind of joy

and self confidence even though they may not be sitting right in front of her. She may be in her room, but the people sitting outside and away from her physical presence enjoy the same bliss which the saints got from discourses about God.

We were sitting in our tent in front of Ma's cottage when Sri Rameshwar Sahai and his wife dropped in and as a matter of habit we started talking about Ma. Mrs. Sahai remarked, "People say that I go to Ma for her darshan and try to be with her as long as possible, but what here I gained except three daughters and one son who is no more." I was not aware of this, and as I heard of it I felt uneasy. Mrs. Sahai is a self-respecting lady, and I had never seen her in this mood. We just listened to her in silence. Mrs. Sahai heaved a long sigh and after a pause added, "It is true I had only one son who passed away, but it is an infinite grace of Ma that I received the strength to bear the intolerable grief of a son's loss. Life would have become impossible without that."

In what different ways Ma showers her grace on her different devotees is known only to those who have received it. I came to know of a similar incident concerning another lady at the Kishenpur Ashram of Dehra Dun. I was told that she was a great devotee of Ma. Suddenly she had to bear the unbearable grief of the loss of her son. Perhaps, it was a small child. She was beside herself with grief. She went to Ma and started crying. Ma consoled her and said, "Look upon me as your son." By this act of mercy Ma gave

her a divine insight and she began to look upon Ma as her child. Often, when she went to have Ma's darshan, she carried toys for her. Sometimes people laughed at her strange behaviour, but Ma always accepted her presents in the spirit in which they were offered. Ma quite often spoke of herself in the presence of other Mahatmas was a mere slip of an ignorant girl. But it was to a very few persons that she revealed herself in this form. This fortunate lady was one among those who had found *Purna Brahma Narayan* in the form of her child by losing her son. Possibly, Mrs. Sahai too had some such experience.

The Non-availability of the Puranas at Naimisharanya

On the first floor of Prayag Narain Dharamshala where Ma was staying at this time there is a temple with a very large idol of Hanuman installed therein. Near that Ma had arranged for a *Path* (Recitation) of the Puranas in a small room. Now there is a fine Puran Mandir, a Yagyashala, and Ma's sacred ashram.

Ma told a story about that. This relates to the period when Shri Govind Narain, I.C.S. (Retd) son-in-law of one of Ma's great devotees, Shri Panna Lal, I.C.S. (Retd) was the Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh.

Samyam Saptah was to be held at Naimisharanya. But difficulties do come in the way of doing a good thing. The first one was that the place where the function was to be held was still filled with flood

water of the Gomati. When this was brought to the notice of Ma, she had asked for a glass of water to drink. Holding the glass of water in her hand Ma said, "As this glass is emptied after drinking the water, so by the grace of God the flood water also can shrink and dry up." Saying this she drank the water and emptied the glass. What Ma had said did come to pass. The water withdrew, and Swami Paramanandaji Maharaj made arrangements for the Samyam Saptah at that very place.

A search was made for the Puranas. But they were not to be found in Naimisharanya — the place where the Puranas came into existence, where eightyseven thousand Rishis had listened to them, where there is the famous temple of Sri Lalitaji and where the seat of Vyas situated under a huge Akshaya tree still offers great peace and bliss to the men who go there.

It seems that Ma had gone to Naimisharanya for this very reason, and it established beyond doubt that Ma had come to this world for the revival of the Eternal Sanatan Dharma.

Ma arranged for a Pandit to perform a daily reading of the Puranas with all the ceremonies. There were only a few persons present at that time, and she asked me to join at the initial (संकल्प) ceremony. With great affection she asked me to sit near her. She placed my wife's hand on her own with a few Tulsi leaves on it and asked us to do the Puja. I had not the least inkling at the moment that at that auspicious hour of early

morning she was laying the foundation of a great project, for it was at that very spot that under the inspiration and patronage of Ma, and the supervision of Mata Anandamayee Sangh a large and fine Puran Mandir, unique and the only one of its kind in the world came into existence. Later on a Yagyashala and Ashram buildings were added at the same spot. The site chosen is on the highest elevation at Naimisharanya where the flood waters of Gomati can never reach. After some time a Veda and Puran Research Centre was established close by. This represents an important step forward in the revival of Veda and Purana studies not only in Naimisharanya but in the whole world.

The *Path* continued under the supervision of Prayag Narain and Ma returned to Lucknow with me. I was driving the car. My wife was by my side in the front seat, and Ma was sitting behind. Gopal was with Ma. Somewhere on the way he fell asleep in Ma's lap which we had not noticed. When it came to our notice we felt so bad that Ma had been put to all this trouble. My wife tried to take Gopal away, but Ma forbade it. Infinite is the affection of the compassionate Ma. We were charmed to see this parental affection of God in the form of Ma. The rest of the journey passed away in contemplation of this aspect of Ma, and the fact of her presence in the car. Now that Ma is no more we feel a stab in the heart when we call to memory this side of her nature.

Ma kept me associated in one way or the other with the project of Puran Mandir from the time the

land was purchased upto its completion. In the meantime Ma continued to visit Naimisharanya on the Akshaya Tritiya day, and sometimes even twice a year. Whenever we got the news we followed. In this way as long as we were in Lucknow we got the benefit of Ma's darshan in Neemsar and her company.

(To be continued)

A person who returns to the world after the experience of *nirvikalpa samadhi* (absolute superconsciousness) does not do so of his volition. It is by the grace of God that one gets *samadhi*, and one's re-entry into the world is also by the will of God. Everything happens only by the will of God.

—Swami Turiyananda
a direct disciple of Shri Ramakrishna

How the Gods came to know of Brahman

Nirmal Chandra Ghosh

[The supreme Prime Ordeal Being (Purusha, Paramapurusha or Purushottama) is called Brahman by the followers of the path of wisdom, Paramatman by the followers of the path of austerities, penances and breath-control and Bhagavan (God) by the followers of the path of devotion. It is due to His power that everything in this universe and beyond, living or non-living, functions. He is the supreme cause of creation, preservation and destruction of everything. He is the supreme Doer of every action and interaction. It is due to His will that everything in this universe and beyond, happens.]

In very very ancient times there were frequent feuds between the gods and the demons. Sometimes the demons defeated the gods and occupied the kingdom of heaven. Once the gods became victorious and drove away the demons from the heaven. It was due to the will and power of Brahman that they won the battle ; but the gods began to boast of their victory and thought that it was due to their great strength that they defeated the demons. They were full of vanity and egoism. They forgot that it was due to Brahman that they became victorious.

The eternal Brahman, who knows everything and the mind of all, gods, demons, men and all others, took pity on the gods. He wished to dispel this illusion from the minds of the gods, because such wrong notion, pride and ignorance ultimately leads to perpetual misery and bondage in worldliness. Unless this illusion goes out from the mind, be he god, man, demon or any other body, one cannot reach that eternal state of joy, bliss and immortality and unification with Brahman. The supreme Lord (Brahman) is attracting every being towards Him with this objective.* He therefore appeared before the gods in the form of a Yaksha† at a distance from them in the sky.

The gods were unable to know who was this Yaksha. They requested the Fire-god‡ to go to Him and ascertain who was this Yaksha. The Fire-god said, "All right. I shall go." He hurried to Him. Yaksha asked the Fire-god, "Who are you?" The Fire-god replied, "I am Fire-god. I know about all that are born." Then Yaksha asked him, "What power have you got?" The

* Shwetashwetara Upanishad, chap. 3, verse 12, tells us :

The Great Lord (Purusha), who rules over everything, who is eternal and full of transcendental light, urges the mind of every one to achieve the supreme goal of life, which is the purest, unblemished and the highest gain (i.e. realisation of Brahman.)

† A type of semi-celestial being.

‡ The presiding deity of fire. He is called Agnideva or simply Agni. He is also called Jataveda (one who knows all that are born.)

Fire-god replied, "I can burn everything that is in this world." Then Yaksha put a piece of straw before him and asked him to burn that piece of straw. The Fire-god tried with all his might to burn that straw, but did not succeed. He felt ashamed and came back to the gods without knowing who this Yaksha was.

Then the gods requested the Wind-god* to ascertain who was this Yaksha. Wind-god was also proud. He said, "All right. I am going to Him."

The Wind-god hastened to the spot where Yaksha was. Yaksha asked him, "Who are you?" Wind-god replied, "I am vayu, the Wind-god. My glorious name is Matarishwa. Then Yaksha asked him, "What power you have got in you?" Vayu said, "I can take away everything that is in this world." Then Yaksha put a piece of straw before him and said, "Take away this piece of straw." The Wind-god tried with all his force but failed to lift that piece of straw. He felt ashamed and returned to the place, where the gods were, without being able to know who this Yaksha was.

Then the gods requested Indra, the head of the gods, who is also called Maghavan because of his great strength, to ascertain the identity of the Yaksha. Indra said, "All right. I shall go and ascertain who is this Yaksha." Indra was very proud as he was the head of the gods. He hastened

* The presiding deity of wind. He is also called Vayu-deva, Vayu, Pawana or Matarishwa (one who blows in the atmosphere.)

towards the place where Yaksha was. When he reached the place, Yaksha disappeared from there. In His place in the sky, Indra saw the very beautiful goddess Uma,* the daughter of the Himalayas. He politely bowed to her and enquired, "Who was the Yaksha, who was here?"

