

MA ANANDAMAYI LILA

Memoirs of
Hari Ram Joshi



SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE CHARITABLE SOCIETY

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SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE CHARITABLE SOCIETY
VARANASI



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PREFACE

Sri Hari Ram Joshi has written some very interesting facts about the life of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayiji in his own style. He was an ardent devotee of Sri Sri Ma and I myself got the happy news of the advent of Sri Ma through Hari Ramji in 1934 when I was in Lucknow.

Hari Ramji was known to me for a good many years, as his younger brother, the late Dr. M. M. Joshi, was in my service in the erstwhile Baghat State.

Hari Ramji was also instrumental in bringing about Mataji's first visit to Solan. It was a great pleasant surprise when Ma arrived in Solan in March 1934 without any previous intimation.

When late Hari Ramji compiled the life of Mataji he was completely blind and all he dictated was from his memory. It is, therefore, but natural that some repetitions might have crept into his narration. On the whole Hari Ramji did his best to relate about important phases of the life of Mataji.

Hari Ramji brought many people in contact with Her which was a great factor in his life. He had many sorrows and misfortunes in his life time, but his devotion to Mataji gave him the courage to bear all ups and downs. He had a very high moral character and was a very honest man all his life.

I sincerely hope that many people will be benefited by reading his description of some important events of our Holy Mother's life in his book.

Solan, July 1972.

Durga Singh

FOREWORD

I had been repeatedly asked by Bhai Hari Ramji to write a preface to "Mā Anandamayi Līlā" but I had as persistently declined to undertake this task on the plea that I lacked the necessary competence. I had suggested that some eminent person who was also a well known disciple of Mataji should be requested to do so. However, as Destiny would have it, Bhai Hari Ramji left this mortal world before a preface could be written by the person he had in view. Under these circumstances I have had to take upon myself the duty of writing a foreword instead.

I came in contact with Bhai Hari Ramji in 1918, more than 50 years ago, when I was admitted to the Muir Central College, Allahabad and joined the Hindu Boarding House, of which he was a senior inmate. He was a staunch believer in our cultural heritage, religiously carried out all the prescribed orthodox practices, and was outspoken and even blunt in expressing his views on the burning topics of the day. We sometimes disagreed, nevertheless the special liking and regard, that he came to entertain for me then, remained undiminished all these years. My regard and respect for him, as to an elder brother, also remained steadfast.

We went our different ways; he joined the U. P. State Service and I went to the Railways. We met often and once came to be posted at the same station.

For the last two years both of us were again in Lucknow together and I could lend a hand in this noble work. He dictated the first drafts of this valuable work, "Mā Anandamayi Līlā" to Sri Dwarka Prasad Tripathi. Since he had unfortunately lost his eyesight totally, I would read to him the scripts, chapterwise, and then again the whole book was read by me to him and some material was rearranged. It was then retyped as the second draft. It had been planned that we would go through the book together, abridge it here and there, edit it properly, and then send it for printing but he parted company before this could be done.

The task of making the final revision and its editing has now fallen on me. His brothers Sri Badri Datt Joshi and Sri Tara Datt Joshi, an ex-Army Officer, read the draft and gave valuable suggestions. The first two chapters have been abridged, as had also been his own intention, but understandingly, as far as possible, only verbal or minor changes have been made in the text, though such references as had no direct relevance to the main subject have been omitted here and there. I have also taken the liberty of adding, as a post-script, an abridged narrative of his last days compiled by his brother Badri Dattji. I am sure that with his guidance the final script would have become much more useful. It is hoped that the kindly reader will forgive the shortcomings.

In conclusion I would like to pay a tribute to the sincere and steadfast devotion of Bhai Hari Ramji to

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Mata Anandamayi. He passed through much stress and even misfortune but he never wavered in his unalloyed bhakti for Mataji. By Her grace, may he obtain salvation and his soul rest in peace.

Ghananand Pande

7, Park Lane,
Lucknow (U.P.)

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Śrī Śrī Mā Śaraṇam

INTRODUCTION

Much has already been written by a number of devotees about the *Līlā* of the Universal Divine Mother Sri Anandamayi Ma (Mataji). However, the main object of writing this book "*Mā Anandamayi Līlā*" is to enable *sādhakas* of any caste, creed, or religion to get authentic information about the life of the Divine Mother arranged in chronological order, and some idea of Her teaching. This book may also make them feel that in their efforts to achieve Self-realization by following the instructions of their respective Gurus, they would be helped by coming in contact with Mataji personally. It is hoped that this book will prove useful to them in attaining perfection in their *sādhana*. If I succeed even to a small degree in achieving the main object which prompted me to compile this book, I shall feel amply rewarded for attempting to record the facts as known to me during my close association with Mataji for the last thirty-six years.

Emotional bhakti does not help the *sādhaka* much in understanding the *Līlā* of the Creator, as the aspirant's ego blurs his intuitive knowledge (*para-buddhi*). Instead of following the path of absolute self-surrender to the Will of the Creator, he tries to

interfere in his own misguided way in the smooth working of God's *Lilā*. This causes much suffering, both mental and physical.

It was on March 17th, 1933 that, through the grace of late Jyotish Chandra Roy (Bhaiji), I had the privilege of Mataji's *darśana* for the first time at Raipur, Dehradun in an old dilapidated *dharamśālā* attached to a Siva temple, situated in the midst of a forest on top of a hillock. It has been my great good fortune to constantly receive Her divine grace (*Ahetuki Kripā*) ever since.

Bhaiji had given me timely warnings against the path of emotional bhakti and had repeatedly told me that, in order to achieve the goal of Self-realization or to be "In tune with the Infinite", an aspirant should try to devote every moment of his life to the remembrance of his *Iṣṭadeva* through *dhyāna*, *jaṭa* or *kīrtana* (meditation, repetition of a mantra, singing or recitation of the names of the Lord). Otherwise the working of the mind could not be properly harnessed or controlled, thus leading him astray and to inevitable failure in his efforts.

The events narrated in this book, a life sketch of the Divine Universal Mother since Her appearance in this world in 1896, are based on what I have personally seen, read, or heard from persons closely connected with Her, specially from Baba Bholanath

(Pitaji)*, Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy (Bhaiji) and Sri Gurupriya Devi (Didi).

I am now over 73 years old and have been blind for the last seven years. The facts narrated in this book are therefore all from my memory as I am unable to refer to any book or record. Though confined to bed with fever and cough for the last few months, I have dictated this book to a close relation and friend, Sri Dwarika Prasad Tripathi. Without his selfless devoted labour for about three months during the summer of 1969, for which I thank him sincerely, it would not have been possible for me to compile this book.

My sincerest thanks are also due to all other devotees of Mataji, who so kindly disclosed to me many important events and incidents connected with the Divine Life of Mataji.

Hari Ram Joshi

Note :

Bhai Hari Ramji breathed his last at Lucknow on April 13th, 1970. He had dictated the above introduction some time early in 1970.

Ghananand Pande

* Mataji's husband was called by Her and others "Bholanath" or "Pitaji".



श्री श्री मां सारानाम

CHAPTER I

Childhood and Marriage

May 1896 to February 1909)

Mata: the Divine Universal Mother, Sri Anandamavi Mā. was born on Jaistha Krishna Chaturthi, 19th Vaisakh, (April 30th, 1896) on Thursday night at about 3.30 A.M. in the remote border village of Kheora, District Tripura, East Bengal, in a distinguished Bhattacharya Brahmin family of Kashyap Gotra of village Vidyakut.

Her father, Sri Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya, had been brought up in the house of his maternal grandfather. He was a very pious, religious, God-fearing and noble soul, quite unconcerned about the fact that he had to pass the early period of his life in dire poverty. He was a great *bhakta* and a fine *kīrtana* singer, gifted with a sonorous voice. He engaged himself much in reciting *nāma kīrtana* to the accompaniment of his *ektāra*. Mataji's mother, Mokshada Sundari Devi, is a unique personality in every respect. She is a quiet, unassuming, pious and religious soul of a very high order. Although the family was extremely poor, she always remained contented. She

is still alive*, aged over 90 years. She embraced *sannyāsa* during the Kumbha Mela of 1939 at Hardwar. Her *sannyāsa* name is Swami Muktananda Giri. Ever since the death of her husband Didima† has almost constantly been living in the company of Mataji.

Before the appearance of Mataji in this form, Didima used to have visions of many gods and goddesses in waking as well as in dreams. Dada Mahashaya's* mother gave Mataji the name of Tirthavasini (one who lives in holy places), while Didima, called Her by the name of Nirmala Sundari† because Mataji had a very fair, shining complexion and was extremely beautiful. At the time of Her birth Mataji did not cry or utter any sound whatever.

Bhaiji (the late Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy) has recorded in his book "*Matri Darshan*" ("*Mother as Revealed to Me*") that in Dacca in 1925, when he enquired from Mataji who She was, She replied, that what She had been before Her appearance in Her present form, the same She was now and the same She would continue to be in future. She told Bhaiji that She was exactly what anyone conceived Her to be and also stated, in an unambiguous language,

* She took *Mahāsamādhi* soon after this was written, namely on August 9th, 1970.

† *Didima* Grandmother. Mataji's mother was addressed in this manner by all devotees.

* *Dada Mahashaya* Grandfather. Mataji's father was addressed in this way.

† *Nirmala* means 'immaculate' and *Sundari* 'beautiful'.

that Her present form was the visible embodiment (Vyākṛta Rūpa) of the pure aspirations (*śuddha bhāva*) of all genuine *sādhakas* including himself in this life as also in their previous lives. It is therefore the earnest request of the writer that seekers after Truth may read the events, big or small, narrated in this book with proper reverence, though the book itself might, both in its language and exposition of the events, be found defective in many respects.

* * *

On one occasion, an aged lady took mantra *dīkṣa* (initiation) from Didima. She was not very intelligent and forgot the details of *mudrās*, *nyāsa*, *āsanas* etc., that she was required to perform before starting her mantra *jaṇa*. She hesitated to consult Didima once again but casually mentioned her difficulty to little Nirmala who, being very young, could not possibly be expected to know anything about *mudrās*, *nyāsa*, *āsanas* etc. However, Mataji, though She had never seen anybody being initiated, gave all necessary detailed instructions to the old lady.

One day Mataji's grandmother, after finishing her *pūjā*, moved out of the *pūjā* room muttering some prayer indistinctly to herself. Mataji, who was standing nearby, repeated to Her grandmother the prayer that she had been muttering. On another occasion, Mataji said something to Her grandmother and immediately there was a remarkable transformation in the body of the old lady. On regaining conscious-

ness after a short while, she told Mataji that on hearing Her say something she had lost body consciousness. All this shows that Mataji, in Her own unassuming and unassertive way, already very early gave guidance to people without any indication of the supernatural powers She possessed.

Every year on the occasion of Durga Puja Mataji's maternal uncle, Sri Sarada Charan Vidyasagar, used to take Her to his village Sultanpur. His family immensely enjoyed Mataji's company. Sri Sarada Charan used to watch very carefully all the changes appearing in Mataji's body while *kīrtana* was going on in his house. At the age of $2\frac{1}{2}$ years Nirmala was taken by Her mother to the house of a neighbour where *Nāma Kīrtana* was in progress. Mataji was made to sit on the floor near Didima. After a short while Didima noticed that Mataji seemed drowsy as if in a trance. According to Mataji's own version of this incident expressed many years later, She had experienced Her oneness with the prevailing *bhāva* (mood) of the *kīrtana* singers.

When Mataji was about four years old, Her maternal uncle took Her and Didima to his home. Didima got seriously ill and was laid up for a long time. During the period of her illness Mataji never cared to go to see her and talk to her. This sort of unusual behaviour of little Nirmala surprised everyone. They used to say that it was very strange and uncommon that a small child should show absolutely no sign of attachment for Her ailing mother. One day, after

Didima's recovery, they sat together for their midday meal. Didima noticed that Mataji, totally unmindful of the food served before Her, was staring at the sky. Didima could not understand what was the matter with Nirmala. Mataji Herself years later disclosed that at that moment She had been watching Goddess Durga and Her attending Deities moving in the sky above, having just left the *Pūjā Mandap* of the neighbouring house of a devotee where Durga Puja had been performed.

In Mataji's childhood Dada Mahashaya would occasionally feed Her with meat and fish which she promptly vomited. Didima therefore took special care to see that Mataji was given only the purest kind of food. When Mataji was a small girl Kheora was once engulfed by a furious storm with the result that a part of the thatched roof of the hut in which Mataji's family were staying was blown off. Everybody in the house was stunned and depressed while Mataji laughed and danced clapping Her hands. She told Her mother in a cheerful voice that now they could see the sky with its beautiful twinkling stars without having to take the trouble of going out of the house. Apparently Mataji, being always in tune with Nature, could enjoy its vagaries in a like manner. It may be mentioned here in passing that Mataji has been observed to equally enjoy all seasons—excessive heat and cold, torrential rain and storms.

At the age of six, when Mataji was taken by Her

uncle Sri Sarada Charan to his home for Durga Puja, She went into a sort of trance and indistinctly started reciting some mantras. When questioned by Her uncle She remained absolutely silent. Sarada Charan was greatly impressed by Her supernatural behaviour and always served the *bhoga* in the *Kumārī Pūjā* first to Her.

At the age of seven, She one day went with the widowed aunt of Her grandmother and few others for *darśana* to the Siva temple of the nearby village Chanla. Mataji was left alone on the bank of the tank adjoining the temple while the rest of the party went to the village. While sitting on the bank of the tank, Mataji saw Lord Siva come out of the tank and again disappear. She also noticed that there was no Siva Linga inside the temple at the time of Her arrival there. On returning to Kheora Mataji narrated what She had seen while left alone on the bank of the tank. All the women who had gone to the Siva temple declared that the Linga had been in the temple when they arrived there and that the story related by Mataji was not correct. Later on, when enquiries were made from the people residing in that area, it came to light that the villagers had been hearing from their forefathers for centuries that the Siva Linga of the temple of Chanla was sometimes in the temple, sometimes in the tank, and sometimes moved about in the forests. Mataji's statement strangely confirmed the old belief of the people of Chanla.

After Mataji three sons were born to Her parents. The eldest one passed away at the age of about seven after a long illness. He had once been knocked down and injured his arm which became crooked in consequence. Many years later Mataji once visited Calcutta with Her parents and with Baba Bholanath. A professor belonging to a Vaidya family came for Mataji's *darśana* with his son, aged seven or eight, whose one arm was slightly twisted. Mataji told everyone present that Her first brother, who had died long ago with a crooked arm, had taken rebirth as the son of the Professor. Mataji's second brother lived only for about four years. The astrologers had predicted in both these cases that if the boys grew up, they would become supermen (*Mahā Puruṣas*). The third brother who was only 1½ months old when he died also had prominent signs of being a soul of a high order.

When Mataji was very young, Didima used to feel quite anxious about her daughter's future as she seemed extremely shy and simple by nature. Didima also feared that Nirmala would not be able to carry out the duties of a housewife efficiently, as She never took much interest in learning cooking, sewing, etc. However, Didima soon discovered that, when asked to prepare any delicious dish, her daughter would surpass any expert cook. Similarly, Didima found that after watching someone sew a garment only once Nirmala was able to accomplish this task perfectly herself. She could also compete with any

expert craftsman in preparing articles of cane, bamboo, etc. Didima therefore finally became confident that when married, Mataji would be able to discharge all the duties as a housewife in an efficient manner.

Mataji's little brothers were often ill and She helped Didima in the house. So She attended school only irregularly. Nevertheless, when questioned by the teacher in the classroom She was always prompt in answering correctly. On one occasion the Inspector of Schools came to Her class and put some questions to Her, which the class teacher thought She would not be able to answer correctly. He, therefore, standing behind the Inspector, wanted to help Her by signs. Mataji immediately protested telling the teacher that She needed no help. Soon after, Mataji never attended school anymore.

There is nothing in this universe which is unknown to Mataji. What was there to learn in a Primary School for Her who is the Fountain of all Knowledge? In later years, Mataji on numerous occasions in the presence of many devotees recited Vedic and Tantrik mantras and even Quran Sharif in Arabic. She has often said that whenever it is Her *kheyāla* to know anything about anybody, all the true facts appear before Her just like the unfolding of a film in a cinema show.

When Mataji had attained the age of twelve, Her father felt that he should arrange for Her marriage

and therefore left Kheora in search of a suitable bridegroom. He finally negotiated with the guardians of Sri Ramani Mohan Chakravarti for the marriage of his daughter with him. Sri Ramani Mohan's family was considered the most distinguished Brahmin family of Atpara, Vikrampur. Sri Sitanath Kushari, the brother-in-law of Ramani Mohan, accompanied Dada Mahashaya to Kheora to see Nirmala. The marriage was fixed and took place in the month of Magh (February, 1909) after Dada Mahashaya had performed the *Śrādha* of his mother who had died that very year. Mataji was 12 years and 10 months old.

After Mataji's marriage two more sisters and a brother were born in Her family. One sister, Hemlata, died in Varanasi on a house boat on the Ganges in 1949 after having undergone treatment for T.B. for about two years at the Bhowali Sanatorium. She was married and left five children. A few days before her death, Didima conferred *Atur Sannyāsa* on her. Hemlata's husband died several years later. Mataji's second sister Surabala passed away soon after her marriage. She too was a great soul and dearly loved Mataji. Mataji went to see her a couple of days before her death. Mataji's only brother alive, Sri J. N. Bhattacharya, ('Makhan Māma') who is married and has five children, now lives in Varanasi and works as the Office Superintendent of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha. He is an unassuming gentleman and a good *sādha*.

Śrī Śrī Mā Saraṇam

CHAPTER II

The Play of Sādhana

(February 1909 to May 1924.)

Immediately after Her marriage Mataji went back to Her parents and stayed with them for some time. After nearly a year, Her father took Her to the house of Ramani Mohan's eldest brother who was Station Master of Sripur, East Bengal Railway. Mataji remained there for four years. At the time of bidding farewell to Her daughter, Didima instructed Her implicitly to obey the orders of Her husband and the elders of his family. Ramani Mohan also asked Mataji to unquestioningly carry out the commands of all elder members of his family, especially his eldest brother Revati Mohan and his wife. During Her stay at Her brother-in-law's house, Mataji took the entire responsibility for carrying out all household duties including looking after the children. Thus She completely relieved Her sister-in-law from all housework. After some time Revati Mohan became seriously ill and was taken to Dacca for treatment. On his recovery he was transferred to Narundi and the whole family, including Mataji, shifted to that



Sri Muktananda Giri (Didima)
Mataji's mother

place. However, Revati Mohan did not remain there for long as he had a relapse of his old disease to which he ultimately succumbed in 1913. After his death his family moved to his parental home at Atpara. Mataji remained with them for about six months and then went to Her parents at Vidyakut for half a year.

In 1914 Mataji came to stay at Ashtagram with Bholanath and kept house for him. At night after finishing all Her work, when Pitaji had gone to sleep, She used to recite *Hari Nāma* and then frequently went into *samādhi*. During that time Gagan Rai, a good *kīrtana* singer visited Ashtagram and at Pitaji's request he came to their house to perform *kīrtana*. On that occasion when *kīrtana* was going on in the courtyard while Mataji was in the room inside, She went into *samādhi*. The following day Gagan Rai again visited Pitaji's house and found Mataji still in *samādhi*. She regained consciousness only after *Nāma Kīrtana* was recited before Her. However, Mataji's parents in Vidyakut got the news that She was suffering from hysteric fits. This caused them a lot of anxiety and they wrote to Pitaji enquiring about Her. Pitaji replied that the rumour was quite unfounded and that there was nothing to be worried about.

Mataji stayed with Pitaji at Ashtagram for one year and four months only. As she did not keep good health, it was arranged that Mataji should go to Vidyakut to Her parents for some time. After staying

in Vidyakut for two years and eight months, she went to Atpara to meet Her sister-in-law, the widow of Revati Mohan. *Kīrtana* and yogic *kriyās* that had come to Her spontaneously during Her stay at Ashtagram continued at Vidyakut as well, in a more intensive form in solitude. It is stated that at that time She used to cure the ailments of sick people around Her whenever She had the *kheyāla*.

In the meanwhile Bholanath had been transferred to Bajitpur. In 1918, after nine years of his marriage, he paid a visit to Vidyakut and took Mataji to Bajitpur, having at last made suitable arrangements for Her stay. At Bajitpur Pitaji was greatly upset at observing frequent changes in the *bhāva* of Mataji. In his anxiety he one day sought the advice of a Munsif who himself was a Vaishnavite and very fond of singing *Nāma Kīrtana*. The Munsif suggested to Pitaji that a *tulasi mālā* might be put round Mataji's neck, which would help Her in Her *sādhana*. When Pitaji told Mataji about the advice of the Munsif, Mataji asked him to enquire from him whether *japa* performed with a rosary was preferable to the rosary of the mind. On hearing this the Munsif declared that in Mataji's case a *tulasi mālā* was unnecessary. He assured Pitaji that there was no reason to feel worried because of what he had been observing in Mataji. In spite of this, Pitaji's anxiety increased.

Pitaji wanted to perform the annual Kālī Pūjā at Bajitpur and all necessary preparations were made.

He persuaded a *tantrik* friend of his who was a pleader to perform the *pūjā*. Although a goat sacrifice was an absolute necessity in the worship of his *tantrik* friend, he agreed to perform the *pūjā* without it. While the *pūjā* was going on, Mataji was all along standing outside in a corner of the big yard in front of the kitchen. When She noticed that Her friend Amiya, after preparing the *bhoga* and serving it on two stone plates, had fallen asleep inside the kitchen, Mataji went and sat down in front of the kitchen door so that in order to enter the kitchen one had to step over her body. While sitting there, she observed that a fair looking person with a glow all around him who wore a sacred thread, entered the kitchen in his subtle body and took three morsels from each of the two stone plates on which the *bhoga* had been served. Then he disappeared. At the close of the *pūjā*, a couple of hours after midnight, the *pūjārī* asked Pitaji to bring the *bhoga* to the *pūjā* room. Pitaji was accompanied by two devotees. All of a sudden a stray dog touched Pitaji's body in spite of the strenuous efforts of his companions to prevent it. Pitaji was very annoyed and leaving the two dishes with the *bhoga* under a mango tree nearby, he went to the adjoining tank to take a bath. Fresh *bhoga* was prepared and offered to Kali Ma.

When Pitaji took *prasāda* after the *pūjā*, Mataji related to him in detail what she had seen in the kitchen just before he had entered it in order to take the *bhoga* to the *pūjā* room. She asked him to

relate the incident to the *pūjārī*. The *pūjārī* thereupon asked Pitaji what he had done with that *bhoga*. It had in the meanwhile been thrown into the adjoining pond. The *pūjārī* remarked that the first *bhoga* had been the real *bhoga* and not the one prepared subsequently and offered to Kali Ma.

When people in Bajitpur came to know about the peculiar changes observed in Mataji's body during *Nāma Kīrtana* and about Her seeing a person in his subtle body enter the kitchen and eating the *bhoga*, they started making fun of Her. This, of course did not affect Mataji in the very least. Different forms of *samādhi* and the play of various *kriyās* on Her body that had been observed by Pitaji for the first time at Ashtagram, appeared in a more intensive form and more frequently during the period of Her stay of six years in Bajitpur.

Pitaji one day pointed out to Mataji that he belonged to a *Śakta* family and, as such, it was not proper for Her to recite *Hari nāma* or *Hari bol* like a *Vaiṣṇava*. Mataji kept quiet for some time and within herself composed a verse "*Jai Śiva Śankara, Bam Bam Hara Hara. Hare Murāre, Rama Rama Hare Hare*". She then asked Pitaji whether he approved of that new verse. Pitaji greatly liked it and Mataji started reciting it regularly.

On the day before *Śrāwan Pūrṇimā* in 1922, Pitaji suggested to Mataji to get Herself initiated as early as possible. Some time before, Pitaji's sister-in-law, the mother of his nephew Ashu, had written to Pitaji

to advise Mataji to take mantra *dīkṣa* from the family Guru, whose address was given in her letter. Pitaji wrote to him, inviting him to Bajitpur for giving initiation to Mataji. He also wrote to his sister-in-law but no reply was received from either of them. However, on August 3rd, 1922, during the full-moon night, Mataji initiated Herself. When Bholanath had gone to bed, She sat down in a particular posture in the North East corner of the room not far from Pitaji's bed and started reciting the newly composed verse. In Her *Mahābhāva*, She prepared a *havan vedi* (altar) in front of Her *āsana* and inscribed on the *vedi* a mantra which She later started reciting after performing *havan* with all the paraphernalia (*havan sāmagri*)* made available to Her from unknown sources. After pronouncing the mantra, she started *mantra japa* by moving her right hand thumb over the fingers of her right hand as prescribed in the *Sāstras*. Mataji had never before heard anything about the procedure to be followed during *mantra dīkṣa*, nor had She seen any person being initiated by a Guru. It is remarkable that whatever She did in that full-moon night on Her own initiative was all strictly in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the *Sāstras*.

One day Pitaji, in the company of a cousin of Mataji, the late Sri Nishikanta Bhattacharya, entered

* These were not physical.

Her room while she was sitting in meditation. Nishikanta was older than Mataji. He pressed Pitaji to enquire from Mataji as to what She was doing. Mataji all of a sudden lifted the veil from Her face and sternly looking at them asked in a firm voice, "Oh, what do you want to know?" Nishikanta, seeing Her stern look and Her glowing eyes, moved a little backward and then with folded hands enquired from Her in a respectful manner who She was. Mataji smilingly asked him whether he had been frightened on seeing Her in that *bhāva*. She also told them in an indistinctive tone that She was both Mahādeva and Mahādevi. Pitaji then asked Her what She was doing. "*Sandhyā* and *Nāma Japa*", was the reply. Pitaji remarked that She was not entitled to perform *sandhyā* and *pūjā* without having taken proper initiation from a Guru. Mataji thereupon declared that She had conferred *mantra dīkṣa* on Herself in the night of *Jhulan Pūrṇimā*.

Pitaji then asked Mataji when he himself should take *mantra dīkṣa* and who would initiate him. Mataji stated without any hesitation that he would be initiated on Wednesday, the 16th day of the month of Aग्रahayan and that She Herself would give him *mantra dīkṣa*. The Hindu calendar was then consulted and that particular day found to be very auspicious for taking initiation. Pitaji wanted to know the name of the particular *nakshatra* (planetary constellation) which would occur on that day. Mataji mentioned the name in Sanskrit. However,

the name given in the calendar did not tally with the one stated by Mataji. She thereupon directed them to go to the adjoining house of Janaki Guha and enquire from him about the correctness of the name of the *nakshatra*. Janaki Babu was an astrologer and a Sanskrit scholar. On being called by Pitaji, he confirmed that the name of the *nakshatra* given by Mataji in Sanskrit was correct. The name stated in the calendar was in Bengali.

Janaki Babu, taken aback by Mataji's appearance, asked Her who She was. Mataji replied with perfect composure: "*Pūrṇa Brahma Nārāyaṇa*". Janaki Babu thereupon, just to arouse Her temper, told Her that She was naughty. Mataji quietly said that She was what she had stated but that they were free to stick to their own views about Her. They then asked for a proof of Her being '*Pūrṇa Brahma Nārāyaṇa*'. Mataji immediately started repeating many mantras and stotras and there was a great change in Her *Mahā-bhāva* (demeanour) which frightened both of them. Janaki Guha and Nishikanta slipped away quietly while Pitaji was directed by Mataji to sit in front of Her. She then touched Pitaji's *Brahma Tālu* (centre on top of the head). Pitaji immediately pronounced 'Om' and went into a deep trance, remaining in that condition for a few hours. His nephew Ashu started crying and other members of the family became very worried when they saw that Pitaji was altogether unconscious. On hearing about this, Janakī Babu and Nishikanta returned and both prayed to Mataji

to restore Pitaji to his normal condition. Mataji, thereupon, again touched the top of his head. Pitaji at once regained normal consciousness and related that during those few hours, he had had no body consciousness and had been immersed in indescribable *ānandam*.

Some time later cholera in an epidemic form broke out in Bajitpur. Pitaji caught the disease. His condition became very critical and Mataji, in Her *kheyāla*, declared: "Let all the finger nails of my left hand be destroyed and may Pitaji recover!" Immediately some improvement was observed in Pitaji's condition and he regained his normal health within a short time. A couple of days later all the finger nails of Mataji's left hand started decaying and dropped off gradually.

During Her play of *sādhana* at Bajitpur, She would for a short while perform miracles like curing diseases and fulfilling earnest desires of people approaching Her. One day Pitaji brought one of his colleagues who had no children. His father was pressing him hard to go in for a second marriage, which he was not at all prepared to do. Pitaji persuaded his friend to fall at Mataji's feet and earnestly pray to Her to fulfil his desire. Some time later, it was reported to Mataji that Pitaji's friend had been blessed with a son.

After going through the play of various types of

sādhana including *nāma kīrtana*, *jaṇa*, *kriyās*, *nyāsa*, *śāsanas*, *samādhi*, etc., for a period of about four years of Her stay at Bajitpur, Mataji started observing *mouna* which continued for three years, one year and three months of which were spent at Bajitpur.

During this time She once visited Vidyakut to attend the wedding of Surabala, Her youngest sister, who was much attached to Her. However, Mataji indicated to Didima that Surabala's married life was not going to be happy. Not long after the wedding both Surabala and her husband developed serious illnesses. Surabala had some brain trouble which resulted in her becoming blind and deaf. During this period Didima was also confined to bed. When her condition became alarming, Mataji, one day looked at her full of compassion and from that moment Didima started recovering and soon was completely cured. A couple of months later Mataji had to shift to Dacca with Pitaji.

Śrī Śrī Mā Saranam

CHAPTER III

Līlā at Dacca (1924—1932)

Pitaji had come to Dacca, the most populous city of East Bengal, in search of a suitable post. He was unsuccessful for some time and, getting impatient, decided to return with Mataji to Atpara, his parental home. But Mataji advised him to wait for three more days. Happily, before the expiry of that period, Pitaji secured an appointment as Manager of the Shahbagh Gardens of the Nawab of Dacca.

Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy (Bhaiji), who was posted in Dacca at that time, heard about Mataji from some of his friends. He went for Mataji's *darśana* and met Her just at the time when She had completed a period of three years of silence. At his first meeting with Mataji in December 1924, Bhaiji asked Her if there was any chance for him to become successful in his search after Truth. Mataji replied that his hunger for the spiritual had not yet fully developed. This first meeting was very brief. Bhaiji had wished to pay his homage by touching Her lotus feet but he could not do so. He left the place disappointed, as if some mysterious force made him withdraw without touching Mataji's feet. He paid his second visit to



Sri Anandamayi Ma
(before leaving Bengal in 1932)

Shahbagh after sending through late Bhupendra Nath Das Gupta a copy of his book "Sādhana" on religion and religious practices, to be read out to Mataji. Mataji said to Bhupendra, "Ask the author to come here himself." Bhaiji thus went to Shahbagh one fine morning and read his book to Mataji, who praised his writing and advised him to aspire to complete purity of body and mind.

It has already been mentioned that Surabala, Mataji's younger sister, lost her vision completely during her illness and had also become deaf—having probably developed a tumour in her brain. When Mataji visited her a couple of days before her death in August 1924, She recited some mantras into the ears of Surabala. Surabala's face brightened up, indicating that she had been able to hear the mantras. Mataji then returned with Pitaji to Dacca and spent the night at Siddheshwari Kali temple where Mataji declared that Surabala would be released forthwith from her ailing mortal frame. The following day Dada Mahashaya and Didima came to Shahbagh and brought the news that Surabala had breathed her last the previous night at Jaidevpur.

While Mataji was observing *mouna*, She one day gave Pitaji to understand that She had seen Her father suffering from a serious attack of asthma. Pitaji requested Her to make sure that Dada Mahashaya would be completely cured. Usually Mataji carried out Pitaji's wishes. When Mataji had the *kheyāla* that Dada Mahashaya should get well, She felt as if She

had sent to Her ailing father something to be used by him during his illness. When he came to Shahbagh after his recovery, he related to Mataji that an unknown person had given him an amulet while he was bed-ridden and had told him to wear it, which he had done. Thus Dada Mahashaya was cured from his serious illness by Mataji's *kheyāla*.

One evening, Mataji suggested to Pitaji to accompany Her to the Kali Bari of Siddheshwari where *bhoga* was under preparation to be offered to the Goddess. Pitaji asked Mataji to offer *bhoga* to the deity of Siddheshwari Herself in Her own way, which She did. They stayed there for seven days. In the morning of the eight day while it was raining, Mataji and Pitaji went round the Kali Bari compound and then to a particular spot nearby. Mataji sat down and put Her hand on the ground by Her side. When Pitaji observed that Her whole arm up to the shoulder had gone down into the earth, he got frightened and pulled Her arm out. He then observed that warm, reddish water was rushing up from that hole. Pitaji and Mataji went back to Shahbagh, and on the third day Mataji directed Baul Babu to preserve that spot carefully. A Siva linga was installed there later.

On the occasion of a solar eclipse on *Makar-sankranti* (January 14th, 1926), *nāma kīrtana* was started at Shahbagh at 10 A.M. This was the first time that Mataji took part in *kīrtana* in the presence of many devotees. In Her *Mahābhāva*, unmindful

of Her body. She started moving Her head backwards so much that it touched Her body. Her hands were lifted towards the sky. For a short while She performed *Tandava Nritya* (Siva's dance), standing on one leg. Thereafter she lay down flat on the floor and Her whole body rolled over the open space just like a piece of cloth or a dry leaf blown away by a strong wind. People around Mataji tried to stop Her movement but failed in their attempts. When Mataji's body became still of its own accord and was lying on the floor, a very sweet melodious tune—'Hare Murāre Madhu Kaitabhāre, Gopāla Govinda Mukunda Shaure' came from Her lips. The *nāma kīrtana* was brought to an end when the solar eclipse was over. As the evening set in, the recitation of *kīrtana* again started in the hall. Pitaji asked Mataji to go there for the 'Hari loot' (distribution of *prasāda* sweets). Immediately on entering the hall, Mataji's body again assumed the same *bhāvas* and poses as during the *kīrtana* in the morning.

In the night, when the *nāma kīrtana* was over, Mataji took a little *prasāda*. The late Sashi Bhushan, a photographer of Chittagong, and the late Niranjana Roy, Assistant Income Tax Commissioner of Dacca, a close friend of Bhaiji, had Mataji's *darśana* for the first time on that day during Her *Mahābhāva*. Shashi Bhushan disclosed to Bhaiji that he had seen Mataji in the form of Goddess Durga while She was singing *kīrtana*. Similar was the experience of Niranjana Roy, who subsequently became an ardent devotee of

Mataji. He made strenuous efforts to build an Ashram for Mataji's devotees in Ramna, Dacca.

Gurupriya Devi once confided to Mataji that she was afraid that her father would soon fall seriously ill. A few days later Sasanka Mohan got a severe attack of fever and cough which continued for a long period. This made Gurupriya Devi very anxious, Mataji told her to cook rice and serve it to her father with a sufficient quantity of fresh curds. This was done and Sasanka Mohan was soon completely cured.

On another occasion a gentleman belonging to Comilla visited Shhabag with his wife and a daughter aged twelve, who had been suffering from paralysis for about four years. With great difficulty the ailing child was made to lie down on the floor in front of Mataji. Mataji asked her parents to bring her again on the following Thursday which they did. The girl was directed by Mataji to try and roll her body over the ground. Making a tremendous effort she carried out Mataji's instructions. Mataji had some pieces of supari nuts in her hand. She threw them a few feet away from the girl and told her to pick them up. Mataji then advised the parents to take the child back home. When they reached their place their daughter was put on a bed and started playing with some children. The next moment the paralysed girl heard the noise of a hackney carriage on the road below. She jumped out of bed and ran to the window to look at the carriage. From that day

onwards the child, who had been paralysed for four years, started walking and gradually regained her normal health.