The goddess replied, "He was Brahman. The victory over the demons which you took to be your glory was really His victory." From this utterance of the goddess Uma, Indra came to know that the Yaksha was Brahman.

Indra then returned to the place where the other gods were, and told them that the Yaksha was none else than Brahman.

Since the three gods Agni, Vayu and Indra had the fortune of seeing Brahman, the nearest and dearest of all, with their eyes by going near him

* Uma is another name of the goddess Durga or Parvati. She is the wife of Lord Shiva. Before her marriage she used to perform severe austerities for having Lord Shiva as her husband, Her mother Mena, who was very affectionate to her daughter, fearing that such hardship would tell upon her health, asked her in the following words not to perform austerities :

O Durga ! Do not perform austerities

So the goddess Durga is called Uma.

According to another version the goddess Durga is called Uma because She is the wife (better half) of Shiva. 'U' in sanskrit means Shiva and 'Ma' means beautiful woman.

She is the embodiment of Brahmavidya (knowledge of Brahman), the highest knowledge. So she could know who the Yaksha was and tell Indra that He was Brahman.

[U, as in full. Ma, as in master.]

and therefore touched Him by their sight, they are regarded as superior to all other gods.

Since Indra could know from the goddess Uma, that the Yaksha was none other than Brahman, the nearest and dearest of all, he touched Brahman by his mind also. He is therefore superior to the rest of the gods.

The above mentioned incident about the appearance of Brahman in the form of Yaksha, is an allegorical advice stating that Brahman appears first like a flash of lightning or like a twinkling of an eye before the aspirant and disappears to increase his aspiration more. This is the advice of Brahman relating to the gods.

The spiritual significance of the incident is that when our mind touches (thinks of) Brahman for a moment, then it has a tendency to think about Brahman with great love again and again and ultimately feels a strong desire to realise Him.

The knowing of Brahman by Indra is called 'parokshanubhuti' which means indirect realisation of Brahman or knowing of Brahman through others eyes. In this case it is from the saying of the goddess Uma, Indra could know that Yaksha was Brahman, because he believed Uma. The direct and perfect realisation of Brahman which is called 'aparokshanubhuti' comes from within by the methods described in the Upanishads, from instructions from a teacher who has knowledge of Brahman and due to grace of God.

Brahman is to be worshipped and realised by every one — for which reason He is called

Tadvanam. Brahman, who is eternal bliss and joy and the soul of all, is the dearest and nearest of all, and knowingly or unknowingly every one wants to realise Him. He is to be worshipped with this idea. The aspirant who worships Him in this way and realises Him is loved by all. Everyone enjoys his company and desires to have his association.*

Austerities leading to concentration of mind, controlling of senses, performance of all duties (without coveting for fruits) as offering to God, are the basis for acquiring the knowledge of Brahman. The Vedas are the embodiment of this supreme knowledge and truth is its abode (i.e. one should be truthful in words, mind and deed).

Any one, who realises Brahman in the above mentioned way, destroys all his sins, and gets firmly seated in the supreme, eternal, blissful and joyful region of Brahman and remains firmly seated there.†

Note: The above topic forms Parts 3 and 4 of Kenopanishad, which is the ninth chapter of 'Talwakara Brahmana' of Sama Veda. Talwakara Brahmana is also called Jaminiya Upanishad or Brahmanopanishad. Since the first verse of Kenopanishad begins with the word Kena it is called Kenopanishad.

* Such persons are very rare, but there are a few, who are wellknown, e. g. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Shri Ramakrishna, and Shri Anandamayee Ma.

† Kenopanished Part 4, Verse 9.

Two Incidents

B. L. Gadkari

Those in charge of Ma's comforts used to put restrictions on persons coming to her for Darshan, conversation etc. which led to an impression amongst many that Ma was available only to the rich and influential people who were acquainted with her or with Ashramites. One day in 1976 when Ma's Birthday celebrations were going on at Kankhal I and my wife were having an argument on the matter and I told my wife that Ma was as much concerned with devotees who were not personally known to her as with others and it was her attendants who put the restrictions and thereby created a wrong impression. I was asking my wife to hurry up so that we would reach the Ashram early and get an opportunity to sit nearer Ma's place while my wife was saying that it did not make any difference as Ma was not interested in persons like us who were unknown to her and the Ashramites.

However, when we reached the Ashram much before the scheduled time of Mahatma's discourse in the hall we found that Ma was distributing with her own hands some sweets as Prasad in the landing of the stair case that led to her room on the first floor of the new building. Naturally we went there and found that Ma was standing there with

the sweets and an old lady attendant Brahmacharini of the Ashram was urging her to go to her room.

“Ma, you have had no rest at night and you are standing here for a very long time. You are tired. You better stop this and come inside your room”, she was saying. Ma turned to her and told her with firmness in her tone, “You may go away if you are tired. I will not come”, and continued the distribution till the last two persons present got the Prasad. Those last two persons were myself and my wife.

Many years ago at a Matri-Satsang in Bombay I wrote out the following question on a piece of paper and handed it over to the Swamiji who was at the Mike.

“When shall we get an opportunity to sing a Bhajan with Ma ?”

Ma asked Swamiji whether the gentleman wanted to sing a Bhajan. Swamiji hastened to tell her that what was desired was her singing.

Ma said, “Oh, it is already very late so we will have it tomorrow”. Soon thereafter we all dispersed as that was clearly a polite way of saying “No”. I wondered whether I had been too presumptuous in making the request as I was a nobody there, not acquainted either with Ma or with anybody else.

Next evening while I was sitting in a far away place in the crowd of devotees Swamiji as usual went to the Mike at the appointed time with a bunch of slips of paper containing questions for Ma in his hands when Ma stopped him and spoke

to him. In accordance with her instructions Swamiji asked, "Is yesterday's gentleman who wanted Ma's Bhajan present?" I stood up and said "Yes". Swamiji declared that in that case there would be no questions and answers but "Bhajan Singing" by Ma, and Ma started her usual song, "He Bhagwan" and it went on for more than half an hour and then the Satsang ended. People rushed to the dais to make Pranam to Ma before she was taken away in her room, and I wondered whether I would get an opportunity to reach her in time. However Ma remained standing till I reached her and offered her fruits and did Pranam. She asked me whether I was pleased and on my saying 'yes' blessed me and went away.

Last night I asked the sage privately not to hide from me the secret of the universe. Quietly he whispered into my ear : "Silence" it is something to know, but not to utter.

—Jalalludin Rumi

Mother Shakti

Swami Ramdas

Pride and hate strut on the stage
With vaunted power of glory
Greed reigns and passions rage
In wild barbaric frenzy.
MOTHER SHAKTI laughs at the dance of death
She casts Her stately serene glance
On puny mortals at their baneful work.
In an instant they vanish
As the short-lived bubbles burst.
He who stands against Her power almighty
Is crushed and thrown away
On the heap of discarded debris
MOTHER'S will is invincible
Omnipotent is Her Name
She rules to vanquish the vain and the wicked
And to care and tend the weak and helpless
Those who seek refuge in Her.

Extracts from the Autobiography of
Swami Shri Shivanandaji Maharaj
(FOUNDER OF DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY)

Editorial :

We have been extremely fortunate through the noblest generosity of Mahamandaleshwar Shri Shri Chidanandaji Maharaj, President of the Divine Life Society — Rishikesh — and Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj, and finally through the dedicated efforts of Ma's devotee and frequent contributor to the Ananda-Varta, Sri Ma Das, in receiving and being permitted to publish the following Autobiography (Extracts) of the late Shri Shri Shivanandaji Maharaj, which make wonderful reading and serve as a priceless inspiration to all Sadhakas.

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Ma Das

This is the birth-centenary year of the world-renowned saint, His Holiness Sri Swami Shivananda Saraswathy, Founder of the Divine Life Society and the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University. Born on Thursday the 8th September, 1887 at Pattamadai (Tamilnadu), he was the third son of Smt. Parvati Ammal and Sri P. S. Vengu Iyer, a deeply religious

descendant of Sri Appayya Dikshitar, a great spiritual luminary who was considered by many as an incarnation of God.

Revered Swamiji held Shree Ma in great esteem. Once he described her as follows :

“Shree Anandamayee is one of the finest flowers of the Indian mystical life ; she is the best image to contemporary consciousness of the silent and radiant greatness of a God-intoxicated individual. In her we find the brooding East brought into a dynamic realization, in everyday life, of the transcendental states of spiritual awareness and being. She is one of the most shining diamonds in the luminous crown of contemporary Indian spiritual life. May she live amidst us longer and yet longer and continue to spread, by the very mere act of her living, abundant joy and peace. May the Almighty Lord grant her health and strength, and preserve her amidst us, for many many more summers to come !”¹

Revered Swamiji's disciple and successor, the venerable world figure, Shri Swami Chidananda Maharaj, the present President of the Divine Life Society, is held in the highest esteem by all the devotees of Shree Ma, who look upon him as one of their own, in view of his real reverence for Shree Ma.