During the period of Her so-called *sādhana* at Dacca, Mataji would not allow anyone to touch Her feet. If anybody insisted on doing so, She in Her *bhāva* would not be satisfied unless She Herself touched the feet of that person. One day Mataji went to the house of a devotee to attend *nāma kīrtana* and on that occasion a boy belonging to the family insisted on touching Mataji's lotus feet and thus payed homage to Her. Mataji then told Pitaji and others that anyone desiring to touch Her feet, could do so every month on that particular day at that same hour. Thereafter, for some time, people would use this opportunity of touching Mataji's feet once a month.

In 1925, after performing Durga Puja, the devotees, especially Pitaji, expressed their sincere desire before Mataji to perform *Kālī Pūjā* on *Dīpāwali* night. All arrangements were made. Pitaji pressed Mataji to perform the *pūjā* Herself. She reluctantly agreed to do so and sat in front of the image of Goddess Kali. In the course of the ritual She first put some flowers on Her own head and then started the worship of Kali. When the time of the goat sacrifice approached, Mataji took the goat on Her lap and passed Her hand over its limbs, repeating some mantras into its ear. She then made the goat stand

by Her side and, taking the sword into Her hand, placed it on Her own neck in such a manner that the devotees got frightened. Simultaneously She uttered sounds like the bleating of a goat at the time of being sacrificed. Everybody became extremely anxious. Mataji then directed Pitaji to take the goat outside for sacrifice. People were surprised to see that while the goat was sacrificed not a drop of blood fell to the ground from its body. Pitaji reported this to Mataji and under Her directions, a few drops of blood for being offered to Goddess Kali were squeezed out of the goat's body. Later Mataji told the devotees that while She had made the goat sit on Her lap She had taken its life-breath into Herself and there was no life left in the goat when it was taken out for sacrifice.

The following year (1926), the devotees suggested that Kāli Pūjā be once again performed on the occasion of the coming *Dīpāwali*. A few days before, while Mataji and Pitaji were going in a hackney carriage to the house of Gurupriya Devi's father, just when passing along the boundary wall of Government House, Mataji observed the Goddess Kali floating in the open sky about nine yards above the ground. At that moment Mataji lifted Her right arm. At Sasanka Mohan's place, when Mataji sat for *bhoga* after the *kīrtana*, the same vision appeared to Her once more. She lifted Her right arm as before in the carriage. Although Pitaji repeatedly asked Mataji why She had raised Her

arm twice, She did not reply at that time. On returning to Shahbagh She was again approached by the devotees to give Her approval for the performance of *Kāli Pūjā* two days later. At about 11 P.M. Mataji told Pitaji that since everyone was so eager about it, the *pūjā* should be celebrated. He, therefore, prepared a list of the articles required and requested Surendra Nath Banerji to go to Dacca and try to get a clay image of Goddess Kali of a particular size. Surendra Nath left for Dacca town and went to a shop where clay images of Kali were sold. The salesman had only one image left. It happened to be of exactly the size that Pitaji had indicated to Surendra Nath and so he got it properly painted. The following day the image was taken to Shahbagh and Mataji approved of it. It had just the same colour as the Kali that had a couple of days before appeared to Mataji twice. The only difference was that the figure seen by Mataji in Her *bhāva* was standing in the void while the statue bought for the *pūjā* was standing on Siva.

Kāli Pūjā was thus performed on *Dīpāwali* night to the entire satisfaction of all devotees. During this *pūjā*, at about midnight, Mataji ordered everybody to close their eyes. When they were permitted to open them again, they saw that a devotee who was a pleader was lying unconscious on the ground. When after a short while he regained consciousness, people enquired what had happened to him. He narrated that when against Her directions he had

been watching Mataji perform the pūjā, he felt as if he had an electric shock when Mataji ordered him in a loud voice to close his eyes. He observed an extremely bright halo of light all round Mataji's face and then lost consciousness and fell down.

The next morning before *visarjana* (immersion of the image) the usual fire sacrifice was performed, and after all the devotees had paid their final homage to the Goddess Kali, Nirranjan Roy's wife requested Mataji not to let the image be immersed but to retain it in the Ashram for regular daily worship. Mataji agreed to this and ordered suitable arrangements to be made for preserving the fire of the *havan* as well. The statue of Kali was shifted to the Ramna Ashram a couple of years later and to the great surprise of all, in spite of its not being conditioned for durability, no damage was caused to it when moved all that distance. Sasanka Mohan and Gurupriyā Didi were put in charge of performing daily *havan* to that perpetual fire as directed by Mataji. Mataji also gave detailed instructions how to relight the sacred fire in case it got extinguished through the negligence of the people in charge of it. After some time, when Mataji was away from Dacca (probably at Cox Bazar) She told Her companions that the sacred fire had just gone out. It later was confirmed by the persons in charge that it had actually got extinguished at that particular hour.

In May, 1932, on the occasion of Mataji's birthday celebrations, one lakh of oblations were poured into

this sacred fire. At Varanasi also one crore (ten millions) of offerings with *Gāyatṛī Mantra* were poured into this sacred fire by some brahmacharis within three years (from 1947—1950) under the guidance of Brahmachari Nepalda, who is now known as Narayana Swami. The sacred fire was for some years in Vindhyaçal and is now maintained in the Ashrams at Varanasi and Calcutta*.

On the occasion of *Mānsa Pūjā* performed at the house of Sasanka Mohan, a goat with a sharp dent in its ear was brought for sacrifice. Mataji enquired from the priest whether it was proper to offer a goat that had a cut mark on the ear. None could give a satisfactory reply. During the *pūjā*, Mataji was lying in *samādhi* on the first floor of Sasanka Mohan's house. While She was taken down the stairs, She lost Her balance and fell down, dislocating both her ankles. When She reached Shahbagh a cold water compress was applied to Her legs and She was made to lie in bed. This treatment did not prove at all effective. After a week or so She told Pitaji that She would not leave Her bed for seven days. On the expiry of this period it was noticed that She could move about freely. During those seven days She had not gone out even to attend to nature calls. This incident is very significant inasmuch as Mataji had given an indication that the sacrifice of a goat with a defective

* Since August 1971 it is also in Kalyanvan, Rajpur, Dehradun.

limb was not proper. Since the goat was sacrificed, some serious calamity would have befallen Sasanka Mohan, Her ardent devotee. Mataji in Her *kheyāla* took the penalty on Herself and saved Sasanka Mohan.

The late Virendra, the elder brother of Gurupriya Devi, once expressed his desire to Mataji to perform *Kālī Pūjā* of the particular image of Goddess Kali that had been retained at Shahbagh. At the close of that *pūjā*, when a goat was to be sacrificed, a finger of Virendra was injured by the sword, while the goat ran away to the open space in front of the temple. Mataji directed Virendra to offer to Goddess Kali his own blood that had been collected on a *bitwa* leaf. Mataji went outside and ordered that the goat should be painted with a particular colour and left free to roam in the open grounds. Pitaji protested, saying that the goat might fall a prey to the wolves living in the forests all around. Mataji did not reply. It was later observed that the goat moved all over the Shahbagh gardens in day time and during the night would go and rest in Mataji's room. This goat and a stray dog were two almost constant companions of Mataji while She was at Shahbagh. They used to sit on either side of Her, whenever *nāma kīrtana* was performed in Shahbagh. Both of them put their heads on Mataji's lap and listened to the singing. They also used to take part in the '*Hari loot*', like human devotees. Being questioned about this, Mataji

said that the goat had been a *sannyāsi* in its previous life.

Early in January 1927, Bhaiji's illness took a turn for the worse and he was practically confined to bed suffering from tuberculosis of both lungs. Bhaiji's friend Niranjan Roy used to inform Mataji almost daily about the patient's condition. He and Didi earnestly prayed to Mataji for Bhaiji's recovery. Niranjan one day told Mataji that Bhaiji was anxious to take *prasāda* (rice and dāl) of the *bhoga* offered to Her. Soon after, Mataji and Pitaji took some *prasāda* to Bhaiji's house, and Mataji made Bhaiji eat three morsels of the rice and dāl brought by Her, although he was not allowed to take solid food as he was spitting blood. On a particular evening while *kīrtana* was going on in Shahbagh, Mataji said to Pitaji that she saw blood on everybody's lips. Pitaji immediately went to see Bhaiji and found that he was vomiting blood. A couple of months later Mataji and Pitaji with many other devotees suddenly left for Hardwar to attend the *Kumbha Mela*. Sasanka Mohan and Didi were also among them. Mataji left them all at Hardwar and with Pitaji went to Rishikesh where they stayed in the *dharmśālā* of Kali Kamli Wala. On their return they received two telegrams from Dacca, one about the death of Sitanath Kushari and the other from Niranjan about the serious condition of Bhaiji. Pitaji tried to persuade Mataji to return to Dacca to see Bhaiji. However, Mataji

had no *kheyāla* to go there at once and left with Pitaji for Vrindaban where they stayed in the Ashram of Sant Baba on the other side of the Jamuna. When after some time they returned to Dacca, Mataji went to see Bhaiji in his new single-storied house close to Shahbagh. She enquired from him and his wife as to what had happened on the particular night when they had asked Niranjan to send Her a wire about Bhaiji's serious condition and whether they had noticed anything unusual. Bhaiji told Mataji that he had smelt a very strong perfume of fresh roses in his room. Bhaiji's wife who used to keep a diary, corroborated the correctness of the facts as related by Mataji. For Mataji there is nothing unknown, and whenever She has the *kheyāla*, She clearly sees what is happening at any place. It is the conviction of the writer that Mataji is all-pervading

One day Mataji and Pitaji went to see Bhaiji. Mataji had a bamboo stick in Her hand. On entering his room, She, in Her *bhāva*, gave a strong blow to the subtle form of the disease Bhaiji was suffering from and commanded it to leave. She also enquired from Bhaiji whether he had any special desire. He expressed that he wanted to have a full bath. At that time he used to vomit blood and was not allowed to leave his bed. The following day at about noon Mataji and Pitaji again came to Bhaiji's house and Mataji told him to get up and take a bath in the tank of the adjoining compound. Bhaiji did as he was told. After the bath he again lay down on his

bed. Members of Bhaiji's family became very worried lest Bhaiji's illness might get aggravated. But by Mataji's grace Bhaiji's health gradually improved. Within a year or so, after staying at Vindhychal and Chunar for a few months for a change of climate, he completely recovered from the fell disease. After Bhaiji had gone to Vindhychal and settled down in a hired house, Mataji and Pitaji also came there. Mataji advised Bhaiji to shift to Chunar for some time. At Chunar, on a particular day, Mataji asked him to accompany Her on Her morning walk over the Chunar hills. On that occasion, as narrated by Bhaiji, he was made to walk a distance of not less than five or six miles without any adverse effect on his health.

On his return to Dacca, in spite of the doctor's advice to retire and take rest, Mataji ordered Bhaiji to resume his duty. She and Pitaji went to Bhaiji's office and made him sit on his chair and start his work. Bhaiji thus continued in service for four more years. In early June 1932, when he had taken four months' leave in order to rest, Mataji abruptly decided to leave Dacca with Pitaji and Bhaiji. Without questioning Bhaiji accompanied Her. They came to Dehradun via Katihar, Gorakhpur and Lucknow reaching there on the morning of June 7th, 1932. The following morning they shifted to the *dharam-sālā* attached to the Śivalaya in the village of Raipur, situated at a distance of four miles from Dehradun.

customary manner. I paid my respectful homage by *sāṣṭāṅga ḍaṇḍawat praṇāma** and placed before Her as my humble offering a dozen sugarcanes which I had purchased at Raipur as I had forgotten to bring offerings from Dehradun. Bhaiji conveyed to Mataji in Bengali all he had heard from me about myself. Mataji did not talk to me directly on this occasion. She only smiled when I placed the sugarcanes before Her. Bhaiji gave me a few as *prasāda*.

At my first *darśana*, Mataji's enchanting and smiling face transformed my mind altogether and brought me the firm conviction that what I had believed to be impossible to be achieved by anyone, namely the state of '*sthita-prajñā*' (perfect sage) as described in Chapter II of the Bhagavad Gita, She actually was in that very exalted condition. This, I must say, was a great inspiration to me as I had no preconceived notions about Her spiritual attainments, not having heard from any quarter anything about Her *sādhana* and supernatural powers.

I returned to Dehradun late in the evening and related to my mother all about my visit to Raipur, assuring her that on the following Sunday I would try to take her for the *darśana* of the Great Saintly Lady. This rather surprised my mother as she was under the false impression that ever since the death of my wife I had, in all probability, developed atheistic views.

* *Sāṣṭāṅga ḍaṇḍawat praṇāma* Obeisance by full prostration.

The following Sunday, instead of taking my mother to Raipur, I suddenly decided to visit Mussoorie to find suitable agents for the disposal of the sugar that was being manufactured in the open pan sugar factory at village Badripur (Dehradun). On reaching Landour Bazar, Mussoorie at about 9 A.M., I sighted Bhaiji in front of the Mansaram Bank, coming from the opposite direction of Sanatana Dharma temple. After paying my respects to him, I told him that he should have informed me before going to Mussoorie as he had promised when I had met him at Raipur. Bhaiji thereupon remarked that the ways of the Divine Mother were quite peculiar. She had no preconceived plans for Her movements from one place to another. On leaving Raipur, She had ordered him to go straight to the Kali Bari *dharamśālā* at Dehradun and from there the following morning to Mussoorie on the way to Uttarkashi. It was because of this that no message about their move from Raipur to Mussoorie could be conveyed to me. He then took me to the Sanatana Dharma temple *dharamśālā* and introduced me to Pitaji who was standing at the gate. Pitaji embraced me and immediately took me to Mataji.

At this second meeting Mataji addressed me directly in Hindi. She first asked what had brought me to Mussoorie, Mataji then intimated to me that She and Her party were to leave the following morning for Uttarkashi. I was also told that at that moment they were going to the hill top of Landaur

Bazar (Depot), from where the whole Himalayan range including Badrinath could be seen. I decided to accompany them. Mataji then wanted to know what I would do with the sample bags of sugar I had brought to Mussoorie. I told Her that the sugar would go with them for their use on their way to Uttarkashi.

Before we left for the Depot I consulted Bhaiji about the coolies, pack-ponies and dandies required for their journey, and detailed instructions were given to my friend, Sri Jamna Datt Sanwal of the Mansaram Bank for making arrangements. Mataji was then bare-footed and so I tried to persuade Her through Bhaiji and Pitaji to use a dandi for visiting the hill top. Two dandies were also arranged for Pitaji and Bhaiji. Mataji at first declined to get into the dandi but Pitaji and Bhaiji finally persuaded Her to do so. On reaching the Depot I ordered from the Military Dairy two seers of fresh cow's milk and offered them to Mataji. Mataji sipped only a little of the boiled milk after considerable coaxing and the rest was distributed amongst all those sitting around Her. She then asked me to sing some songs. I obeyed though I was not a singer nor did I have a sweet voice. However it appeared to me that Mataji was listening with great interest. Late in the evening we came back to Sanatana Dharma temple and Sri Sanwal told me that he had made all necessary arrangements for the journey of Mataji and Her party to Uttarkashi. I then sought

Mataji's permission to leave for Dehradun on foot as the motor road would have already been closed. Mataji advised me to pass the night in Mussoorie but as I had not informed my mother, I decided, though reluctantly, to walk down to Dehradun at that late hour. This time I was promised that Mataji would certainly give me timely information on Her return from Uttarkashi. In the meantime I should be on the look-out for a suitable place for Her stay in Dehradun proper or nearabout.

It was in the first week of July 1933 that at about 10 A.M. the nephew of late Sri K. N. Tankha of Ananda Chawk knocked at the door of my office-room at my residence in the Phaltu Line. When I came out, he enquired from me if I was Hari Ram Joshi, for whom he had brought a letter from Bhaiji. He had met him and Mataji in the early morning at Tapkeshwar Mahadeva (Garhi) in the cave of the temple. Bhaiji informed me through this letter that Mataji and he had walked from Mussoorie to Tapkeshwar the previous day and that, if I wished, I could go to meet them there. I immediately requested a friend to lend me his car for a couple of hours, so that I might show Mataji a few places for Her future stay in Dehradun. On my way I picked up my friend, the late Sri Hansa Datt Tewari. Reaching Tapkeshwar we paid our homage at the lotus feet of Mataji as also of Bhaiji. I learnt that Pitaji and Brahmachari Kamlakanta had stayed back at Uttarkashi for further *sādhana*.

We were given *prasāda* by Bhaiji, consisting of one loaf of bajri with some gur (jaggary), which they had collected in their morning *bhikshā* (alms) out of which one loaf had been eaten by Mataji and Bhaiji. Then we all left Tapkeshwar for Nalapani Siva temple, which was under a rudraksha tree. After about an hour we motored to Dehradun. I showed them the Siva temple adjoining the Parade Ground and the General Post Office. Bhaiji then directed me to take Mataji to the Kali Bari *dharamsālā* as it was getting late. I requested Mataji to see one more place at Ananda Chawk that I had in view for Her stay, and Mataji agreed to go there.

Mataji decided to pass the night on the veranda of the Ananda Chawk temple, on one side of which was installed a Siva linga and on the other side a twin murti of Sri Radhakrishna. I brought from my house a few *chapatis* prepared by my mother with flour mixed with milk, some unsalted fried potatoes and some cow's milk for Mataji and Bhaiji. They partook only of a little of it and I was asked to take the rest back home. Thus in the first week of July 1933, Mataji and Bhaiji started living in a small room of the Ananda Chawk temple.