On this most auspicious occasion of the birth-centenary, we would like to pay, on behalf of all devotees of Shree Ma, our humble tribute to revered Swami Shivananda Maharaj for his admir-

1. See Ananda-Varta, Birthday Number, Vol VII, No. 1, May 1959, p. 6.

able attainments, tremendous talent, loving leadership and superb services in the spiritual sphere. Fortunately, he has written an interesting autobiography — a mine of valuable information, studded with gems of helpful hints and inimitable instructions for sincere seekers of life divine. And so we offer our trenchant tribute by making widely known through this journal, with the courtesy of the Divine Life Trust Society*, the following :

*Extracts from Swami Shivanandaji's publication
How God came into my Life.*

“How God came into my life :”

Cosmic consciousness is not an accident or choice. It is the summit, accessible by a thorny path that has steps — slippery steps. I ascended them step by step the hard way ; but at every stage I experienced God coming into my life and lifting me easily to the next stage.

1. My father was fond of ceremonial worship in which he was very regular. To my child mind, the image he worshipped was God ; and I delighted in helping father in the worship by bringing him flowers and other articles of worship.....*Thus did God come into my life and place my foot on the first rung of the spiritual ladder.*

2. As an adult, I was fond of gymnastics and vigorous exercises. I learnt fencing from a teacher who belonged to a low caste. I could go to him only for a few days before I was made to under-

* These extracts are reproduced here with the prior permission of the Divine Life Trust Society.

stand that it was unbecoming of a caste-Brahmin to play the student to an untouchable. I thought deeply over the matter. One moment I felt that the God whom we worshipped in the image in my father's worship room had jumped over to the heart of this untouchable. He was my Guru all right. So I immediately went to him with flowers, sweets and cloths, and garlanded him, placed flowers at his feet and prostrated myself before him. *Thus did God come into my life to remove the veil of caste distinctions.*

3. How valuable this step was, I could realize soon after this, for I was to enter the medical profession and serve all, and the persistence of caste distinctions would have made that service a mockery I can look back now upon the whole period of my stay (as a doctor) in Malaya as a single event in which *God came to me in the form of the sick and suffering.* People are sick physically and mentally. To some, life is lingering death, and to others, death is more welcome than life; some invite death and commit suicide, unable to face life.

4. The aspiration grew within me that if God had not made this world merely as a hell where wicked people would be thrown to suffer, and if there is — as I intuitively felt there should be — something other than this misery and this helpless existence, it should be known well and experienced.

It was at this crucial point in my life that *God came to me as a religious mendicant*, who gave me the first lesson in Vedanta.

5. The positive aspects of life here and the real end and aim of human life were made apparent. This drew me from Malaya to the Himalayas. *God now came to me in the form of an all-consuming aspiration to realize Him as the Self of all.*

6. Meditation and service went apace ; and then came various spiritual experiences. The body, mind and intellect, as the limiting adjuncts, vanished, and the whole universe shone as His Light. *God then came in the form of this Light in which everything assumed a divine shape* and the pain and suffering that seem to haunt everybody appeared to be a mirage, the illusion that ignorance creates on account of low sensual appetites that lurk in man.

7. One more milestone had to be passed in order to know that "everything is Brahman". Early in 1950 — on the 8th of January — *the Lord came to me in the form of a half-demented assailant, who disturbed the night Satsang at the Ashram.* His attempt failed, I bowed to him, worshipped him and sent him home. Evil exists in order to glorify the good. Evil is a superficial appearance. Beneath its veil, the one Self shines in all.

(To be continued)

The Guru actually emerges from within, when genuine search takes effect, his genuine manifestation is bound to occur ; it cannot possibly be otherwise. The One, assuming Himself the shape of the Guru, of His own accord brings about His manifestation or become manifested.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

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**SHREE SHREE
MA ANANDAMAYEE KANYAPEETH,
BHADAINI, VARANASI-1**

An Earnest Request.

The above-named residential institution for girls, which was founded in the year 1938 through the blessings of our Mother, will be holding its Golden Jubilee celebration next year.

A Special Souvenir is proposed to be published by the authorities of the Kanyapeeth on this occasion.

Devotees of Ma, who were indeed blessed enough to meet her in the Varanasi Ashram during the past so many years and at the same time had the opportunity to come in close touch with the activities of the Kanyapeeth, are earnestly requested to send their valuable experiences in writing as early as possible in any language of their choice for inclusion in the proposed Souvenir.

If any devotee has in his or her possession any significant photograph of Ma taken inside the Kanyapeeth premises or of any noteworthy function of the Kanyapeeth girls with Ma in their midst that will also be gratefully accepted. Original photo will no doubt be returned to the sender.

Padma Misra Bithika Mukerjee Jaya Bhattacharya
President *Secretary* *Principal*

The relation between Guru and Sisya (disciple) deserves to be called eternal only when the Guru is possessed of divine power and can and does communicate this power to the latter at the time of his initiation. This power being eternal, the relation between Guru and Sisya as thus established is also eternal.

—Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

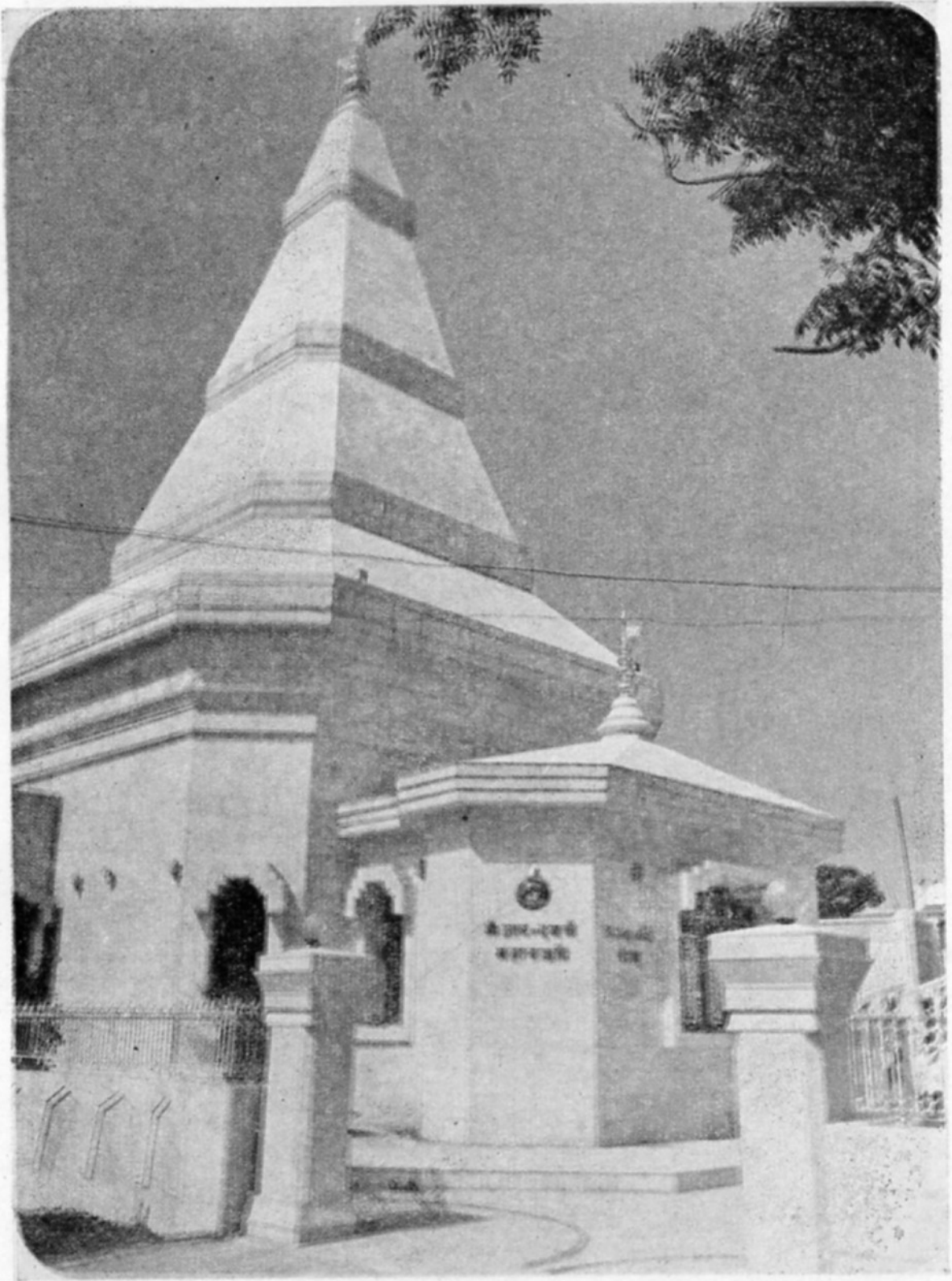
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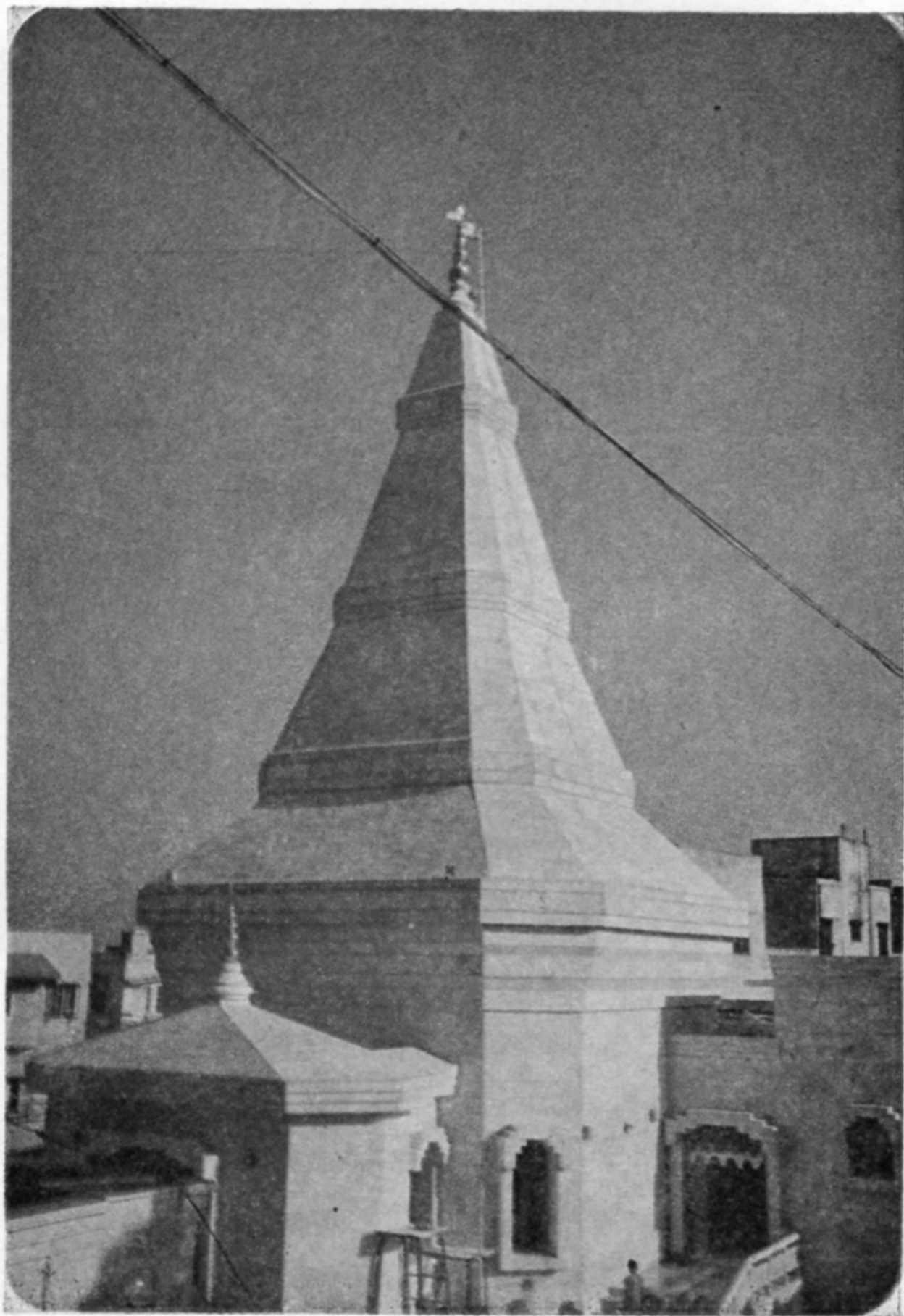
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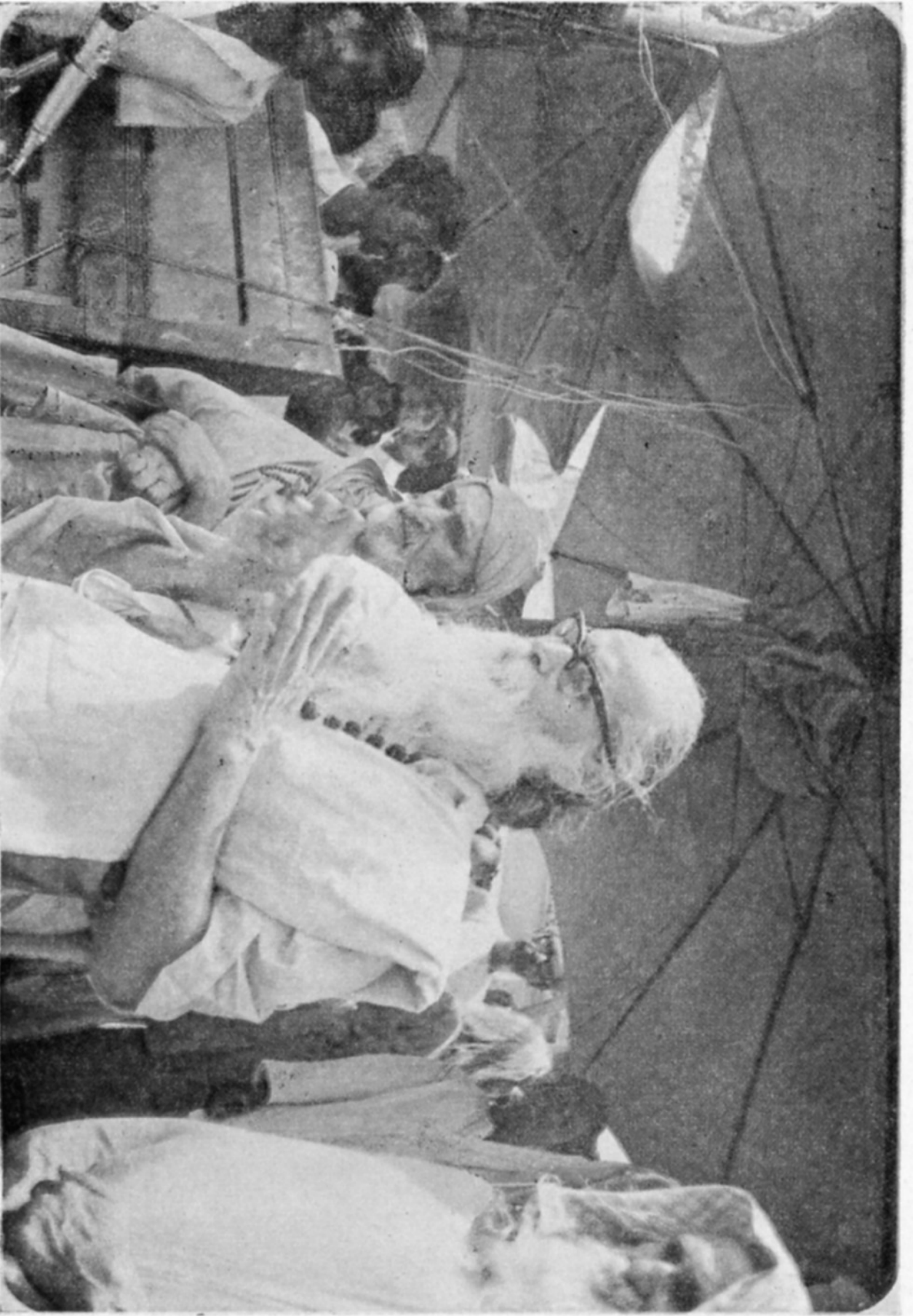
A view of the 87 ft. high marble temple with a separate temple in front where Ma's marble statue was installed.