The temple belonged to the Bhargava family of Saharanpur, and Sri Kashi Narain Tankha had been entrusted with its management. I therefore approached him to obtain permission for Mataji and Bhaiji to stay in the room attached to the temple. The following morning the wife of Sri Dwarka Nath

Raina, pleader, who was residing in the small cottage next to the temple, and the wife of Sri Kashi Narain Tankha, who lived in Ananda Chawk in a bungalow nearby, came to the temple for their daily morning prayers. They met Mataji and Bhaji. Mataji's personality greatly attracted them and they both became Her ardent devotees. Kashi Narain's wife was given the name of 'Mahalakshmi' by Mataji. Within a few days of Mataji's arrival at Ananda Chawk, a number of persons belonging to that locality, mostly Kashmiris, started visiting Her almost daily. Their devotion to Mataji was of a very high order. Dwarka Bhai used to be addressed by Mataji as 'Gopalji'. One evening in October or November 1934, I brought for Mataji's *darśana* Sardar Balwant Singh, P.E.S., Assistant Registrar, Co-operative Societies, U.P. Meerut, who had come to Dehradun on his official tour. He was greatly impressed by Mataji's remarkable personality and the next morning took Mataji, Bhaji and myself in his car to Kalsi on the Chakrata Road along with his wife who had not seen Mataji before. Sardarji's wife later became one of Mataji's foremost devotees. Mataji named her 'Maharatan' (great jewel). Sardar Balwant Singh was a Sikh and distantly related to the family of the Maharaja of Kapurthala. His wife Maharatan was a religious soul. She and her five daughters started coming to Mataji as often as they could. Sardar Balwant Singh died in harness at Lucknow. Sister Maharatan passed away in 1967, constantly remembering Mataji. The second daughter

of Maharatan, Swaranlata has been living in Mataji's ashram for the last 22 years. She is an M.A., L.T., unmarried, and devotes much of her time to Mataji's service. For several years she was a teacher in the Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth at Varanasi.

At Bhajji's suggestion Mataji's devotees and admirers started reciting *Mā Nāma Kīrtana* at the Ananda Chowk temple every evening. It may be recalled here that on a good many occasions at Bajitpur and Dacca Mataji had in Her *Mahābhāva* recited Vedic mantras one after another in Sanskrit. A few of those mantras had been taken down by the devotees and were recited daily at fixed hours in the morning and evening. In 1931 Mataji had suggested to Bhajji to try and compose something else as the hymns were incomplete. He therefore one night composed a hymn for recitation at *kīrtana* hour, which was sung daily at the Ramna Ashram, Dacca. In this prayer, reproduced hereafter, Bhajji has lucidly described the most important phases of the *Mahābhāvas* of the Divine Universal Mother Anandamayī Ma:—

*Jai Hridaya vāsini śuddha sanātani Srī Ānandamayī
Mā,*

*Jai bhuvana ujwalā janani Nirmalā punya vistāriṇī
Mā.*

*Jai rāja rājeśwari swāhā swadhā Gourī praṇava
rūpinī Mā,*

*Jai soumyā soumyatarā satyā manoharā pūrṇa parāt-
parā Mā.*

Jai raviśaśi kundalā mahāvryom kuntalā viśva rūpinī
 Mā,
 Jai eiśwarya bhātimā mādhyura pratimā mahimā
 manditā Mā.
 Jai ramā manoramā śānti śāntā kśamā sarva devamayī
 Mā,
 Jai sukhadā varadā bhakati jñāṇadā keivalyadāyini
 Mā,
 Jai viśva prasavinī viśva pālinī viśva sanhāriṇī Mā.
 Jai bhakta prāṇa rūpā mūrtimatī kripā trilokātāriṇī
 Mā,
 Jai kārya kāraṇa bhūtā bhedā bhedā tītā parama
 devatā Mā,
 Jai vidyā vinodinī yogijana raṅjinī bhava bhaya bhaṅ-
 jinī Mā.
 Jai mantra bijātmikā Veda prakāśikā nikhila vyāpikā
 Mā,
 Jai saḡuṇā sarūpā nirḡuṇā nirūpā mahābhāvamayī
 Mā.
 Jai mugdha charāchāra ḡāhe nirāntara tava ḡuṇa
 mādhuṛī Mā,
 Morā mili prāṇe prāṇe praṇāmi Śrī Charaṇe, jai jai
 jai Mā'.

Translation

Glory to Thee, Sri Anandamayi Ma, eternal holy
 dweller of the heart!
 Thy lustre, Mother Nirmala, illumines the universe.
 Heavenly virtues radiate from Thee, O Mother.

- Queen of divine glory, Gouri, *swāhā*, *swadhā*, Om art Thou, O Mother.
- Divinely graceful, Thou art absolute Reality, supremely beautiful and perfect, O Mother.
- Sun and moon adorn Thy countenance, the boundless sky crowns Thy head, the whole universe is Thy glorious form, O Mother.
- The lustre of worldly riches art Thou, sweetness incarnate, radiant with splendour, O Mother.
- Thou art charming as Lakshmi is to Vishnu, Thou art peace, tranquility and mercy; all gods and goddesses emanate from Thee, O Mother.
- Grantor of happiness and benediction, bestower of love, wisdom and liberation art Thou, O Mother.
- Bringing forth the world, Thou it is who nurses and preserves and finally draws it back into Thyself.
- The very life of Thy devotees art Thou, Grace incarnate, Saviour of the three worlds, O Mother.
- Spell of all Knowledge, charmer of yogins; the terrors of life are dispelled by Thy presence, O Mother.
- The soul of all mantras art Thou, the revealer of the Vedas, pervading the whole universe, O Mother.
- Thou art with forms and qualities, yet also formless and beyond all description; aglow with love and bliss, O Mother.
- Thrilled by Thy touch, the entire universe, animate and inanimate, ever sings Thy praises, sweet Mother.
- Let us all unite and from our hearts offer obeisance at Thy holy feet; hail, and again hail to Thee, Mother.

The above recitation was now introduced in Ananda Chawk temple followed by *Mā Nāma Kīrtana*.

* * *

A couple of days after Mataji's return from Uttarakashi, I felt that sister Kamla Nehru should somehow be persuaded to go for Mataji's *darśana*, so that if impressed by the Divine Personality of Mataji, she might at an opportune time be able to bring Mahatma Gandhi in close contact with Her. I thought that if Mataji were properly approached by Gandhiji, he would by Her grace be successful in his non-violent struggle for the freedom of our country from foreign rule, and might establish *Rāmraj* and thus revive and preserve the old spiritual and cultural heritage of Bharat.

Kamlaji was then suffering from T.B. and at the advice of her doctors staying in Dehradun to recoup her health. While she was undergoing treatment, Jawaharlalji was in detention in the Dehradun jail along with Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. Both of them were suffering from one serious illness or the other. I suggested to sister Kamla Nehru that she might visit Mataji and secure Her blessings. Kamlaji was a devotee of Lord Krishna. She had received *mantra dīkṣa* from the late Swami Sardanandaji of the Ramkrishna Mission. She often used to go into trance during her *pūjā*. Kamlaji told me that due to certain domestic difficulties, it would not be possible for her to go for Mataji's *darśana*. While we were

thus conversing, Srimati Swaroop Rani, Jawaharlalji's mother entered the room and on hearing about Mataji from me expressed the desire to have Her *darśana*.

In the evening Srimati Swaroop Rani, Kamlaji, Indiraji, Shivadatt Upadhyaya and myself motored to the Ananda Chawk temple. To my great surprise, Kamlaji, after leaving her mother-in-law at the gate of the temple, drove away with her daughter Indira and with Upadhyaya without even paying homage to Mataji and went to see an English picture in Dehradun. I was sorely disappointed and therefore went to see Kamlaji again a day or two later. I pointed out to her that she had not acted wisely in turning away at the gate of the temple without seeing Mataji. Kamlaji explained to me that her husband did not like her to associate with *sādhus* and *sannyāsis* and for this reason she had not gone to see Mataji. I was surprised to hear this. However, after seriously reflecting for a short while, Kamlaji told me that she would that very evening go and visit Mataji with me. We thus went by car to the Ananda Chawk temple and paid due homage at Mataji's lotus feet. Kamlaji sat close to Her, touching Her body. A few minutes later, Kamlaji lay down on the floor having gone into a sort of trance. She got up again after a couple of minutes, but on touching Mataji she again went into that state. Mataji then asked me to keep a conveyance ready to take all of us to Chandbag in Dehradun Cantonment after Kamlaji would

regain consciousness. So we all motored to Chandbag. Mataji and Kamlaji sat on a large, green lawn, while Bhaiji and I were asked to remain at a distance and to join them only when called. After a short while we came back to the Ananda Chawk temple and Mataji ordered me to accompany Kamlaji to her residence and then to return to my home. Kamlaji invited me to have dinner with her. I politely refused, as I was then somewhat orthodox and would not take my meal without performing my *sandhya* (evening prayer). I however agreed to wait at Kamlaji's place till she had finished her dinner. She then expressed the desire to spend the night in the Ananda Chawk temple. I tried to dissuade Kamlaji from this but she paid no heed to my words and told me straight off that if I was not willing to accompany her she would go by herself. I therefore decided to take her to the temple once more. Fortunately we could get a tonga just a few steps ahead. When we reached the temple at about 11 P.M., Mataji and Bhaiji were sitting on the veranda, conversing. I entered the temple, leaving Kamlaji in the tonga. Mataji asked me what had brought me back at that late hour. I narrated to Her all that had happened at Kamlaji's residence. Mataji thereupon called Kamlaji and directed Bhaiji to spread Mataji's only blanket on the floor to serve as bedding for Kamlaji. But She asked Kamlaji not to visit Her again without the consent of her husband. Mataji then ordered me to go home and return in the

morning at about 5 A.M. to escort Kamlaji to her bungalow. This is how Kamlaji had her first *darśana* of Mataji in July 1933. Kamlaji felt so strongly attracted to Mataji's Divine Personality that she longed to be in constant touch with Her.

The following day Mataji and Bhaiji suddenly left for Lakshman Jhula, Rishikesh. Two days before *Krishna Janmastami*, Bhai Prakash Narain Tankha, a cousin of Kashinath, and myself took the afternoon train to Lakshman Jhula. When we reached Rishikesh in the evening, the weather became extremely stormy and it started raining. With great difficulty we found a porter to carry our luggage to the *dharamśālā* where Mataji was staying with Bhaiji. The night was dark and only due to occasional flashes of lightning from the thundering clouds we could get a glimpse of the road leading to Lakshman Jhula which is about four miles from Rishikesh. It was very risky to walk on that damaged road, running parallel to the Ganga in spate. With the help of a lantern carried by some villagers going ahead of us, we could negotiate one or two very dangerous spots. We reached our destination at about 9 P.M.

Mataji and Bhaiji were sitting in a room of the *dharamśālā*. We fell at Mataji's feet and with Her permission went for a bath to the nearby ghat. Mataji warned us to be very careful as the Ganga was in flood. Prakash Bhai first entered the river catching hold of my hand. In a second it seemed that he had slipped and was almost on the point of being carried

away by the strong current. In distress, I shouted Ma's name loudly, and with great difficulty I somehow managed to pull Prakash Bhai out of the water. Prakash Bhai was very bulky, weighing not less than about two and a half maunds, while I was lean and thin. My feeling is that it was only by Mataji's grace that both of us narrowly escaped death from drowning. When we returned to the *dharamśālā*, Mataji immediately asked us what had happened when we had our bath. She also told us that the previous night a young man had been washed away and drowned while bathing at that very spot. She congratulated both of us. After taking the *prasāda* given by Bhaiji, we passed the night in the adjoining room of the *dharamśālā*. In the morning we requested Mataji to go back to Dehradun by the afternoon train and join the *Krishna Janmastami* celebrations at Ananda Chawk. At that moment Mataji kept quiet but at about noon She suddenly called us and asked us to accompany Her to Rishikesh. No conveyance being available, Mataji had to walk all the way at a very quick pace in order to catch the 3 P.M. train to Dehradun.

The next day all the devotees of Mataji observed a fast. At Mataji's suggestion a *Gāyatrī Havan* was performed at the Ananda Chawk temple at a spot where a snake gliding into the open varanda had coiled itself on a tile, lifting its hood and all the time facing Mataji. A few minutes before Mataji had gone outside. On returning She had told Bhaiji that

She felt She had sat over a snake. Bhaiji did not believe this as he thought that if Mataji had actually sat over a snake, She would have certainly been bitten by it. When the snake entered the veranda and advanced towards Mataji, Bhaiji became very nervous. Mataji told him to sit still and watch the movements of the snake but not to kill it. The tile on which the snake had coiled itself was removed and on that spot a *havan kunda* and *vedi* were erected. *Gāyatrī Havan* was then performed. My father, aged over 65, also took part in it. After finishing the *havan* and *pūjā* of Lord Krishna, Mataji asked us to first serve *bhoga* to all *humārīs* below the age of nine and *batuks* (boys) of the same age. Mataji, to everyone's great surprise, sat before the dining plates of each boy and girl and asked each of them to put something in Her mouth from his or her plate. As the children were too timid to do so, Bhaiji took some *prasāda* from each plate and fed Mataji. This *līlā* of Mataji reminded us of the play of Lord Krishna with the Gopas and Gopis in Vrindaban thousands of years ago.

While *Krishna Janmastami* was celebrated in August 1933 at the Anand Chawk temple, sister Kamla Nehru was away from Dehradun, having gone to Hardwar and Rishikesh in search of Mataji. On her return to Dehradun, Kamlaji learnt about the performance of *havan* at Ananda Chawk in Mataji's presence. She was told that immediately after the *havan* Mataji had gone back to Hardwar or Rishi-

kesh. Kamlaji therefore followed Her to Hardwar and on meeting Mataji expressed her keen desire that another *havan* should be performed in Mataji's presence somewhere in Dehradun. Mataji returned with Kamlaji to Dehradun and arrangements were made to perform *havan* at the Durga Temple at Rajpur which is on the way to Mussoorie.

A special messenger was sent to the Vindhychal Ashram to bring the perpetual sacrificial fire from the *havan kunda* there. The fire had originally been lit by Mataji Herself in a supernatural way on the occasion of Kali Puja at Dacca in 1926. In Mataji's presence, Kamlaji performed *havan* at the Rajpur temple. After the completion of the fire sacrifice, Mataji ordered Bhaiji to keep that fire burning and offer every morning and evening ten oblations with *Gāyatrī* mantra. Bhaiji carried out Mataji's instructions for some time but later I requested Mataji to entrust this fire to a *pandit* who, not being in service, had considerable leisure to regularly offer the oblations as prescribed by Mataji and to keep the fire burning. Monthly contributions were given to the *pandit* for this purpose and for some time he carried out Mataji's instructions faithfully; but after a year or so his enthusiasm slackened and he neglected to take due precautions to keep the sacred fire burning, so it got extinguished.

My feeling is that Mataji had ordered the maintenance of the fire for the well-being of Kamlaji who was ailing. In summer 1934, Kamlaji came to Dehra-

dun from Allahabad to meet Pt. Jawaharlalji who was still in jail. Kamlaji sent me a telegram asking me to inform Mataji about her visit to Dehradun and to request Mataji to come down from Mussoorie as Kamlaji had not much spare time to go there. However, I did not convey her message to Mataji. When Kamlaji came to my house the day after her arrival, I told her that Mataji could not possibly be expected to regulate Her programme according to the convenience of Her devotees. Kamlaji thereupon decided to go to Mussoorie after meeting Pandit Jawaharlalji in jail and asked me to accompany her. As I did not agree to do so, she left alone for Mussoorie and passed the night with Mataji. On this particular occasion Mataji gave Kamlaji a gold bangle that had been offered to Mataji during the *pūjā* performed that night at Mussoorie by Sri Nirmal Chatterji, Retired Range Officer, the husband of Gurupriya Didi's elder sister.

The next morning when I came to Mussoorie I found Kamlaji preparing to move down to Dehradun on her way to Allahabad. I advised Kamlaji not to take the risk of staying in Allahabad during the month of June when it was extremely hot there, as she had not completely recovered from T.B. However, since there was none to look after the "Anand Bhawan", Panditji being in jail, Kamlaji went to Allahabad. My apprehension that she would again become bedridden if she did not stay in the cool climate of Mussoorie was unfortunately justified

and soon after reaching Allahabad she had to be shifted to Bhowali for treatment.

The husband of Gurupriya Didi's eldest sister who had performed Mataji's *pūjā* a few days before got a serious attack of colic and died in Mataji's presence after a short illness in spite of the best treatment available. With the help of a few local devotees the dead body was taken to the burning ghat for cremation by his wife and daughter. During the cremation, the fixed time for observing silence (8.45 P.M.) having struck, Didi's sister and her daughter stopped weeping. Mataji says that the faith (*niṣṭhā*) of every *sādhaka* must be of that type. The time set apart for the contemplation of God must under no circumstances be missed. If a *sādhaka* sticks to his resolution with complete regularity, he may hope to succeed in reaching his goal of Self-realization. Mataji assures all devotees that if She is informed of their respective fixed times for observing silence for fifteen minutes, She remembers them at that moment, whether physically present with them or not.

Mataji went to see Kamlaji at Bhowali on Her way from Kathgodam to Almora about the middle of October 1935. I met Mataji accidentally at Rani-khet while she was travelling in a motor-bus with Bhaiji. Bhaiji asked me whether I had received the telegram which he had sent to me the previous day from Dehradun before leaving for Almora. As I had left Almora at 10 A.M., I did not receive his message.

Mataji then wanted to know how I could meet them at Ranikhet? At that very moment a motor-bus came from Almora and the driver delivered to me the telegram that had reached Almora in my absence. I then accompanied Mataji to Almora. Arrangements for Mataji's and Bhaiji's stay had been made at the Bhadreshwar Mahadeo temple.

Mataji passed two nights on the open veranda of that temple. The proprietor, Sri Laxmi Datt Joshi, maternal uncle of Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant came the following morning for Mataji's *darśana*. Mataji, in Her *bhāva* told Laxmi Datt that She, "his little daughter", would beg of him to stay away from his family for the remaining part of his life in a small cottage which he should get constructed in front of his family temple Bhadreshwar Mahadeo. She also suggested that if he were unable to remain aloof from his family all the twenty-four hours, he might make use of his old residence "Central Lodge", hardly two furlongs from Bhadreshwar temple, and have his morning and evening meals there. He should spend the rest of his time in this lodge mostly in prayer, *japa* and meditation. Unfortunately Laxmi Dattji was unable to carry out Mataji's suggestions, with the result that he was not very happy about his environment during his last days. This shows that destiny does not change and persons getting directions for their highest good fail to carry out the advice given to them. Therefore it is not proper for

a *sādhaka* to blame anybody for his own shortcomings.

I saw Kamlaji again at Bhowali on our return with Mataji and Bhaiji from Almora to Dehradun. In the winter of the following year, Sri Feroz Gandhi who was then not yet married to Indiraji, came to Dehradun and requested Mataji to go to Allahabad to see Kamlaji who was shortly to proceed to Switzerland for treatment. But Mataji told him that She had no *kheyāla* to go to Allahabad. I suggested to Feroz Gandhi that if Kamlaji was keen to meet Mataji she might be brought to Dehradun, and that it was not necessary to send her to Switzerland for treatment as, if Mataji so wished, Kamlaji could be completely cured without any treatment. Feroz Gandhi did not appreciate my suggestion and went back disappointed. Kamlaji was sent abroad and expired there after some time. In the letters which she often wrote to Bhaiji from Switzerland she said that she was very fortunate in having visions of Mataji, sometimes in dreams and sometimes even in waking, though she was physically separated from Her by thousands of miles. Kamlaji thus lived only for about three years after her first meeting with Mataji in July 1933. The *pandit* who had been enjoined to keep the sacred fire burning uninterruptedly, neglected his duty as already stated. According to the writer's inference, Kamlaji did not survive after this sacred fire ceased to burn. It was

so destined and thus the *pandit* need not be blamed for his negligence.

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In early July 1933, when Mataji returned from Uttarkashi to Dehradun, my two sons Rama Krishna and Hari Mohan, aged eight and four years, were suffering from slow fever. In spite of the best treatment, both allopathic and homoeopathic, their temperature had persisted for about five months. In October 1933, when I went to Ananda Chawk for Mataji's *darśana*, She as usual at once enquired from me about the health of my sons. On hearing that their condition was just the same, She asked me to go back home and bring them to Her. On arriving again at the temple we all joined the evening *kīrtana* till about 9 P.M. When my sons and I were left alone with Mataji and Bhaiji after the *nāma kīrtana*, Mataji asked me whether I was not unduly attached to my sons and whether I would leave them in the temple in Her care. I agreed to do so without any hesitation. She then told Bhaiji to spread one of Her blankets on the tiled floor of the verandah for the boys to sleep on. On Her enquiry, Mataji was assured that after going to sleep the boys did not usually wake up till the next morning. Both my sons were asked by me to lie down in front of Mataji. I remained with Mataji for about an hour more. Mataji then went out for about half an hour. On coming back She asked me whether the boys had



Mataji, Hari Ram Joshi, Bhaiji Hansa Tewari,
Rama Krishna Joshi, Hari Mohan Joshi

gone to sleep and if so, I should go home and return early next morning at 4 A.M. to take them back. At that moment I observed that Rama, my elder son was changing sides. He had not actually gone to sleep. Mataji thereupon asked me to take him back home but to leave Hari Mohan there. I assured Mataji that Rama would not weep in my absence. I told him that I was going back home to bring his grandmother to the temple, leaving Hari Mohan in his care and that he had to console him in case he woke while I was away. Rama agreed and told Mataji that he would not cry in my absence. When I reached home at midnight, my mother and aunt became furious on learning that I had left the boys with Mataji. They refused to accompany me to the temple in the morning. Hansa Bhai and I, after taking our bath, reached Ananda Chawk just at 4 A.M. We found Mataji sitting in the same posture in which I had left Her at night, in front of Bhaiji, Rama and Hari Mohan who were all fast asleep on one and the same blanket. Mataji then told me that She too would lie down and that after sunrise Rama and Hari Mohan should recite *nāma kīrtana* for about fifteen minutes and then be taken home. My mother and aunt had followed us to the temple. When they saw that Mataji as well as Bhaiji and my two sons were resting while Hansa Bhai and I were performing our *sandhya*, they went back quietly. After sunrise we all recited *nāma kīrtana* for fifteen minutes and

then left. At the time of our departure Mataji told me not to take the temperature of my sons anymore.

I had to go to Roorkee on some official work after leaving Rama and Hari Mohan at home. On returning in the evening I went to Ananda Chawk for Mataji's *darśana*. Mataji related to me that my mother and aunt had come to see Her during the day. She had told them that if they were unduly attached to Hari Mohan and Rama they would have gone to the temple and taken them home at night. She also said that had I not gone to Roorkee She would have kept the boys with Her for at least two or three days. The boys were soon restored to their normal health. This in short is the story of the recovery of my two sons by the grace of the Divine Mother, without my ever asking for it.

Srī Srī Mū Saraṇam

CHAPTER V

Visits and Pilgrimages

(1934—1935)

While Mataji was staying in the Ananda Chawk temple during 1933, I had once suggested to Her that She might some time visit Solan, where my younger brother, Dr. Madan Mohan Joshi was the Chief Medical Officer in the State of Raja Durga Singh, Chief of Baghat. I told Mataji that Raja Durga Singh was a very religious and saintly person. Thus if She visited Solan, he and his wife would feel highly honoured and pleased. Mataji replied that She would go there when She had the *kheyāla*. One fine morning in March 1934, when during the previous night there had been heavy snowfall all over the Himalayan range, Mataji decided to go to Solan and stay there in the cave of the Salogra temple about three miles from Solan, just below the motor road leading from Solan to Simla. I tried to dissuade Her from visiting such a cold place while it was snowing on the hills around. But Mataji would not postpone Her trip and left by the night train with Bhaiji and Hansa Bhai. I sent a telegram to my brother, Dr.

Madan, informing him of Mataji's visit. Mataji motored from Kalka directly to Salogra without halting at Solan. Madan Bhai went there for Mataji's *darśana*. One day, Mataji suddenly came to Solan and went to see Sogi Baba, a saint of a very high order, aged over 100 years, who lived in Solan all naked, even during the winter, in front of his *dhuni* (sacred fire), covering his body with a rough blanket.

Raja Durga Singh and my brother were great devotees of Sogi Baba. Sogi Baba loved Raja Durga Singh immensely and therefore was constructing near the Raja's palace a Śiva temple and a *dharamśālā*. My brother told me that during Mataji's visit Sogi Baba had met Her for a short while in private. Mataji passed two or three nights more in the temple cave at Salogra and then went to Hardwar. A couple of months later I visited Solan. Along with my brother I went for Sogi Baba's *darśana* and paid my homage to him. Babaji asked me if I could recite the Rāmāyaṇa and directed me to read something from the Ayodhya Kanda. I then enquired from Babaji if he had met Mataji. Babaji became furious when I spoke of Anandamayi Ma as "Mataji." He objected to my calling Her 'Mataji' as it had been reported to him that She was travelling about after leaving Her husband in Uttarkashi. I told Sogi Babaji that his information was not correct since Mataji's husband was staying at Uttarkashi for *sādhana* out of his own choice. I also said to Babaji that he being a saint of a high order, should not have rebuked

me for being devoted to Mataji. Babaji then, in the presence of my younger brother, told me that if I ever harboured any evil thought about Mataji in my mind it was certain that I would have to suffer severe consequences. Madan Bhai who had taken *dikṣa* from Babaji did not like my arguing with Sogi Baba as he was afraid that Babaji might in his anger give me a beating with his iron tongs as he used to do on occasions when people reasoned or debated with him. However, I paid no attention to my brother's advice. Before leaving Babaji's place, I requested him to give me some *vibhūti* (ashes) from his fire, which he gladly did to the great surprise of my brother.

Madan Bhai was in the very good books of both Raja Durga Singh and his wife on account of his pious nature. He might subsequently have narrated to the Raja the details of my meeting with Sogi Baba. Sogi Baba within two years of his meeting Mataji left his mortal frame, taking *mahāsamādhi* within the premises of the Siva temple built by him at Solan. A couple of months after Sogi Baba's death, Mataji visited Solan for the second time in summer 1936 and stayed in the *dharamśālā* in front of the Siva temple.

Some time during the rainy season of 1934, Mataji was staying in the Sanatana Dharma temple at

Mussoorie. When I went there for Her *darśana*, Bhaiji related to me about the unparalleled devotion for Mataji of his friend Niranjan Roy. At that time Mataji was lying on the floor of the room covering Her whole body with a white wrapper. Bhaiji told me that some time towards the end of 1928 after his recovery from tuberculosis, Niranjan and he had gone together to Mataji at the Dacca Ashram. Niranjan had prayed to Mataji to fulfil his earnest desire for leaving his mortal frame as early as possible together with Bhaiji, so that they both might come back to this earth to serve Her as brahmacharis. Mataji did not say anything to Niranjan about his death. But She told Bhaiji that there was no need for him to be reborn in order to serve Her as a brahmachari as during his long illness he had actually collapsed, but She had had the *kheyāla* to bring him back to life again. In April 1929, Niranjan's wife had died after a protracted illness. Niranjan was terribly upset and unable to bear the separation from her. In his great agony he daily visited the cremation ground much against Mataji's advice. He soon developed a fatal disease and died on June 30th, 1929. On hearing all this from Bhaiji, I told him that I was under the impression that Niranjan had taken birth in my family as my second son Hari Mohan who was born on August 4th, 1929. At that moment Mataji uncovered Her face and enquired from Bhaiji what I had said about Niranjan's rebirth. When Bhaiji repeated to Her all he had heard from me, Mataji only

laughed. I told Her that my statement about the rebirth of Nirranjan was probably not correct, as the interval between the date of Nirranjan's death and the birth of my younger son was just a month and four days. Mataji did not definitely tell us whether I was right or not. She only pointed out that a soul could certainly find a new place for his rebirth, leaving the former mortal body in his subtle form (*sūkshma sharīra*) much in advance, without leaving it physically. To stay for nine months in the mother's womb is not binding on each and every soul. As such, though she was not prepared to divulge the actual secret, Nirranjan might possibly have come back as my second son, in spite of the fact that the interval between Nirranjan's death and Hari Mohan's birth was so short. About eight months after this incident on the *Sambatsar Pratipada*, the Hindu New Year's day of 1935, Mataji told me at the Ananda Chawk temple that if I wished I might, from that day, call Hari Mohan "Hari Nirranjan." Mataji further mentioned that Nirranjan had been known as Hari Charan Giri in his previous life and so in renaming my son Hari Mohan 'Hari Nirranjan' we would always be reminded of both Nirranjan and Hari Charan Giri. Some of Mataji's devotees have drawn the conclusion that the soul of Hari Mohan is identical with that of Nirranjan Roy. However, Mataji alone knows the truth. The theory of transmigration as enunciated by Mataji is not easy to understand; but it is clear that the soul before its complete union with

the *Paramātmā* has to pass through many births and rebirths in order to finally shake off the ego which alone is responsible for its bondage in this illusory world of coming and going.

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In 1934 Mataji and Bhaiji were staying in the temple attached to the Royal Military College at Garhi, Dehradun. The priest of the temple, Pandit Bala Datt Pande who was known to me, was also a religious instructor in that Academy. While Mataji stayed in the temple, the school was closed for the summer vacation. At that time I one day received a message from Dr. Miss Sarda Devi Sharma, In Charge of the Child Welfare and Maternity Centre, Dehradun, requesting me to see her at her residence if possible. I went there in the evening and met her, her father and Dr. Misquitta, the Health Officer of Dehradun. Dr. Sharma* questioned me about Mataji's supernatural powers and wanted to know whether Mataji could restore her peace of mind which she had completely lost. I assured her that if she could approach Mataji with full faith, there was no reason why she should not get complete peace of mind. Though she agreed to go to Mataji for Her *daršana*, I felt that she was not at all convinced that Mataji would be able to help her. The following afternoon, she and her father visited the Royal Military College temple with me. When we reached there at about

* Mataji named her Sevāji.

4 P.M., Mataji was taking rest in the Kirtan Hall, covering Her body and face with a white sheet. Bhaiji was sitting nearby. As Dr. Sharma had to attend a farewell party at Dehradun at 6 P.M., on the occasion of the transfer of Colonel Barbar, Civil Surgeon, she and her father were anxious to leave for Dehradun not later than 5.30 P.M. Mataji was all the time lying quite still and did not even uncover Her face. Dr. Sharma took me outside and asked if I could indicate to Her when Mataji would meet her. Her father suggested that she should return to Dehradun to join the party, but she decided not to go away without having Mataji's *daršana*. When we re-entered the hall at about 5.30 P.M., she to her great surprise found Mataji sitting and smiling. Bhaiji then introduced her to Mataji. We remained with Mataji till about 6.30 P.M. Dr. Sharma had of course missed the party. Mataji told her to come again alone the following day after finishing her hospital duties. During this second interview she had a private talk and narrated to Mataji her whole life story. Ever since then she became a regular visitor to Mataji.

One evening a few months later, she came to the Ananda Chawk temple when I happened to be there. A lady devotee of Mataji from Rishikesh who was very bulky had also come. Mataji had given her the name of 'Barik Mai' (slender mother). Lakshmiji, the wife of Kashi Bhai, was sitting there as well. After the evening prayers all the devotees dispersed

except Sevaji (Dr. Sharma), Lakshmiji, Barik Mai, Bhaiji and myself. It was about 9 P.M. when the *kīrtana* ended. Lakshmiji and Sevaji then started to persuade Barik Mai to sing one or two devotional songs to Mataji. But Barik Mai felt shy and Sevaji and Lakshmiji kept on trying to persuade her. I took them to task for unnecessarily wasting our time in the presence of Mataji at that late hour. Sevaji felt offended by my criticism and started weeping. Mataji thereupon told me that I should not have rebuked Sevaji as she was a younger sister and my remarks had hurt her feelings. I blurted out that if my statement made in good faith was not appreciated, I would in future take care not to express my views, and if necessary, might even stop going to the Ananda Chawk temple. The atmosphere at that moment became somewhat tense. I requested Mataji to permit me to go home. But Mataji directed me to stay on a little longer. After about an hour She asked Sevaji to take me in her tonga and leave me at my house before going to her residence. Mataji also asked Sevaji, Lakshmiji and myself to be present in the Ananda Chawk temple at 5 A.M. the following morning after performing our ablutions and prayers.

Early next morning Sevaji picked me up from my house in her tonga as desired by Mataji, and we both went to Ananda Chawk at 5 A.M. Lakshmiji had also arrived. Mataji then asked Sevaji, Lakshmiji and myself to observe a fast that day and in the evening to perform *Kumārī Pūjā* of three girls aged below



Kumari Puja at Ananda Chawk

nine years, assigning one to each of us. After the *pūjā* group photos were taken of each girl separately with Mataji, Bhaiji and all three of us. Mataji then told Sevaji that from that moment Sri Narsingh Prasad Chatterji, who was standing nearby, should be regarded by her as her *dharmaputra* (spiritual son). Sri N. P. Chatterji had passed his M.A. in English at the Allahabad University. He had lost his mother when he was hardly a few months old and had been brought up by the sister of his father, Sri Manmatha Chatterji who did not remarry after the death of his wife. Manmatha Babu was also a great devotee of Mataji. He had retired as an officer in the Survey of India Department, Dehradun. Narsingh Prasad Chatterji subsequently became a Deputy Collector after the first Congress ministry had come into power in the U.P. in 1937.

Sevaji was initiated by Bhaiji and at his request Mataji agreed to guide her in her *sādhana*. Sevaji made up her mind not to go in for marriage and to lead a religious life in the manner indicated to her by Mataji. Bhaiji suggested to me that a bungalow might be purchased for Sevaji so that, after the payment of the loan that she might have to raise for this purpose, she might be able to resign service and devote her time mostly to *sādhana*. A bungalow was therefore purchased for her on the East Canal Road with sufficient land attached to it for the erection of another bungalow. The loan was repaid by Sevaji within a couple of years. A new bungalow

and a small cottage were subsequently constructed on the vacant land by Sevaji. She resigned service more than ten years back and is now living in the small cottage and maintaining herself from the rent she gets for the new bungalow. The old bungalow was given in dowry to her younger sister. By Mataji's grace, Sevaji in her old age of over sixty-five years, is happily leading a quiet religious life in her cottage, passing most of her time in meditation, *japa*, and the study of scriptures. My personal feeling is that she has reached a very high stage of *sādhana*.

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Pitaji who had been practising meditation in Uttar Kashi ever since the middle of 1933, attended to by Brahmachari Kamalakanta, wrote to Bhaiji about the construction of a temple of Kali Mata at Uttar Kashi. Sri Chakradhar Juyal, the then Diwan of Tehri State, sent a donation of Rs. 500/- which Bhaiji passed on to me with the request to make necessary arrangements for the construction of a Kali temple at Uttar Kashi within the shortest possible time. I approached Th. Kishan Singh, M.L.A. Advocate of Dehradun, who belonged to the famous Seth Thakur family of Dhanari and requested him to write to his elder brother at Dhanari to help Pitaji at Uttar Kashi in this matter. He was given the Rs. 500/- received from Sri Juyal. The rest of the money spent for the construction of the temple was donated by Th. Kishan Singh's elder brother. The temple was thus

completed and its consecration was done in Mataji's presence and under Her direction in August 1935. She and Bhaiji went to Uttar Kashi, accompanied by a party of over two dozen devotees from Dehradun and Bengal. After the consecration Mataji returned to Dehradun, while Pitaji continued his *sādhana* at Uttar Kashi for another year.

In early 1935, Choudhri Sher Singh of Doonga, Dehradun district, who had become a devotee of Mataji, invited Her to Doonga. Bhaiji liked the place very much. Mataji stayed at Doonga for about a week in a tent and during the year 1935 visited Doonga three or four times for short periods. Later Choudhri Sher Singh built a small Ashram for Mataji there. For the opening ceremony he invited all the devotees of Mataji of Dehradun. Mataji stayed there several times. On one occasion Mahamahopadhyaya, Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj was taken by Mataji to that remote Ashram. I also accompanied Mataji. After obtaining Her permission, I met Dr. Kavirajji in private and asked him what was his opinion about Mataji. He tried to evade a reply but told me that my conviction that Mataji was '*Pūrṇa Brahma*' might be correct. He is an eminent philosopher and a scholar of great fame and the author of many authoritative books on *Tantra Sāstra*. His latest publication on *Tantra*, which he has dedicated to Mataji, is considered to be an authentic document on that subject. Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj was the disciple of Swami Visuddhananda ("Gandha Baba"). It

was only by Mataji's grace that the Mahamahopadhyaya survived when in 1961 he was operated upon in Bombay for cancer of the rectum. Mataji Herself took him there, and then to Poona to convalesce. In May 1964, Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj accompanied Mataji to Almora to attend Her birthday celebrations. He remained at Almora with Mataji for about two months and gave learned discourses to deserving devotees in private. He is now staying in Mataji's Varanasi Ashram. Until recently he wrote articles on religious subjects, specially commentaries on the philosophy of Mataji, for "Ananda Vārtā", a quarterly magazine published by the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Varanasi.