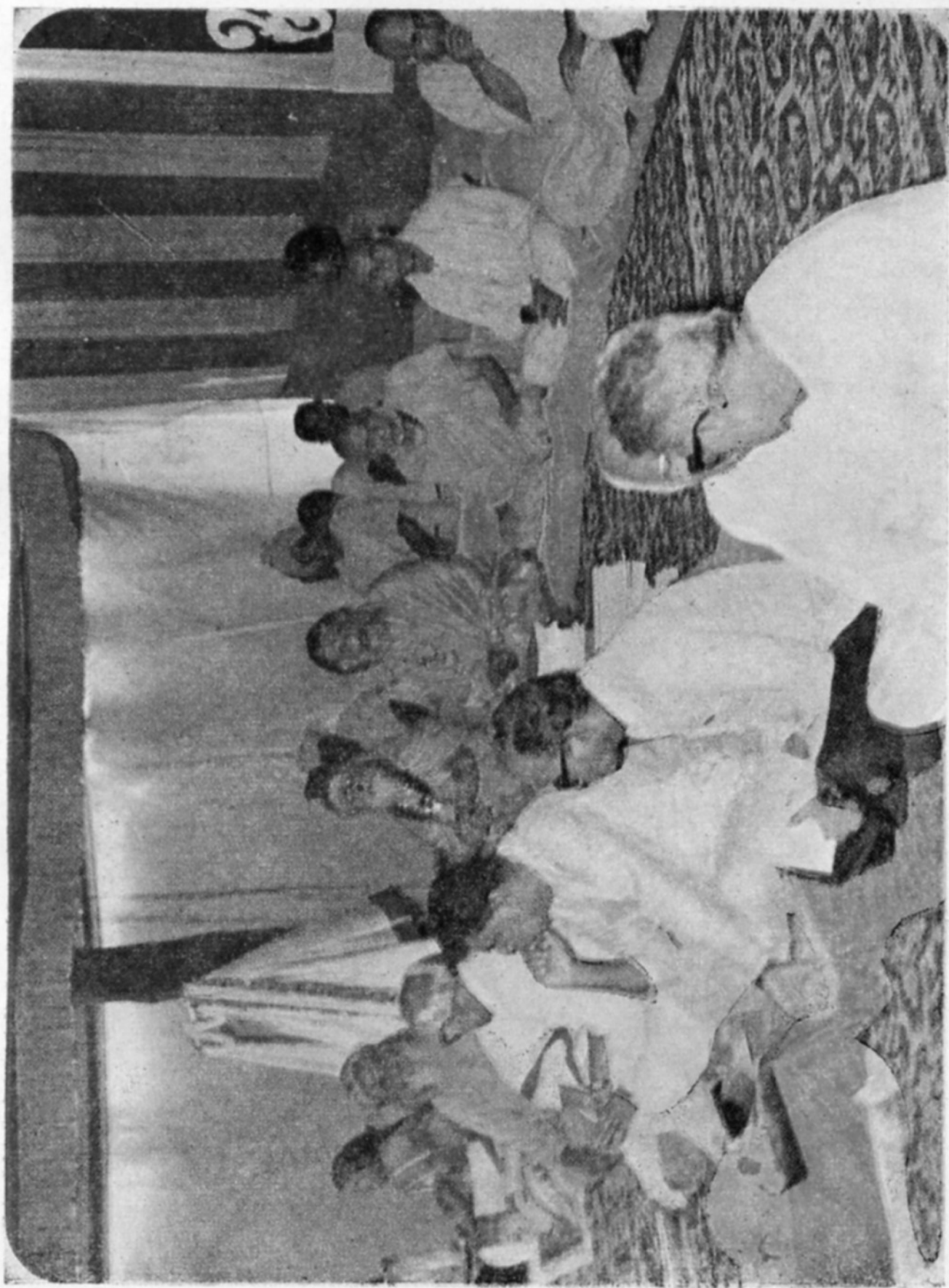
A view of Ma's new marble temple 87 ft. high at Kankhal.



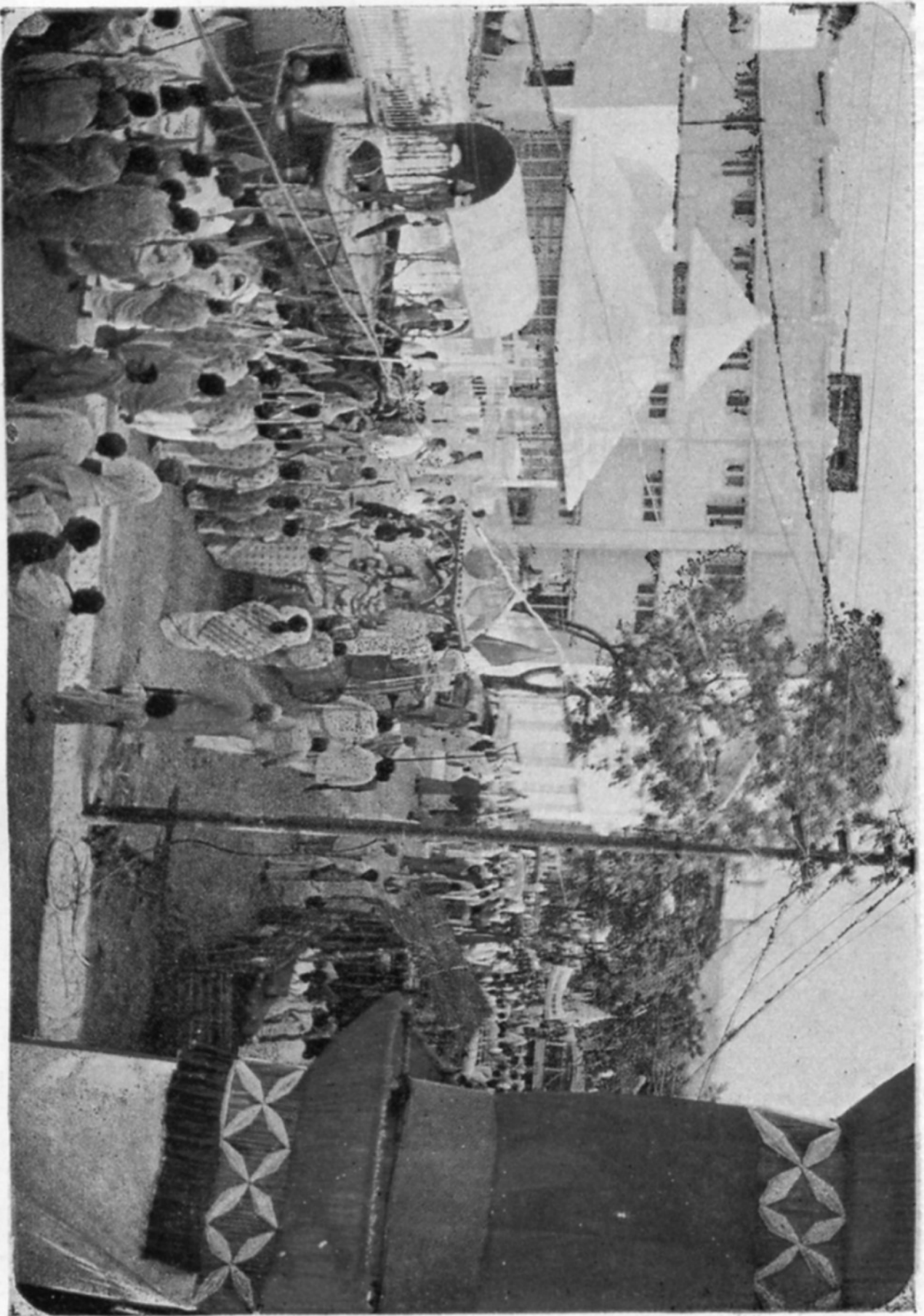
Jagatguru Sankaracharyaji of Jyotir Math formally inaugurating Ma's new marble statue on 15.87. Swami Chidanandaji—the President of the Divine Life Society and other Mahatmas are also seen.



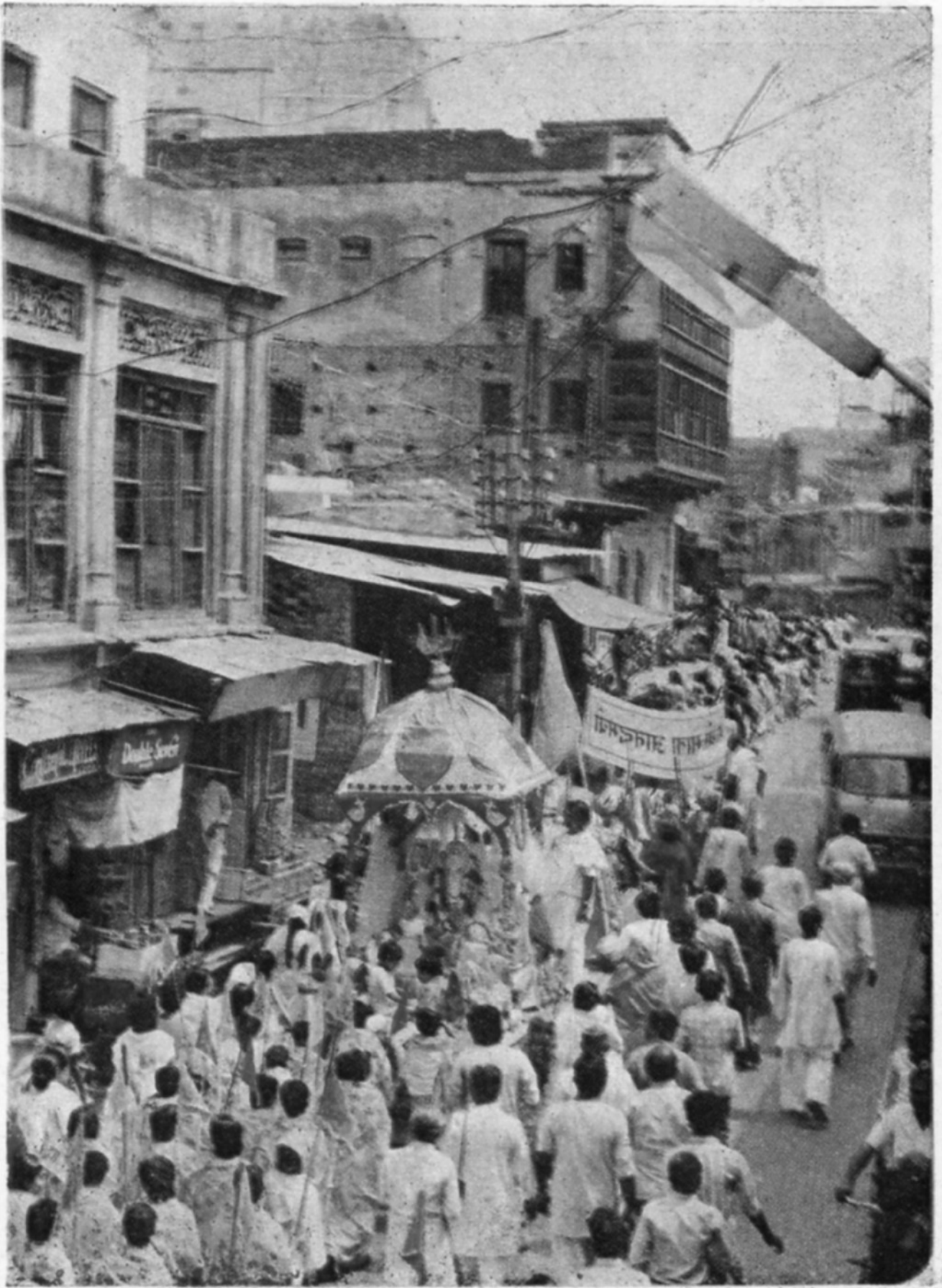
Swamis Bhaskaranandaji, Nirbananandaji and Br. Shivanandaji—amongst others in the inaugural function of Ma's marble temple at Kankhal.