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I had repeatedly suggested to Mataji to bless us by the construction of an Ashram in Dehradun. But Mataji told us not to worry about Ashram buildings as the real Ashram or temple should be located within everyone's heart. However, when I visited Mataji in Ananda Chawk temple on *Sambatsar Chaitra Sukla Pratipada*, the Hindu New Year's day in March 1935, Bhaiji told me to make serious efforts for establishing an Ashram in Dehradun for Mataji, which I had been eager to do for so long. I straight away went to see Ch. Shamsheer Singh, the proprietor of a medical hall who lived close to my house, and suggested to him to donate his bungalow at Kishen-

pur with the adjoining eleven bighas of land for an Ashram for Mataji. He had been confined to bed for a long time after a stroke of paralysis. It was therefore advisable to do this noble charitable work to perpetuate his memory after his death. Ch. Shamsher Singh appreciated this proposal and the same evening informed me that he had decided to endow his property at Kishenpur for that noble cause. He suggested that Mataji be persuaded to visit his bungalow at Kishenpur the following evening at 5 P.M. when he too would be present for Her *daršana* and thereafter he would take the necessary steps to legalise the endowment. This was arranged, but Mataji did not enter the house but sat outside in the garden. She said that if She had the *kheyāla* she would enter the bungalow at Her next visit. The deed of endowment of the property was drafted by Sri Chatterji, Bar-at-law, and registered that very day in the office of the Sub-Registrar at Dehradun, with Ch. Shamsher Singh, Bhaiji, and Captain Mitra as its first trustees. In spite of the insistence of Ch. Shamsher Singh, my name was not included among the first trustees as Mataji did not agree to this.

About a month later, when we were just thinking of celebrating Mataji's birthday at this new place, I received a long letter under registered cover from Sri Talati, Bar-at-law, warning me not to meet his client Ch. Shamsher Singh, who had been forced by me to sign an endowment deed of his property at

Kishenpur, while he was laid up in bed in an almost unconscious condition on account of paralysis. Sri Talati also stated that Mataji was not at all interested in the said property, as was apparent from the fact that She would not enter the bungalow even after the execution and registration of the deed of endowment. He further mentioned that Mataji, being illiterate, could not be interested in establishing any educational institution. For the reasons stated above, his client had been obliged to revoke the deed of endowment and had got the deed of revocation duly registered. His client had endowed the aforesaid property in favour of the well-known Ramakrishna Mission and the rest of his property in favour of Jat Mahasava.

The above letter surprised and shocked me immensely as we were planning to establish a *Vidya Peeth* for the training of brahmacharis in that bungalow after celebrating Mataji's 39th birthday there during the coming May. Mataji, always full of mercy, tried to console me and explained that it was for that very reason that She had not allowed Bhaiji to include my name among the first trustees. She also encouraged me to have an Ashram built in another place out of my own efforts. Bhaiji supported this suggestion. Half an acre of land was thus purchased at Kishenpur adjoining the bungalow of Ch. Shamsher Singh. Mataji's birthday was celebrated on this new plot of land in May, 1935.

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Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya used to visit Dehradun during the summer months almost every year for a change of climate. He usually stayed at Dalanwala in the house of Sri Hari Datt Sastri of Tehri who was a great scholar of *Tantra Śāstra*. Pt. Malviya was a close friend of my father's elder brother, the late Pt. Durga Datt Joshi, District Judge. I used to meet Pt. Malviyaji very often during the period from 1935 to 1937, whenever he visited Dehradun. I drew his attention to the fact of Mataji's presence in Dehradun and related to him how I myself had come in contact with Her. I suggested to him that he might also see Her. Malviyaji along with Sastriji went for Mataji's *darśana* and was much attracted by Her Divine Personality. In 1936, I gave him a copy of the collection of Mataji's sayings '*Sad Vani*' by Bhaiji, and a photograph of Mataji standing on the sea-shore at Cox Bazar, which had been taken during the period of Her three years' silence. Malviyaji kept the book and the photograph in his attache case which used to be placed on his bed-side table close to his head. Whenever I had the occasion to meet Malviyaji at Varanasi during his illness, he always would make enquiries about Mataji. On one occasion Pt. Malviyaji persuaded Mataji to visit the spot within the compound of the Banaras Hindu University where now a large temple has been constructed. Recitation of *nāma kīrtana* was also arranged on the occasion of Mataji's visit.

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In early July 1935, Mataji and Bhaiji left for Tarapith at Baijnath near Yogendranagar and stayed there in the Ashram of Swami Tarananda, an ideal devotee of Tara Ma. From there Mataji returned to Dehradun from where she proceeded to Uttar Kashi in August 1935 for the consecration of the Kali temple. During the Durga Puja She stayed in Ananda Chawk. In the middle of October, after the Dusserah, She and Bhaiji paid a short visit to Almora. On Her way Mataji met Kamlaji who was staying in a hired bungalow at Bhowali for treatment. I have already recorded that quite accidentally I met Mataji at Rani-khet, when She was on Her way to Almora. On Her return journey, Mataji again saw Kamlaji.

Soon after Mataji reached Dehradun, I suggested to Bhaiji that if Mataji approved She might visit Etawah where a friend of mine, Dr. Pitambar Pant, Civil Surgeon, was very keen to have Her *darśana*. Lakshmiji also had recently requested Mataji to go to Fyzabad and Ayodhya where her sister and brother-in-law were living. Sevaji's younger sister Dr. Rama, was posted in Sultanpur and had repeatedly begged of Mataji to grace that place with Her presence. It was therefore arranged that Mataji, Bhaiji and all of us, including Lakshmiji, Sevaji and sister Bhramara, a devotee from Calcutta, would travel to Etawah, Fyzabad, Ayodhya, Sultanpur and Varanasi.

Dr. Pitambar Pant had made arrangements for our stay in his bungalow at Etawah while Mataji Herself occupied a tent pitched in his compound.

Dr. Pant was deeply impressed by Mataji's Divine Personality and subsequently became a great devotee. He told Mataji that after his retirement a year or so later he wanted to stay mostly in Hardwar, where he had a very good three storied house on the bank of the Ganga near Bhola Giri Ashram. We went to Fyzabad where Mataji put up in a *dharamśālā*. After visiting Ayodhya, Mataji went to Sultanpur and Kurwar for a day and then returned to Fyzabad. Dr. Rama also accompanied Mataji. As Dr. Rama had to catch the 5 A.M. train to Sultanpur the next morning, Mataji directed me to see her off at the station. After her departure I returned to the *dharamśālā* at about 6 A.M. and found Bhaiji sitting on the veranda adjoining Mataji's room. I learnt from him that after Dr. Rama had left, Mataji had asked everybody to vacate Her room as She wished to be alone. Everyone had obeyed excepting Bhramara. When Bhramara would not leave the room in spite of Mataji's insistence, Mataji had started weeping bitterly. Her weeping continued for full twenty-four hours. Mataji's body became ice-cold and Her face bluish in colour. All of us and the devotees of Fyzabad who had assembled felt extremely worried. It was observed that Mataji's breathing stopped very often for intervals of five to ten minutes. Bhaiji explained to us that Mataji was in Her *Mahābhāva* state. On several previous occasions She had told Bhramara that She would one day demonstrate to her how to weep. Bhramara had an obstinate nature

and often used to shed tears before Mataji for petty reasons. The following morning Mataji stopped crying and after a couple of hours She started speaking to Bhaiji in a very low voice, uttering hardly one or two words at a time. Mataji had thus to stay at Fyzabad for two more days and then we all left for Varanasi where we put up in a *dharamśālā* close to Dasaswamedh Ghat.

Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj came for Mataji's *darśana*. It was arranged that Mataji would visit the Ashram of his Guru, Sri Vishuddhanandaji, the following morning. Mataji, Bhaiji and all of us who had come from Dehradun, visited the Swamiji who although very aged, had a magnetic and attractive personality. Mataji sat on an *āsana* on the floor and made Swamiji sit in an arm-chair. She requested him to show some of his miracles to all of us. Swamiji had a number of magnifying glasses. He took one of them and asked us to take out our handkerchiefs, on each of which he concentrated the rays of the sun at different angles, after enquiring which particular perfume each one of us would like our handkerchiefs to be scented with. It was really surprising that by the concentration of the rays through the magnifying glass, each one of us got the scent of the very perfume we had asked for. Mataji then requested him to show some other miracle. Swamiji plucked a few leaves from a croton plant in a flower pot, which were then crushed in a mortar and a pill was made on which he concentrated the rays of the sun through a magnify-

ing glass at a particular angle. Within a couple of minutes the pill of half an inch in diameter was converted into a crystal bead. Everybody in the room was greatly surprised to see this transformation of a vegetable product into a solid glass ball. Swamiji was a great yogi, having stayed in Tibet for a number of years. He declared that he could teach solar science to any person who would care to stay with him. After spending about two hours in that Ashram, Mataji returned to the *dharamśālā*. Soon after meeting Mataji, Swami Vishuddhananda died in Varanasi at a very advanced age.

Mataji and all of us returned to Dehradun some time in the first week of January 1936. In March Pitaji joined Mataji after completing his *sādhana* at Uttar Kashi. Soon after, Mataji, Pitaji, Bhaiji and some of us went to Delhi. Sri Chintamani Pant had been transferred from Simla to, Delhi in October, 1935. He made arrangements for Mataji's stay by pitching tents in his compound in Hailey Road. Uncle Chintamani also arranged for the visit of Mataji and Her party to Kurukshetra in two motor cars. There we all stayed in the *dharamśālā* attached to the Gita Mandir. Mataji, in Her *bhāva* asked us if anyone of us could tell who had been who at the time of the great Mahābhārata War between the Kauravas and Pandavas, indicating perhaps indirectly that all of us who had come with Mataji to Kurukshetra this time had also been present when the great battle was fought. We entreated Mataji to dis-

close to us the real facts as we were incapable of knowing anything about them. Mataji only smiled and told us that She had no *kheyāla* to say anything more on the subject. We returned to Delhi and after visiting the famous temple at Kalkaji, Mataji proceeded to Dehradun with Her party.

Śrī Śrī Mā Saraṇam

CHAPTER VI

First Ashram at Dehradun—Pilgrimage to Kailash—
Bhaiji's *Sannyāsa* and Death.

(1936—1937)

Thanks to the strenuous efforts of Hansa Bhai, the construction of the Ashram buildings at Kishenpur were completed before the celebration of Mataji's fortieth birthday which commenced on May 2nd, 1936. A large number of devotees from all over India, specially from East and West Bengal, came to Dehradun to attend the functions. Bhaiji told me that in future Dehradun should be the centre for all the activities connected with Mataji's mission of Universal Brotherhood, Peace and Love as contemplated by him. After the birthday celebrations, Mataji, Pitaji, Bhaiji and a good number of devotees including Hansa Bhai and myself went to Solan and then we visited Simla some time in June 1936. Sri Chintamani Pant, Executive Engineer, Central P.W.D., Simla, made arrangements for Mataji's stay in the Gorkha Dharamaśālā at Kaithu, as Mataji would not stay in the house of any family. In the Kirtan Hall of Kali Bari of Simla, recitation of *Akhaṇḍa Nāma*

Kīrtana for twelve hours was arranged and during this *kīrtana*, Mataji in Her *mahābhāva* started reciting Vedic mantras. Mataji remained in Simla for several days and on Her way down She stopped for a few days at the Sanskrit Pathsala building at Solan, where Raja Durga Singh had arranged for Her accommodation. From there we all returned to Dehradun. When Mataji left Dehradun again, Bhaiji was directed by Her to stay in Solan in the guest-house of Raja Durga Singh who asked Dr. Madan Mohan to look after Bhaiji's comforts. Raja Durga Singh himself used to spend a couple of hours every evening with Bhaiji.

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On reaching Calcutta at the end of July 1936, Mataji suddenly decided to move about all alone without disclosing where She would go, and asked Pitaji to remain in Calcutta. On August 3rd, She left for an unknown destination with only one companion, an old lady, Virajmohini who was a disciple of Pitaji. Mataji travelled all over the country for nearly five months without giving any clue of Her whereabouts to Pitaji or anyone else. During Her travels in seclusion, Mataji took no money with Her and kept only two dhotis. The important places visited by Her were Puri, Varanasi, Allahabad, Agra, Mathura, Etawah, Nainital.

One day in August 1936, at the time when Mataji was moving about incognito with Virajmohini, Bhai Talattuf Hussain of Dehradun, an old man of over

sixty, who had retired as an officer from the service of the Survey of India, came to my house. Though a staunch Muslim, reciting *Namaz* five times daily, he had been visiting Mataji and was known to Her. Earlier in life he had travelled to foreign countries, specially Mecca and Medina. Bhai Talattuf Hussain confided to me that he had long ago heard about the presence of Mataji in India from an Arab Faquir in Mecca. The Faquir had told him that on his return to India he would, at an opportune time, come in contact with a woman saint of a very high order who would give him necessary instructions for completing his *sādhana*. Bhai Talattuf took me to his residence at Karanpur and introduced me to his wife and daughter although they observed strict *purdah*. He wanted to know what I had seen in Mataji that attracted me so much to Her. I replied that at the very first sight of Her at Raipur in March 1933, Her Divine Personality appeared to me most fascinating and enchanting and that I felt as if I was having *darśana* of a *Stithaprajña* as defined in Chapter II of the *Bhagavad Gita*. I had until then thought it impossible for anyone to achieve that state. However, I had not yet seen any *vibhūti* (supernormal power) of Mataji. Bhai Talattuf at first did not believe this statement of mine but was pleased to disclose to me what he had seen in Mataji that had attracted him so irresistibly that he was unable to stop visiting Her in spite of the protest of his wife and children who had put him in the category of

kafirs, as he used to take *prasāda* from Mataji's *bhoga*. Bhai Talattuf that day, in the presence of his family, took off his upper robe and I was greatly surprised to see that within his dress he was wearing a saffron cloak. He offered me a cup of tea and some *halwa*. At first I hesitated but finally decided to partake of it as I was loath to injuring the feelings of a great Muslim devotee of Mataji. Bhai Talattuf also narrated to me how during his prayers he used to see Mataji sitting in front of him in the form of Mohammed, the Great Prophet. He then told me that we should not feel worried if we got no news about Mataji's movements during Her incognito travels. He further assured me that Mataji would soon come back to us. This actually happened a few months later.

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Mataji says that sometimes dead persons in their subtle bodies appear before Her just as we go to Her for *darśana*. She also has said that these souls sometimes come to Her in the guise of even snakes. At times the devotees feel that they should leave Mataji alone in Her room so that She may have the chance to rest. But Mataji has stated so often that even though She might be left alone in the room, souls not visible to ordinary human beings appear before Her and talk to Her in their own languages. She says that Her body may seem to be sleeping but actually She does not sleep inasmuch as She never is unconscious. In Her *kheyāla* or *bhāva* She knows

what is happening all around. The reader therefore might draw his own conclusions about the Divine Nature of Mataji and Her equal love for all individuals, high or low, irrespective of caste, creed or nationality. It is really surprising that, when we are blessed with the presence of such a great Divine Being in our midst, only few of our leaders, educationalists, reformers and well-wishers of the oppressed and down-trodden should take advantage of Her guidance to solve the many intricate and complex problems facing the world.

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In early 1937, Mataji accompanied by Pitaji, Bhajji, Gurupriya Didi and some others came to Bareilly where they stayed in the Pilibhit Dharamsala adjoining Bareilly Junction. One Mrs. Jennings, who belonged to a wealthy family of California and was working in London for international peace, had spent some days with Mataji at Nainital and accompanied Her to Bareilly. She had visited Sri Ramana Maharshi and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, where she had gone for help and guidance in her practice of meditation. Learning about Mataji during her stay in Pondicherry, she went in search of Mataji to Calcutta, where she got information about the movements of Mataji in Uttar Pradesh. When she succeeded in contacting Mataji in early 1937 she was greatly attracted by Her Divine Personality. She was keen to accompany Mataji on Her pilgrimage to Kailash in the coming summer. Pitaji had repeatedly

requested Mataji to fix up a definite programme for their trip to Kailash. However, to her great disappointment, Mrs. Jennings was not permitted by the Government of India to visit Kailash.

At Bareilly I was directed by Mataji to take Mrs. Jennings to the Kishenpur Ashram and to allow her to enter the *Mouna Mandir* (silence room), on the first floor of the Ashram building, in which only one person at a time is permitted to enter, as it is reserved for strict silence and meditation. Mrs. Jennings expressed the desire to meditate in that room and asked me to knock at the door after one hour. She entered the *Mouna Mandir* wearing a beautiful silk sari presented to her by Mataji at Bareilly. The door was closed by me from outside. On the expiry of the hour, I knocked. When Mrs. Jennings came outside, her face was flushed and she appeared as if in a deep meditative mood. She gave me some idea of the *ānanda* she had experienced during her meditation. She told me that had I not knocked at the door but allowed her to stay in the room for longer, she probably might have been absorbed in a deep trance. She also stated that even during the short hour in the *Mouna Mandir* she had practically lost body consciousness and had felt that her *Ātmā* was floating in a sort of *Śunya* (void).

After her visit to Dehradun, Mrs. Jennings left for California via Bombay and London. On her way she visited Jaipur and from there sent a beautifully engraved brass globe as a symbol of Universal

Brotherhood to be hung in the Kirtan Hall of the Kishenpur Ashram. When I had first met Mrs. Jennings at Bareilly, I had told her that Mataji in Her *Avyakta Rūpa* (Unmanifested Being) was the *Ādya Śakti* (Primeval Energy), the Creator of the *vyakta* (manifested world). Mrs. Jennings probably did not much appreciate my statement at that time. During the winter months of 1937-38, I received a long letter from Mrs. Jennings enquiring about Mataji's visit to Kailash and telling me that though she had not been physically present with Mataji, she was blessed by Her from Kailash, about which she got an indication through a great spiritual friend of hers in the U.S.A. She also intimated to me that though at Bareilly she had been unable to appreciate my views about Mataji, she now felt that there was really much truth in what I had said to her.