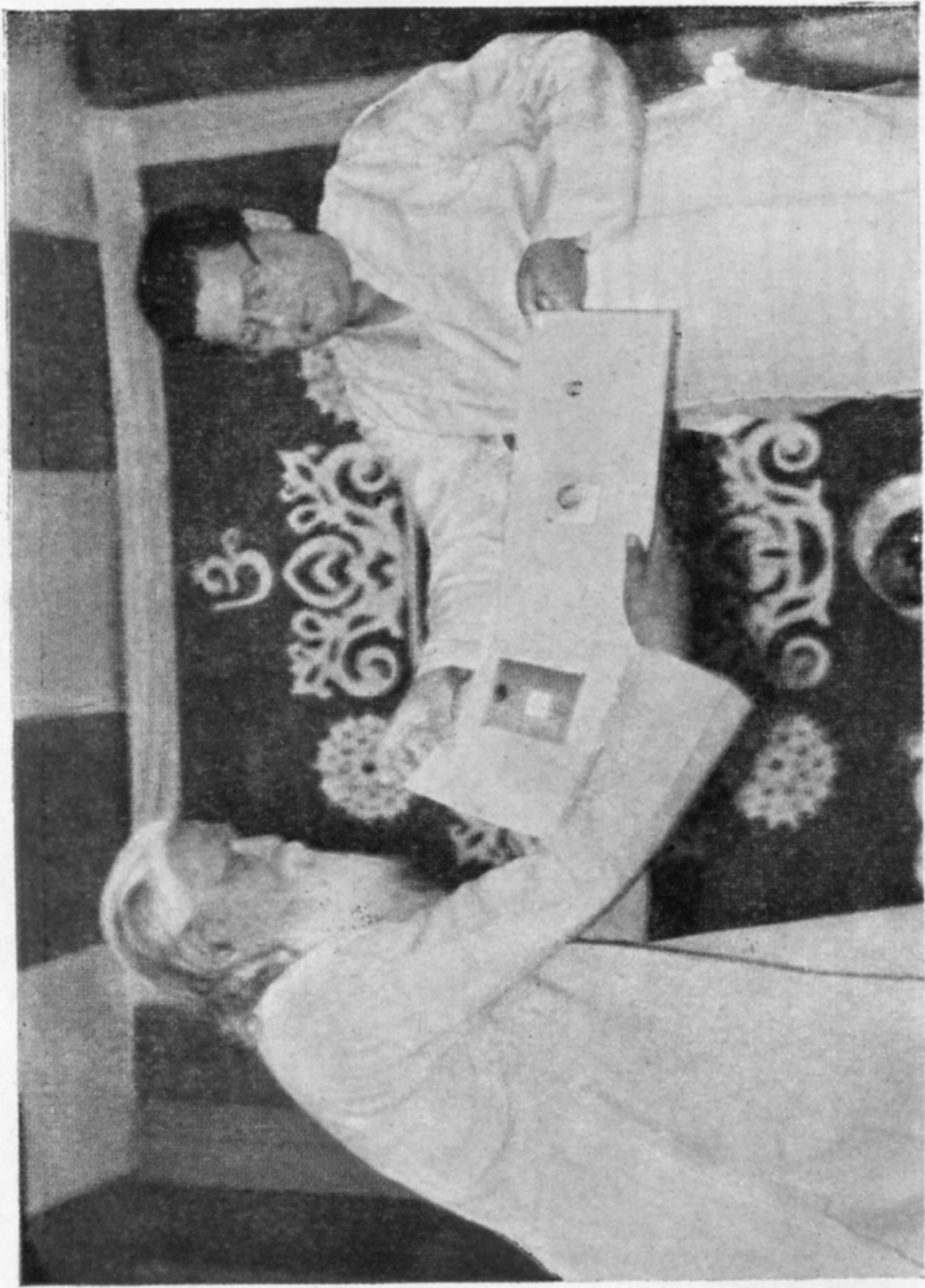
A view of Mahatmas and Maha-mandaleswars and some devotees on the occasion of formal opening of "Jyoti-Peetham" at Kankhal on 15.87.



Massive procession with Ma's marble statue along Kankhal-Hardwar Road before its formal installation



Procession by the devotees and sadhus with Ma's marble statue before its formal installation in the gorgeous marble temple on her Maha-Samadhi.



A senior official of Union Postal Department formally handing over the special stamps and stamped envelopes specially taken out in Ma's honour to Swami Swarupanandaji —the General Secy. of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sanghaat Kankhal.

The Inauguration of the Jyoti-Peetham-Samadhi Mandir at Kankhal

On Friday the 1st May, on the auspicious occasion of Akshay Tritya, the unrivalled beautiful Marble Structure or Temple called "Ananda-Jyoti-Peetham", built around the ever-conscious Maha-samadhi of Shree Shree Ma, was inaugurated. From the 28th April to the 18th May, for 21 days, the following Utsabs were celebrated, the Abhisekam of Ma's Marble Statue, grand procession, the inauguration of the temple, Ma's Birthday celebration, Hari-Hara Yagna, 108 Kumari Seva, Chandipath (100 times), the learned discourses of Mahatmas, the singing of religious songs, Rash-leela, Havan, Nam Yagna etc.

On this auspicious occasion Ma's children and devotees gathered together from various places to enjoy a wonderful period of joy and bliss.

On the 29th April, Ma's Murti was consecrated with Ganga water, rice, flowers and sweets and cloth.

On the 30th morning Ma's Murti was dressed according to her usual custom with Dhoti, Chaddar, Yellow towel over the head, decorated with flowers and garlands, and placed on a decorated chariot. The procession started towards

Brahma-Kund at 8 A.M. All the Mahatmas of Rishikesh, Hardwar and Kankhal graced the occasion by taking part in the procession. Leading it were the Nirvani Akhara Sadhus on decorated elephant and horse. Behind them the bandparty, thereafter ladies dressed in white saris with red borders blowing conch shells. Many of them were carrying Mangal Ghatas.

Then came a procession of cars, carrying leading Mahatmas including the President of the Divine Life Society, Swami Chidanandaji, Mahamandaleshwar Swami Brahmanandaji of Sannyas Ashram, Mahamandaleshwar Swami Prakashanandaji of Jagad-Guru Ashram ; Mahamandaleshwar Swami Sri Shyamsundar Das and Nirvani, Niranjani, Juna and Udashin Akhara Mahantas.

Behind the Mahatmas, the Sadhus and Brahma-charis of the Ashram walked carrying flags. One car was carrying a model of the newly built Ananda-Jyoti-Peetham Temple. The leading guarding sadhus of Maha Nirvani Akhara were carrying Silver Dandas in their hands. Behind them came Sri Sri Ma's decorated white effulgent Murti.

Keeping Ma in front came the junior Brahma-charinis carrying saffron flags and singing Kirtan.

Thereafter lady devotees walked singing the Name. At the tale-end came the bus carrying the Kirtan party.

This huge procession started from Kankhal at 8 A.M. and reached Brahma Kunda before midday. There, in the holy waters of Brahma Kunda, Shree Shree Ma's white marble statue was bathed and

then worshipped. All bathed in the Brahma Kunda and then started on the return journey to the Ashram, which was reached at 12 P.M. Then full Adhibas and Sayan Adhibas was performed for the Murti, that is, it was completely covered with cloth.