After I had gone to Dehradun with Mrs. Jennings, Mataji paid a short visit to Almora with Pitaji and Bhaiji. From Almora She left for Dacca. During this visit to Almora, Bhaiji went to Pataldevi and said that while Mataji, Pitaji and others would go to Kailash, he wanted to stay at Pataldevi until their return, if permitted by Mataji.

Mataji's birthday in 1937 was celebrated in Dacca. Immediately after, Mataji left Dacca on pilgrimage to Kailash. I joined Mataji and Her party at Bareilly where they stayed for two days. They then halted at Nainital for three days in the *dharamśālā* of the Seva Samiti, attached to the Nanda Devi temple,

Mallital. At Nainital Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant who had become the first Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh after the elections of 1937, met Mataji for the second time. His first *darśana* of Mataji had been in summer 1935 at the Ananda Chawk temple, when he had told Mataji that the Congress had decided to fight the elections. It is my firm conviction that the victory of the Congress party in that election was due to Mataji's blessings. Early in 1937, Pantji wrote me a letter asking me to pray to Mataji on his behalf for their success in the elections in 1937. In that letter he had also stated that it was because of Mataji's blessings that the Congress had had an unexpected victory in the election of 1935, and he was also elected the Deputy Leader of the Congress party. In reply I wrote to Pantji that the success of the Congress in the election of 1937 was assured in view of the fact that its leaders had complete faith in Mataji and that his prayer must have reached Her the moment he thought of Her Divine Personality. It may be mentioned here that in the election of 1937 the Congress captured the legislatures in almost all the States and secured overwhelming majorities.

Mataji and party left Nainital for Almora by bus late in the afternoon and we had to pass that night in Ranikhet, reaching Almora at about noon the next day. There we spent three days at the Nanda Devi temple at Lala Bazar, Mataji and party left for Kailash through Berinag, Askot, Dharchula and Garbyang. At Garbyang, Ruma Devi, a pious old

Bhutia lady attached to the Ramakrishna Mission, met Mataji. She made all arrangements for the journey of Mataji and party from Garbyang to Kailash and back. Ruma Devi subsequently became a great devotee of Mataji and passed the remaining portion of her life in Mataji's company and in the Kishenpur Ashram. A good number of girls of the Bhutia clan closely related to Ruma Devi are now good devotees of Mataji. A beautifully carved image of Lord Krishna was presented to Ruma Devi by the Maharaja of Mysore when he met her at Garbyang on his pilgrimage to Kailash. That image is now installed in the Ashram of Sri Narayana Swami near Dharchula. It is said that Sri Narayana Swami spent not less than six lakhs of rupees on the construction of this Ashram on the way to Kailash. He also established an Intermediate College near Askot, Pithoragarh, for educating Bhutia boys and girls belonging to that undeveloped area. It is because of Sri Narayana Swami that one observes a considerable cultural advancement in the backward Bhutia community. His contribution is most creditable and can never be forgotten. He was a great soul and a very fine *kīrtana* singer. Before his death he handed over the management of the Intermediate College to the Education Department of the U.P. Government. He had a good number of devotees in South India and even more in Gujarat. During his life time he came in close contact with Mataji.

Early in August 1937, Mataji, Pitaji, Bhaiji and

the rest of the party returned to Almora from Kailash. Just a few days before reaching Almora, Bhaiji got indisposed and his condition soon started deteriorating. At Almora, Mataji and Her party stayed in a newly built flat, in the house of Sri Tika Ram Joshi on the main motor-road, near Sri Bhairavnath temple. On their arrival at Almora, Swami Akhandanandaji informed me telegraphically about Bhaiji's serious illness. Sister Maharatan and I left Dehradun immediately for Almora. Wires had also been despatched to Bhaiji's wife and his son Ramananda. However, only Bhaiji's old servant was able to come to Almora from Dacca before Bhaiji's death. Dr. Khajan Chand, the leading private medical practitioner of Almora, was engaged as attending physician for Bhaiji's treatment. Although in consultation with the Civil Surgeon he gave him the best treatment available, Bhaiji's condition showed no sign of improvement and on August 17th, 1937 on *Śravan Śukla Dvadeśi* at about 3 P.M. he breathed his last, smilingly, in the presence of Mataji, who had attended on him throughout his illness day and night, assisted by Gurupriya Didi. During the entire period of a fortnight, when Bhaiji was lying seriously ill at Almora, Mataji observed *mouna* (complete silence) and ate very, very little. Just before Bhaiji's death, I prayed to Mataji to save his life, as She had done once before in Dacca when he had suffered from tuberculosis. Mataji directed us all to vacate the room and, after a few minutes we were again

called. I then reminded Bhaiji that before proceeding on his pilgrimage to Kailash he had promised that after due consultation with Mataji he would on his return from Kailash give me detailed instructions for establishing and organising Mataji's "Mission of Universal Brotherhood, Peace and Love" in the Kishenpur Ashram, as had been conceived by him. I asked who would give us the necessary guidance if he did not survive. Bhaiji replied that if I was unable to organise the Mission, it would look after itself. Then, just a few minutes prior to his death, he said in a very clear voice: "Mataji and I are one, Pitaji and I are one, we are all one." He thereafter recited *Mā Nāma* in a sweet, melodious voice and at that moment we were directed by Mataji to place his body on a mat spread on the floor. Bhaiji repeated *Sannyāsa Mahāvākya* and breathed his last.

After Bhaiji's death, Mataji broke Her silence and narrated to us all in detail how Bhaiji had embraced *sannyāsa* after taking a bath in the Mansarovar lake immediately on reaching Kailash. He and Pitaji had walked ahead. Bhaiji became an *avadhūta sannyāsi* in the presence of Pitaji and requested him to convey to Mataji (who was lagging behind with Swami Akhandananda) that he had embraced *sannyāsa* and that he would not go back from Kailash with Mataji and Her party. However, Pitaji persuaded him to speak to Mataji before taking that final decision. Bhaiji thus waited and on Mataji's arrival sought Her permission to pass the remaining portion

of his life in Kailash. He reminded Mataji that the further lease of life, given to him by Her during his fatal illness in Dacca in 1927, would expire soon and therefore he wanted to stay back and leave his mortal frame at Kailash. But Mataji asked him to return with Her. He agreed but wanted to be permitted to stay in Almora for the remaining portion of his life. He also suggested that he might be admitted to the District Hospital in Almora as he was likely to fall seriously ill very soon. Mataji told Bhaiji that She Herself would attend on him if and when he got sick. After narrating all this in detail, Mataji told me to arrange for laying Bhaiji's body in *samādhi* at a suitable place in Almora. As already mentioned, Bhaiji had told my cousin Girija Datt Joshi that he wanted to stay at Pataldevi, which is considered a very quiet place, suitable for *sādhana*. It is at Pataldevi that Bhaiji was laid in *samādhi* at about 11 P.M. on August 17, 1937. A good number of the citizens of Almora joined the funeral procession and throughout the two miles to Pataldevi, *Mā Nāma Kīrtana* was sung by all. On returning to Almora just after midnight, we found Pitaji in the grip of a severe attack of colic. He was being attended by doctors. By Mataji's grace his pain soon subsided.

At about 2 A.M. that very night, Mataji called me to the room where Bhaiji had died and I was closeted with Her for about an hour. I asked Mataji who would now give directions for organizing the "Mission of Universal Brotherhood, Peace and Love" as con-

ceived by Bhaiji. Mataji reminded me of what Bhaiji had told me just before he passed away. She then asked me not to weep anymore. She also told me that Bhaiji had suggested to Her that She might, if She approved, consult me about Her future movements before taking any final decision. I humbly requested Her to stay in the Kishenpur Ashram and make it a centre of Her activities as had been Bhaiji's earnest desire. I also communicated to Her that Bhaiji had told me that Dehradun was the place from where She had assumed a Universal Character during the short period of four years after leaving Dacca in June 1932. Therefore, Dehradun might be looked upon as the centre of the Mission. Mataji agreed to go down to Dehradun and gave me detailed instructions about the arrangements to be made for maintaining a proper spiritual atmosphere in the Kishenpur Ashram. I promised that I would try my best to mould my life according to Her directions. I must confess that I have not been able to faithfully carry out the promise given to Mataji on that memorable night of Bhaiji's death. I requested Mataji to pay a visit to Bhaiji's *Samādhi* before leaving for Dehradun, which She said She might do. During that night Pitaji, Swami Akhandananda, Didiji, each of them separately, had private interviews with Mataji.

We had arranged that Mataji would visit Pataldevi the following day between 3 and 4 P.M. to see Bhaiji's *Samādhi*. But Pitaji did not like the idea of

taking Mataji there. Mataji thereupon told us that She could go to Pataldevi in Her own way, which Pitaji would not be able to know. Just before 3 P.M., while Mataji was sitting in the room where Bhaji had passed away, She asked all of us to immediately vacate the room as She wanted to be left alone. When till late in the evening Mataji did not come out, the room was opened. She was found lying on a mat in deep *samādhi*. Her whole body was ice-cold and there was only very slight breathing. This made everybody anxious. Pitaji was afraid that on account of the death of Bhaji, Her adopted son (*dharma putra*), Mataji might Herself leave Her mortal frame and go into permanent *samādhi*. I told both Pitaji and Didi that they were not wise in harbouring such thoughts, and tried to convince them that their apprehension was quite unfounded. I also indirectly communicated to them that Mataji had given me a positive assurance that She would go to the Kishenpur Ashram along with all of us and therefore they should try to remain calm during Her *samādhi*. I then made a special request that all of us should recite uninterrupted *Mā Nāma Kīrtana*. Everybody agreed and the chanting of *Mā Nāma* was started by all present. When after nearly four hours there was no special sign visible in Mataji's body that She was emerging from *samādhi*, I in my anxiety, cried out: "Oh Ma, will you not be pleased to give an indication to us by some movement of your body that you are not taking perma-

ment *samādhi*!" Immediately after this, Mataji's body moved slightly. I was reminded of the promise I had given to Her the previous night that I would always try to remain composed under all circumstances and live up to Her *bhāva*. Mataji then sat up in *padmāsana* perfectly erect, with Her face glowing and a halo all round. *Āratī* was immediately performed with the recitation of many *stotras* (hymns) as also the song in praise of Mataji composed by Bhaiji—"Jai Hridaya Vāsini". When it was over Gurupriya Didi gently massaged Mataji in the region of her spinal cord. However, Mataji again went into *samādhi*. Throughout the night and also the following day till noon She remained in deep *samādhi*. Pitaji and Didiji again became apprehensive and with the help of Swami Akhandanandaji shifted Mataji from the room where Bhaiji had died to the adjoining room, in spite of my protest that in that deep *samādhi* Mataji's body should not be touched. Pitaji had thought that if Mataji were allowed to remain in the room where Bhaiji left his body, She might not resume Her normal condition. Therefore he considered Her removal absolutely necessary. Mataji remained in deep *samādhi* the whole of that night. In the meantime Pitaji decided to take Mataji to Dehradun the following morning. A motor-bus was hired for going down to Kathgodam. With great difficulty Mataji was carried to the bus in an arm-chair and made to lie down on the berth behind the driver's seat.

We left Almora at about 10 A.M. On reaching Bhowali at 5 P.M., Mataji said a few words to me in a very low voice and then again resumed Her *samādhi*. At Kathgodam we had to use a stretcher to take Her to the railway compartment reserved for our journey to Bareilly. From there we caught the train to Dehradun and again a stretcher had to be procured to carry Mataji to the Dehra Express. At Dehradun also we had to take Mataji to the Kishenpur Ashram on a stretcher as She continued in deep *samādhi* throughout the whole journey. At the Kishenpur Ashram She was first taken to the main Kirtan Hall and then to Her room. When Mataji was in the Kirtan Hall She started speaking normally to the devotees who had assembled there to receive Her and have Her *darśana*. In Dehradun Mataji did not eat and subsisted on a small quantity of water for a whole fortnight. She broke Her fast late at night by chewing a piece of ginger that had been boiled in water according to Her directions. The day after, Mataji's devotees arranged for a big *bhandāra* (feast) in memory of the late Swami Mounananda Parvat (Bhaiji), and on this occasion Mataji tasted everything that had been prepared—i.e., *puries*, rice, dal, vegetables, sweets, etc. A good number of *sannyāsis* from the adjoining Ramakrishna Mission were also invited.

As already stated, Mataji had in the night after Bhaiji's death given me some detailed directions for fixing up a regular daily routine of morning and

evening *kīrtana*, *bhajana*, *pūjā* and recitation of Holy Scriptures like *Bhagavad Gita* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* so that the sanctity of the Ashram might be well preserved, as desired by Bhaiji. Mataji had told me very clearly not to disclose to anyone that the programme had been suggested by Her. Efforts were made by me to carry out Mataji's instructions, but unfortunately I did not receive the co-operation of some important devotees.

Two days after Her arrival in Kishenpur, Mataji asked me in the presence of Pitaji, Gurupriya Devi and others, to show Her all the articles that Bhaiji had left with me before his departure for Kailash. A small attache case, a fountain pen and a few other articles of his use were brought there by me and shown to Mataji and Pitaji. Bhaiji had given me a sealed packet, which contained a manuscript in Bengali—'Early Life Story of Mataji'—right from Her first appearance in this world on April 30th, 1896, till June 2nd, 1932, when She left Dacca for Dehradun with Pitaji and Bhaiji. This life story had been narrated to Bhaiji by Mataji Herself. During the years 1933 to 1936, when Mataji was mostly living in Dehradun, Bhaiji had requested Her to give him some detailed information about Her *Līlā* for the period from 1896 to 1932, which facts were unknown to the earnest devotees. This book was compiled by Bhaiji on the basis of what he had heard from Mataji. Bhaiji had given me positive instructions that the sealed packet should

be delivered by me to Mataji in private. Thus I did not give this manuscript to Mataji in the Kishenpur Ashram, but only at Karnali, Baroda, in December 1938. I am informed that this manuscript is being revised after being read out to Mataji. My personal feeling is that this book is not being published as yet as Mataji does not want to disclose Her divine supernatural powers to the general public for the present.

Before his departure to Kailash, Bhaiji had given me a small pocket diary in which he had written instructions for my guidance so that I might become a good devotee of Mataji. According to Bhaiji, he alone can be a real devotee who is able to reduce himself to zero; in other words, a good *sādhaka* must completely shake off his ego. Then alone can he expect to reach the goal of Self-realization. Bhaiji had quoted the following two *ślokas* of the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*, which he thought were the "seed mantra" of that sacred book. In these two verses, Lord Krishna gave directions to his great devotee Arjun as to how he should proceed in order to merge his identity with Him. The two verses are:

*"Nirmāna moha jītasanga doṣa
 Adyātma nityā vinivṛita kāmā I
 Dvānhveirovimuktā sukha dukha sangyeir
 Gachhantyamudhā padam avyayam tat II"*

*"Tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu
 Mām anusmara yudhya cha I
 Mayyarpita mano buddhir
 Mām eveisyasyaśāya II"*

Gita, VIII, 7

"Without pride and delusion, victorious over the vice of attachment, dwelling constantly in the Self, desire pacified, liberated from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, they go, undeluded, to that indestructable state."

"Therefore at all times think upon Me only, and fight. With mind and reason set on Me, without doubt thou shalt come to Me."

The seeker after Truth, who can mould his life in the manner indicated in the above verses is sure to succeed in reaching his goal of Self-realization. Bhairji's instructions, seventy-seven in all, are reproduced below. They have proved very useful to me and it is hoped that other seekers might also derive some benefit by reading and putting them into practice.

Bhairji was an ideal *sādhaka* throughout his life and as a result of his sincere efforts in this and also in previous lives, he, before leaving his mortal coil, could merge his identity with his *Iṣṭadeva*, Mataji, (*Pūrṇa Brahma Nārāyaṇa*)—who in Her mercy has appeared in this world in Her present form. Genuine seekers of whatever caste, community or religion, if they carefully study the life of Mataji with *śraddha* (faith and devotion) will get a considerable amount

of encouragement in their search after Truth. Bhaiji compiled '*Sad Vani*' (Sayings of Mataji), which was published in 1935 in Bengali and English. Bhai Ganga Charan Das Gupta, a great devotee of Mataji and a close friend and relative of Bhaiji, translated '*Sad Vani*' into English and it was through him that Bhaiji made arrangements for its publication. In 1936, Bhaiji also compiled another book '*Matri Darshan*' which was published after his death by Bhai Ganga Charan Das Gupta, who also translated this book into English under the title '*Mother as Revealed to Me*'. It was published first in 1952 and has had four editions by now. The Hindi and Gujarati versions of '*Sad Vani*' and '*Matri Darshan*' were published some time in 1951. The Hindi translation of '*Sad Vani*' was done by Sri Krishna Pant, the eldest brother of Sri Chintamani Pant.

Śrī Śrī Mā Saranam

Bhaiji's instructions for the guidance of Hari Ram
Johi.

Reduce Yourself to Zero

1. Every man's duty is to do what he can to make his fellow-men wiser, better and happier. This is the best form of charity and is sure to bear fruit in this world and the next, even though our progress be slow and produce no immediate visible result.

2. On this life's journey, keep attending to your own steps. As you come nearer and nearer to the destination, you will find yourself reconciled not only to the Ideal, but also, most difficult of all, to others.

3. To become a devotee for want of occupation or out of disgust is a sin against society and yourself. Examine yourself thoroughly with the help of a guide and find out if you have real honesty of purpose.

4. Take a vow to be true and sincere to the Ideal, chaste, obedient and full of humility. The rest will take care of itself.

5. If you are always busy watching the actions of others, you become a passive sight-seer to your own doings. First know yourself, your own errors and faults, only then you can become a useful C.I.D.

6. Be sweet and kind to all, high and low, in action, thought, and speech. You will then become conscious of the affirmative attitude of life and find the peace resident in the soul.

7. A pessimist is always miserable. Not only does he gain nothing, but he loses what he has already got. So be an optimist; even if you cannot gain, you will lose nothing.

8. The good of man does not depend on any possession, except the right inner quality.

9. If you go to have a bath in the sea, you are always careful so that you may not be carried away by the waves. Thus in your love and devotion for the Ideal, you should be beyond impulses and emotions.