The next day, on the auspicious occasion of Akshay Tritiya the installation of the Murti commenced at 3 A.M. with the Veda path of distinguished Pandits. The temple was inaugurated by Shri Shri 1008 Jagatguru Shankaracharya Shri Vishnudevanandaji Saraswati Maharaj of Jyotir-Math. Practically all Sadhus and Mahatmas were present. Ma's marble statue was installed in the Jyoti Temple. It seemed that after 5 long years Ma was actually present among us once more. The temple yards were packed with people. The white marble temple was beautifully lit with pretty electric hanging lamps. The atmosphere became purified by the Kirtan, music and Vedapath of the Ashram Brahmacharinis. Brahmachari Nirvananandaji performed the fully Shastriya Puja at the feet of the Samadhi. A famous Sehnai player of Delhi filled the morning air with wonderful music with various Ragas and Raginis. The special Puja was completed by Kumari Puja and Yagna.

On behalf of the Govt. of India the Door-Darshan authorities took the first pictures. Other photographers were also present with their Video Cameras. The Mahanta of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple decorated the Murti with a beautiful Rudraksha garland as well as flowers. At the very

end all of Ma's devotees filed past doing their pranams to Ma.

For this Utsab of Ma a huge pandal had been constructed, and decorated. At 10-30 A.M. on the 1st, Sri Santosh Mohan Deb, the Central Govt. Minister for Communication, inaugurated the sale of a special Re. 1 ticket carrying the picture of Ma. A special souvenir published for the occasion was introduced by the Central Govt. Minister of Social Welfare Sm. Rajendra Kumari Bajpayee, a foremost devotee of Ma. She quoted Ma's words in saying : "The observance of Truth and service to the masses is Ma's directive to me". Among the distinguished people present were the President of the Divine Life Society, Swami Chidanandaji, Mahamandaleshwar Swami Brahmanandaji of Sannyas Ashram, Swami Sacchidananda Giri, Mahamandaleshwar of Bhola Giri Ashram, Mahamandaleshwar Swami Sivananda Giri, Swami Ganeshanandaji, the Gujrat Governor Sri Ramkrishna Trivediji, the Ex-Governor of Mysore Sri Govindanarainji, the President of Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha Sri B. K. Shah, and the General Secretary, Swami Swarupananda Giri etc.

All of them payed their respects to Ma by speaking in turn according to their own experience.

The former President of the Rishikesh Bharat Mata Mandir Swami Satyajugananda Giri Maharaj prayed that with the inauguration of the Samadhi Mandir the dormant spirituality inherent in our hearts be aroused and be reflected in our lives in the glory of the Sadhaka's faith.

The President of the Sannyas Ashram Swami Brahmanandaji said: "In her spirit Ma is always present here, she will certainly answer our fervent call and prayers and fulfil them, there is no doubt about this. Ma's being does not suffer from change. We see several pictures of Ma, not one of which resembles the other, so we must accept her in the form in which she has appeared today before us (in the marble statue)."

The Mahamandaleshwar of Gita Bhavan Swami Mangalanandaji said, "Ma is ever present, but for ease of worship and meditation, a statue has been created. In the present context of the country Shree Shree Ma's Ashirbad is urgently required. If we proceed along the path shown by Ma we may realise our real selves."

Mahamandaleshwar Swami Sacchidananda Giri of Bhola Giri Ashram sang in a melodious voice :

"Ma Amar Anandamayee
Ma Amar Brahmamayee
Ma Adibhuta Sanatani
Sacchidanander Manomohini."

Praying for Shri Shri Ma's grace, he said, "Bharat is a land based on religion. To escape from the dire straits of the present time, we must heed Ma's advice and follow them. We can only obtain peace if we cling to a spiritual life. Shri Shri Ma Anandamayee is the embodiment of bliss, she is replete with this Ananda, she is an ocean of Ananda. The Goddess Durga representing the divine consciousness of the soul is incarnate now as Ma Anandamayee."

Swami Ganeshanandaji said "We can learn the following lessons from Ma's life — pure straightforwardness, humility and completely unselfish love for all and sundry". Mahamandaleshwar Swami Prakashanandaji said, "This Kankhal is an all-embrasive pithasthan. Every action on Ma's part is part of a Leela of an Avatar. Let Ma please lighten the darkness of our mind, show us the Divine light. I seek this boon from Ma in the authority of her son."

Kothariji of Surat Giri Bunglow said, "To say something about Ma is to light a lamp in front of the son. As long as Ma played her Leela as an Avatar in this world you have heard plenty of many learned discourses about Ma from erudite Mahatmas."

"Ma is the incarnate Kalpa Briksha, the tree which grants every boon asked of it. Swami Maheshwaranandaji used to say, Ma exists in front of us with a form, but without a form she is present everywhere, and will always be so present."

After the speeches of several other Mahatmas the erstwhile Governor of Karnataka Sri Govinda Narainji acknowledged his thanks to everybody present on behalf of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha. The General Secretary of the Sangha, Swami Swarupanandaji expressed his heartfelt thanks to all visitors. He admitted that there must have been many blemishes or omissions in the arrangements, which should please be forgiven.

After the worshipping of all the gathered Mahatmas, the Sabha was concluded. In the afternoon all the Sadhus were fed in a Bhandara.

In the afternoon session, there arrived at the Sabha, Jyotirpitha Swami Jagatguru Shri Shankaracharyaji, flanked on both side by two guards carrying silver batons and two others waving chamars, as well as a disciple beating the Dambaru drum.

He said, "When the Sun god appears in the sky, the lotus in the tank opens its petals automatically ; in the same way Ma Anandamayee appears in the eastern sky, in the glory of her advice and the touch of her Jyoti, the hearts of Bhaktas will also open their petals like those of the lotus ; we must follow her advice just as they were Mantras."

The President of the Shivananda Ashram at Rishikesh Swami Chidanandaji said, "Ma Anandamayee appeared in mortal form and blessed innumerable well placed Jeevas with her darshan. This kind of Divinity is observed after several centuries. The compassionate Mother has let herself be realised partly by Sadhakas, so as to make their task easier. The leading staff of the Anandamayee Sangha are to be congratulated in completing in so short a time such a beautiful edifice with special architecture, so as to enable its inauguration by Akshay Tritya". The Mahanta of Udasin Akhara said, "Ma exists everywhere. Ma used to fulfil the desires of all that approached her. In the 5 locations of Kankhal, Ma had been incarnate as the true Jagadamba Mahamaya in the flesh."

Swami Madhavanandaji of Shivananda Ashram (Rishikesh) said, "Whatever we say about Ma remains incomplete. Because to express the Supreme Truth silence is truly sufficient, therefore

it is a presumption on my part to speak about Ma." The Mahanta of Bhagavatdham Swami Krishnanandaji said, "We are inaugurating the Samadhi Mandir of Ma, who is replete with Ananda, and is the embodiment of Ananda. Ma is not the mother of only Hardwar or of India, but Ma is the mother of the universe." The President of Ramtirtha Ashram, Swami Amar Muniji said, "Ma has bestowed infinite love among us. He who has true devotion and feeling can still behold Ma. I pray that Ma's incomparable mercy and kindness continue to be showered upon us."

Mandaleshwar Brahma Hariji said, "Ma is an Avatar of the original Shakti. Those who have been fortunate enough in coming into the vicinity of Ma has beheld her in many forms. Our Gurudev used to have very special regard for Ma."

Swami Ganeshanandaji said, "Implicit faith or belief is a part of our heart, it can only be revealed by words. That is why I am publicly acknowledging my respect to Ma. The Paramatma resides within all of us, but due to a barrier we can not see him. In Ma the Paramatma resides openly in visible form. If through our Sadhana and after receiving the grace of Ma, we can awaken the Paramatma residing within our hearts, only then will our lives be glorified."

The Mahamandaleshwar of Hariharananda Ashram at Kankhal, Gita Bharatiji said, "The Lord has declared in the Gita, "My birth and deeds are Divine." Birth is identical in all cases, but due to actions performed this life can be turned

divine. Work on our own behalf is merely worldly, but spiritual effort can be termed Divine work. Ma's birth and Leela are Divine. Ma is the embodiment of renunciation, spiritual austerity and knowledge of truth. Ma never used to be without activity for a second. Whatever she organised, whether it was Samyam Saptaha, various Puja Utsabs etc. were all for our own good. Anandamayee Ma is perennially present among us in our spiritual consciousness. We can only pay our respects to her by following the path indicated by her, and by obeying scrupulously her instructions."

The Executive President of the Swami Naradanda Ashram, Swami Vivekananda said, "Ma Anandamayee is the Mother Jagadamba. Formerly we used to behold her with our eyes open, now we must close our eyes and behold her within our hearts. The eye within the heart is called the "Third Eye." Outward forms may be many, but the true form is one only. Ma is the embodiment of spiritual Truth. Whichever devotee after beholding Ma can surrender his life and soul at her feet, can realise his True Self. Ma is like a Magnet, we are merely pieces of iron gathered together here by her attraction. Without Ma's benediction our Sadhana can not be successful".

For three weeks at the conclusion of the daily evening Arati & Ashram Kirtan, special artists performed their spiritual or classical songs and music. Among the eminent artists assembled from Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Ranchi were Sri Hariprasad Chaurasia, Sri Ramkumar Chatterjee,

Sri Purna Das Baul, Smt. Manju Das, Sri Ajay Chakravarti, Smt. Chandana Chakravarti, Sri Kishore Chakravarti, Smt. Itu Banerjee, Sri Arun Bhattacharya, Sri Shyam Ganguli, Sri Srikumar Chatterjee, Sri Sanat Sinha, Smt. Lolita Rao, Sri Sunil Mukherjee, Brahmachari Krishnanandaji, Kumari Chhabi Banerjee etc. ... They all considered themselves blessed in offering their music at the feet of Ma. Sri Shyam Ganguli created a new Rag called "Ananda Manjari", and submitted it as an offering at Ma's feet. Professor Dr. Basanti Chaudhuri charmed everybody by her melodious recital of Bhagavat in her sweet voice.

On the 2nd May, 500 Sadhus were fed and offered clothes.

On the 3rd May was Shree Shree Ma's Birthday. On that day in the early morning at the moment of Ma's birth, a very ceremonial puja was performed with all pomp and ceremony at Ma's Mahasamadhi complete with Vedapath, Stotrapath, Bhajan, Kirtan, Kumari Puja, Havan and offering of flowers.

From the 4th May the special attractions included Chandipath (100 times), Akhand Japa, and Kirtan of Ma's name.

On the 6th May was Baba Bholanath's death anniversary. A special Puja, Bhog and Arati were performed in front of his picture in an organised way. There was also a Sadhu Bhandara on this occasion.

From the 7th May, to the 13th May, Hariharatmak Yagna was performed in the Ati Rudra Yagnashala. For this special Yagna, 54 Pandits

well versed in the Vedas were brought from Varanasi. In Ma's ground floor room in the Guest House a Ghata was consecrated for the reading of 100 Chandis, and this was continued from the 3rd May to the 16th May with a special Mantra before and after each sloka. At the conclusion a special Yagna was performed.

The famous troupe of Sri Haragovindaji arrived from Vrindaban and exquisite Rash Leela or Mahaprabhu Leela was performed daily in the pandal from 8 A.M. to 11 A.M. keeping the audience spell-bound with their performance.

From the 8th May to the 15th May for eight days each afternoon Mahamandaleshwar Swami Shree Gita Bharati expounded the Kathopanishad in a masterly yet lucid manner.

On the Purnima day of the 12th May, the girls sang Ma Nam all night. On the 13th May, with great pomp and ceremony, 108 Kumaris and 11 Batuks were dressed and worshipped with Bhog and Arati in the Main hall.

On the occasion of Ma's Tithi Puja (the night of the 16th May) Ma's special full ceremonial Puja, Kirtan, Bhog and Kumari Puja and Havan were meticulously observed.

At the end of the puja, the entire assembly of devotees filed past Ma's Mahasamadhi to bow down in their pranamas.

On the 17th May, a huge Sadhu Bhandara was celebrated for the Mahamandaleshwars assembled. On the 17th evening after Adhibas Kirtan, Akhand Maha Nam for the Nam Yagna was sung all night

by the girls and from sunrise to sunset on the 18th by the men. At the end of the Kirtan, a Nagar Sankirtan with Kirtan was performed in front of the assembly of Mahatmas and the breaking of an earthenware vessel full of curd heralded the conclusion of the Mahotsab carried on for so many days.

Swami Chidanandaji was so enchanted by the rendering of Vedapath by the tiny Brahmacharinis of the Varanasi Kanyapeeth, that he affectionately took all the girls to his Ashram so that his Ashramites could hear their Vedapath, and greatly enjoyed the whole episode. He declared that "I have never before heard the Vedas pronounced so purely and correctly by so little girls."

From the 28th May to the 30th May, at the request of the late Lachmiji (Ashram Brahmacharini) arrangements were made for the reading of Akhand Ramayana. For this purpose the Ramayana specialist Smt. Malati Bhargava and her party were invited from Meerut. They sang Ramcharita Manas for 3 days in several beautiful tunes.

There was a Bhagavat Saptaha Parayan from the 1st to the 8th May. Sri Kania Bhai and Smt. Jaya Behn had this Bhagavat performed in the sacred memory of the early and unfortunate death of their only son for the liberation of his soul. Simultaneously 10/12 other devotees also performed the Bhagavat Parayana in memory of their dear and departed relations.

JAI MA

Ashram News

Varanasi :

On the 30th March the Central Government Minister for Social Welfare Sm. Rajendra Kumari Bajpayee visited Varanasi Ashram, and distributed fruits and cloth to 100 children in the Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Hospital.

Basanti Puja was celebrated in grand style like in previous years. On the auspicious day of Akshay Tritya, all the deities in Annapurna and Gopal Mandir, Shiva Mandir and Shree Shree Ma were specially worshipped. At the end special Purnahuti was performed in the Yagna Kunda. 12 Sadhus were fed in the afternoon.

On the occasion of Ma's birthday on the 3rd May Ma's special puja was performed in the Chandi Mandap with Kirtan etc. From the 3rd to the 16th Ma's picture in the Chandi Mandap was beautifully decorated and worshipped. On the 6th May Baba Bholanath's death anniversary was celebrated with full rituals.

On the 16th night Ma's picture was beautifully decorated with clothes, flowers etc. At 3 A. M. the Brahmacharini of the Kanyapeeth started the special puja of Ma. At the conclusion when all the inmates were garlanding Ma, everybody seemed to feel Ma was present there in person, and smiling gently as usual.

An elderly devotee exclaimed, "I have come here to see this Puja for several years. But I have never beheld such a miracle." Most of the Kanyapeeth girls had departed to Kankhal for the celebrations there, only a few girls left had spent all their soul and strength in conducting Ma's Puja, so perhaps Ma must have proved, "Wherever I am called with true Bhakti, I have to be present."

At the conclusion of the Puja, Kumari Puja, Arati etc., were performed upto 5 A. M. and then prasad was distributed to all. Like previous years at 3 A. M. the same night special Puja was performed of Shree Shree Annapurna and Narayanji. On the 17th at midday 21 Sadhus were given presents and fed. Later at 12-30 P. M. Raj Bhog was offered to Shree Shree Ma at the Chandi Mandap. All the devotees assembled there were very pleased with the Bhog and other arrangements.

All were unanimous in praising the few Brahmacharinis present for their special effort in conducting this huge Utsab so efficiently. Some even declared, "That due to Ma's Ashirbad, what Didi wanted is still clearly evident here, which is a matter of great joy".

Ranchi :

On the 14th April, on the last day of Chaitra, the Sannyas Utsab of 1008 Swami Shri Muktananda Giriji was conducted with special Puja, Kirtan, offering of flowers, and feeding of 300 devotees present.

On the 3rd day, Shree Shree Ma's Birthday was celebrated with special Puja and Arati. On the 16th May, devotees started gathering together from evening and the Ashram resounded with Kirtan and songs about Ma. This continued all night, and at 3 A.M. Shree Shree Ma's Tithi Puja was performed by Brahmachari Makhanda. On the 17th May, being Sunday, Akhand Kirtan was arranged. Brahmachari Nirmalananda presided over a special satsang with discourses about Ma.

Agarpara :

On the evening of the 16th May the proceedings commenced with a special Satsang, after Sandhya Kirtan. Later there was the staging of "Mahi Raban Badh" Pala at Nat Mandir, after which Bhajan Kirtan and songs about Ma were sung before Ma's beautifully decorated picture in the Chandi Mandap. Special Mauna was observed from 3-15 to 3-45, and Brahmachari Sadananda completed the Tithi Puja, including Kumari Puja and Havana by 5 A.M. after which Pushpanjali was offered by all devotees present. At the conclusion Ma's Annabhog and fruits etc., were distributed among the 400 odd devotees present throughout the night. On the 17th special Bhandara was held at which an estimated 2000 people were fed.

Shree Shree Ma's Birth Anniversary was appropriately celebrated also at Delhi, Dehra Dun, Puri, Bhopal Ashrams, etc.

Obituary

1. It is with great regret that we have to announce the passing away on the 20th April at Ranchi of Sri Ma's special devotee Kamakshya Prasad Roy, at the age of 75. He died peacefully in his own home taking the name of Ma. He had consecrated a Pad Padma to Sri Ma at his home, in her presence. Even on the morning of his death he had gathered flowers from his garden, and offered Puja at the Pada peeth himself with his normal worshipping mantras. We pray for his soul to rest in peace at Sri Ma's lotus feet, and offer our sincere condolences to the bereaved family.

Kamakshyada was indefatigable in his attempts to being the poorer and more afflicted people of his acquaintance to Ma's feet for their initiation, and spared no personal pains in spite of falling health during his latter years, in meeting her in distant places whenever the occasion demanded.

2. Shri Shri Ma's ardent devotee Shri Raja Behn Khaitan passed away peacefully on the Vijaya Dasami day of the last Basanti Puja on the 8th April, at her Dehra Dun residence, hallowed by Ma's presence for several years, including a month before her departure from earth, during the 1982 Guru Purnima. She was associated with her late husband M. L. Khaitan in a number of important works on Ma's behalf, and had practised long Sadhana of Japa in Ma's own room at Tarapith Ashram with the approval of Ma.

We pray that her soul rests in eternal peace in Ma's feet.