10. Without a really disciplined life, harmony and wholeness cannot be achieved.

11. To see God in everything is a better method than renouncing everything with the idea that it is all transitory.

12. A sincere and selfless idea and an aspiration to serve can set the whole being in activity.

13. No separate effort is needed to control the senses if you can make your heart the abode of God.

14. Always stick to the Ideal, the Reality. Innumerable influences which are pouring upon you from all quarters of the universe will disappear in no time.

15. There are three stages in Karma Yoga:

(1) To give up the idea of result in work.

(2) To give up 'I'-ness.

(3) To dedicate every action to God.

The sense of duty or 'I ought' must be qualified by the above three conditions.

16. The mission of the guide is to inspire the quest; it is for the pupil to discover the treasure.

17. Peace, which is a resident of the soul can receive its true culture only from within.

18. Mingle with the world only to the minimum extent needed, without being entangled in it.

19. When we have known the Mother, we shall know that all around Her are but our brothers and sisters.

20. Cultivate patience—a virtue which is never defeated.

21. Love never claims, it ever gives; Love ever suffers, never resents and never revenges itself.

22. The pursuit of Truth may entail suffering and difficulties, but in the long run it must contribute to the greatness of the spirit which is the source of real happiness.

23. You get nothing unless you feel more or less a need for it. You have got the present environment because you have wanted it; so, if you desire seriously to extricate yourself from this self-created misery, you must apply yourself earnestly to the purpose, like a lion in a net.

24. Measure your own mind by the shadow it casts.

25. The final purpose of life, according to all religions, is to realize the Ideal or to know that the Self is God. By toiling consciously on the side of the forces of God or the Ideal, this becomes possible.

26. How to fix up the Ideal, see the *Slokas* 7 and 8, Chapter VIII of the Gita.

27. Concentration and relaxation must go side by side. True relaxation will bring contentment and raise you up.

28. Religion is not a science which in its ordinary usage is the expression of a fragment of the Self; it is an art which is the expression of the whole Self.

29. Those who seek a reason for all things do utterly overthrow reason.

30. True faith does not look for or depend on any arguments. It comes from within.

31. Love is God. So all our desires must ultimately aim at Universal Love. Human life begins as a baby with intensely selfish love for the mother and ends with selfless love for children as a parent.
32. Saints love because they cannot help it. Realize this and get their love extended to mankind.
33. Withdrawal is not the whole of religious tradition, there is also participation. We renounce the part in order to return to it with the knowledge of the whole. Nothing is to be rejected, everything is to be raised.
34. To keep your balance in life's struggle, take recourse to the depths constantly and develop a disinterestedness of mind which no pleasure can entice, nor pain overpower.
35. The Divine Call cannot be heard by anyone whose conflict between body, mind and soul is not over.
36. Try always to be an optimist with unlimited faith in the powers of the Ideal.
37. It hampers nourishment to vomit food before assimilation.
38. Mind is energy. Reinforce its strength by good association, noble thoughts and deeds.
39. Every great grief is small because of the brevity of time.
40. It is easy to walk miles and miles in the plains but it is difficult to go up hills.
41. A concentrated attack on mind and body is

necessary in order that we may root ourselves deep in the spirit.

42. Prayer and meditation must not be forgotten any day. You can go without food but in no case without prayer and meditation.

43. An honest, dutiful life is needed to raise one to a higher level.

44. As soon as we can make our thoughts pure we shall find ourselves free from all torments of the mind.

45. The soul remains dormant so long as we remain busy with the details of brain, senses, and the body.

46. Narrowness in any sphere means death. Broadness denotes life.

47. Make a persistent effort to keep the mind concentrated on the Ideal, then alone it can become as pure as the Ideal.

48. Attraction towards the Ideal may be, easy, but it is only when all dispersed energies, emotions, desires and even the physical body itself, are gathered up and concentrated that we come close to the Ideal.

49. By devotion, worship, and constant remembrance one can make himself free.

50. A silent conscious effort is more valuable than a mere formal pompous ceremony.

51. Every breath of our life must be associated with something good or noble.

52. Sever yourself completely from the unnecessary or unconnected conversation of the world.

53. A drop of practice is better than an ounce of theory.

54. Every stage of life is necessary; but examine constantly whether you are walking up or going down.

55. Consider yourself miserably unworthy during your prayers. This will shape your egoism into proper form.

56. Constant meditation on the presence of the Ideal in all helps the cultivation of Universal Love.

57. Don't speak unnecessarily or utter useless words. You will feel strong in your inner force.

58. The world catches us mostly by the futile externals of our lives. Always try to get rid of them.

59. Religion is 'isness' and not 'oughtness'.

60. Keep the lamp of love ever burning in the heart, it will remove darkness and all its evils.

61. If you apply your egoism in separating the things of God from those of the world, it will ultimately work on the right lines.

62. Egoism is vitiated when it works alone for itself. Subjugate the small 'I' to the bigger 'I', selfless work will glorify your career.

63. An utter submission to the Ideal in all respects will give you direct vision of everything.

64. Transformation of our being is more necessary than the wearing of outward garments.

65. Turn your mind homeward (inward) and establish contact with the Creative Centre.

66. The mind which strives for divine essence

must be totally and thoroughly free from all commerce with corporal senses.

67. To know the truth we have to deepen ourselves and not merely to widen the surface.

68. Prayer, meditation, silence and quiescence are necessary for the replacement of self-will by impersonal Universal Will.

69. No determination is valuable which is not self-determination controlled by a resolute will.

70. See good in everything. Your eyes will then be closed to all ills and evils in the world.

71. If it is not possible for you to keep a check over your own mind, why do you feel angry when others fail. Remember that an idea of outside control is the outcome of vanity.

72. Don't lose yourself in anything except in meditation on the Ideal.

73. Praise others and observe your own faults and shortcomings. If you are true to yourself, none can harm you.

74. Care for the Ideal alone, others will take care of themselves.

75. Artificial madness is not at all helpful. Intoxication will come of itself when you are up to the mark.

76. Pleasant speech and manners can remove many misunderstandings in our every-day life.

77. Develop yourself, to begin with, in a limited area. If you want to be a race-horse before training you will surely lose the race.

Śrī Śrī Mā Saranam

CHAPTER—VII

Visits to Various Places—Pitaji's Death—Establishing the *Anandamayi Nari Siksa Niketan* and *Vidyapeeth*—Mataji's Illness and Miraculous Cure.

(1937—1940)

In October 1937, Mataji accompanied by Pitaji, Swami Akhandananda and Gurupriya Devi left Dehradun to tour some important places in Gujarat, such as Baroda, Ahmedabad, etc. This had been arranged by Swami Asimananda who had come in contact with Mataji in Dehradun about a year before. As advised by Her, he had stayed in the Raipur Ashram for a couple of months for his *sādhana*. When Mataji had left Dehradun, he went to Gujarat and spent several months in Ahmedabad and Baroda. On returning to Dehradun about the middle of September (after the death of Bhaiji) he requested Mataji to visit those towns where a good number of religious persons, who had heard about Mataji from him, were very keen for Her *darśana*. They had sent to Swami Asimananda the required funds for the journey of Mataji and Her party to Ahmedabad.

After returning to Dehradun from this trip in

January 1938, Mataji proceeded to Rishikesh some time in February and came back to Dehradun, suffering from an attack of acute malaria. Her temperature at times would shoot up to about 106° and She would vomit whatever She ate or drank. Mataji refused to take any medicine, though Pitaji, Swami Akhandananda and others tried their level best to persuade Her to do so. In that condition of ill-health She decided to go to Hardwar where She stayed in a *dharamśālā*. Dr. Pitamber Pant, Retired Civil Surgeon, who had had the privilege of Mataji's *darśana* twice at Etawah (once in November 1935 and again sometime in the rainy season of 1936) was staying in Hardwar in his house close to the Bhola Giri Ashram on the Ganga Canal. On hearing that Mataji had come to Hardwar and was suffering from acute malaria, he went to see Her and requested Her to take some medicine to cure Her fever.

It must be stated here that during Her second visit to Etawah in 1936 Mataji had suffered from a severe attack of blood dysentery. At that time She had been staying in a *dharamśālā* with sister Viraj-mohini. Dr. Pant had brought some medicine and urged Mataji to take it. Mataji however had asked Dr. Pant to wait and watch Her condition for another day. The following day Dr. Pant found no trace of blood dysentery on testing Her stools, and so Mataji did not take the medicine. However, a day later Dr. Pant observed that the disease had reappeared and therefore tried to persuade Mataji

to use the medicine prescribed by him for Her complete cure. Mataji did not agree to do so but said that if ever in future she would have the *kheyāla* to take any medicine She would do so on Dr. Pant's advice.

When Dr. Pant found Mataji suffering from acute malaria at Hardwar, he reminded Her of what She had said to him at Etawah in 1936 and requested Her to undergo proper treatment. Pitaji, Swami Akhandananda, Didi and others also urged Mataji to take the medicine which She finally did. One or two tablets cured the malaria but Mataji developed violent palpitation of the heart, which caused a lot of anxiety to Dr. Pant and others for several months. It was just to satisfy Dr. Pant that Mataji had agreed to take his medicine. Dr. Pant of course never could have imagined that, as a result, Mataji would develop such a serious type of heart trouble. He remained with Mataji for a couple of months and made all arrangements for Her proper nursing and complete rest. Needless to say, he never again ventured to administer any medicine to Mataji.

On the occasion of the *Kumbha Mela* of 1938 at Hardwar, just after Mataji had been cured of acute malaria, Dr. Pant requested Her to go and stay in his house on the Ganga Canal, which he had decided to convert into a school for young girls, so that if they wished to get married after finishing their education, they might become *adarsha grihinis* (ideal housewives). He had decided to name this institution

"*Sri Anandamayi Nari Siksha Niketan*" and requested Gurupriya Didi to select a couple of idealistic, religious-minded lady teachers who were known to Mataji, to work in that institution. After attending the *Kumbha Mela* of 1938 and having stayed in Dr. Pant's house for a couple of weeks, Mataji, Pitaji and others returned to the Kishenpur Ashram.

The spacious house endowed by Dr. Pant for establishing the *Anandamayi Nari Siksha Niketan* was valued at not less than one and a half lakhs of rupees. Dr. Pant at his own expense, amounting to about Rs. 400/- per month, maintained the school for a period of about five years. He mentioned in his will, written in 1943, that the building had been donated by him to the Municipal Board, Harwar, for running the Girls' School and for this purpose he also donated to the Municipal Board Rs. 20,000/- in cash. This he did as Gurupriya Didi did not agree with him that the institution should impart education to girls who afterwards might lead a family life. She would have preferred the institution to be reserved for girls who wanted to take the vow of *brahmacharya* for life. The *Anandamayi Nari Siksha Niketan*, now called "*Sri Anandamayi Seva Sadan*", has during the last about 30 years developed into a very large institution, imparting education to girls upto the B.A. standard under the principalship of Miss Khurana who has been in charge of the institution for over 20 years.

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Sri Kunja Mohan Mukerji, Swami Akhandananda's younger brother who had come to Kishenpur with Mataji from Hardwar in 1938, obtained Her permission to return to Hardwar to take *sannyāsa*. Bholanath was eager to accompany him. In spite of Mataji's advice to stay back at Kishenpur, he left with Gurupriya Didi's uncle. When they were about to start from the Ashram, Mataji in Her *bhāva* told Didiji and others that Pitaji would return suffering from some fatal disease. Didi thereupon made another attempt to dissuade Pitaji from going to Hardwar but unfortunately failed. Within three days Pitaji came back to Kishenpur suffering from very high fever. He thereafter developed a severe type of small-pox which proved fatal. Shortly before he passed away, Mataji directed everybody who was with Her in the Ashram, including Didima, Swami Akhandananda and Didi, to leave for Varanasi. When they pleaded that they should be allowed to stay back for Pitaji's nursing, Mataji told them that if they remained, She Herself would leave the Ashram. On hearing this, they all were obliged to go to Varanasi. Mataji allowed only Brahmachari Jogesh, a disciple of Pitaji, to stay on and nurse his Guru under the guidance of Vaidyas of Dacca who had been specially summoned by telegram.

Pitaji's condition did not improve in spite of the best allopathic and ayurvedic treatment. He died in the Kishenpur Ashram after a protracted illness of about three weeks on May 7th, 1938, at 9 P.M.,

while Mataji was sitting by his side along with some devotees of Dehradun, including myself. Mataji placed Her right hand over the top of his head (*Brahma Tālu*) and directed us to recite *Mā Nāma Kīrtana* as was the earnest desire of Pitaji. It seems that while Mataji touched the top of Pitaji's head, his *prāna* (life force) left the body through his *brahmānda*. Mataji thereafter directed me to go to the Swamis of the adjoining Ramkrishna Mission and consult them as to how to dispose of Pitaji's body. The Swamis suggested that it should be taken to Neeldhara, Hardwar, and immersed in the strong current of the Ganga. I also went to Dehradun to consult my friend, Sri Chatterji, Bar-at-law, in this matter. He too advised us not to bury the body in the compound of the Kishenpur Ashram as people residing in the neighbourhood might raise objection. Early the following morning, Jogeshda, the vaidyas and myself took Pitaji's body in a specially hired motor-bus to Hardwar for immersion in the Neeldhara of the holy river Ganga. After the immersion which took place just before sunrise, we returned reaching Kishenpur at about 11 A.M. We found Mataji sitting on the veranda in front of the Kirtan Hall. Everybody in the Ashram was directed by Mataji to undergo vaccination as advised by the doctors. Mataji Herself did not take vaccination and neither did I.

After Pitaji's death, Mataji was always seen in a calm and serene mood with the usual smile on Her

face just as had been observed after Bhaiji's death. It is but appropriate that Siva Linga were installed at the Kishenpur Ashram, in March 1959, in a temple built in Pitaji's sacred memory. The *prāṇa pratiṣṭha* of the Siva Linga was done in Mataji's presence and under Her direction. Brahmachari Yogeshda is the priest in charge of the temple. When Pitaji died, Jogeshda had suggested to bury the body of his Guru within the compound of the Kishenpur Ashram and erect a *Samādhi Mandir* over it, but this could not be done for reasons already mentioned. I am happy that Yogeshda's cherished desire has been fulfilled by Mataji's grace and a Siva temple has been built in memory of Pitaji. Brahmachari Yogeshda, who in the earlier part of his life was one of the revolutionaries of East Bengal, is one of the oldest disciples of Pitaji.

An impartial study of Pitaji's life, specially the period from his marriage in 1909 until his death in 1938, will be very illuminating to the future devotees and admirers of the Divine Universal Mother, Anandamayi Ma. Only due to Pitaji and Bhaiji, the two foremost devotees of Mataji, so many *sādhakas* were able to come in such close contact with Mataji and receive Her guidance in their various *sādhana*s. In this life as well in the previous one, Pitaji was a *sādhaka* of a very high order. Mataji, in Her *bhāva*, showed him the spot at Ramna, Dacca, where the *samādhi* of his previous life had been. She had also shown the *samādhis* of their previous lives at

Ramna to Bhaiji and Swami Akhandananda. Pitaji was a great *tapasvi* (ascetic) endowed with the capacity to recognize Mataji's Divine Nature. Yet, in spite of being helped so much by Her, he could not shake off his ego completely. Fortunately, while suffering from smallpox, Pitaji at the end of his life realized his mistakes and in the early morning of his last day prayed to Mataji to forgive him for all his shortcomings. At his request, Mataji then with Her own hand put Her *prasāda* into his mouth. Pitaji died a *sannyāsi*, having embraced *sannyāsa* on the occasion of the Kumbha Mela at Hardwar, only a few weeks before his passing. Mataji Herself gave him the name of Swami Tibbatananda Tirtha. After having been in close touch with Mataji for so many years and having played a most important role in the *Līlā* of the Divinity Incarnate, Pitaji passed away at a not very advanced age, just about nine months after Bhaiji's death. It is certain that by Mataji's grace he achieved the final goal of Self-realization through *bhakti marga* (the path of devotion) in *pūrṇa ānanda* (complete bliss) and *pūrṇa śānti* (complete peace) and merged his identity with the Universal Mother, as had been the case with Bhaiji.

Pitaji had a very kind heart. He could not refuse help to any *sādhaka* who approached him to secure the blessings of Mataji in the search after Truth. It is not very easy to understand the secret of the relationship or Pitaji, Bhaiji, Swami Akhandananda

and similar *sādhakas* with the Divine Universal Mother. If a seeker continues his *sādhana* with unflinching faith and unshakable perseverance he must succeed in reaching the Goal at the appointed time, as destined for him by the Creator. Sincerity alone enables the aspirant to attain to Self-realization.

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Mataji accompanied by Swami Akhandananda, Gurupriya Devi, Swami Paramananda, Brahmachari Abhaya, and others again left Dehradun some time in November 1938 for Baroda and Ahmedabad, where the devotees were pining for Mataji's *darśana* ever since She had gone there a year before with Pitaji. During the Christmas holidays of 1938 I also went to Baroda. When Mataji was staying at Karnali on the bank of the holy Narmada, I delivered to Her the sealed packet of the manuscript of the early life story of Mataji, entrusted to me by Bhaji before he left for Kailash. No one else has maintained a detailed correct record, specially for the period from 1896 till 1932 of Mataji's life.*

From Karnali, Mataji and Her companions went by motorboat to Vyasa Ashram which is situated in a solitary place on the bank of the holy river Narmada, about six miles from Karnali. I left Mata-

* From 1926 onwards, Sri Gurupriya Devi has kept a diary of Mataji which has been published in Bengali and Hindi in many volumes.



Mataji and Gurupriya Devi

ji and Her party at Vyasa Ashram and returned to Dehradun on January 1, 1939. I met a good number of Mataji's devotees at Baroda where I passed one night. Sri Narayana Swami was also in Baroda at that time and in the night we attended the *akhaṇḍa kīrtana* arranged by his devotees in a big hall in the city. Narayana Swami had a very attractive personality and a sweet, melodious voice. His singing was extremely enchanting and throughout the whole night, while Swamiji performed the *kīrtana* uninterruptedly, the place was surcharged with an indescribably calm and spiritual atmosphere. I was deeply impressed by the extraordinary devotional attitude of the majority of Swamiji's devotees who had assembled in the beautifully decorated hall where was installed a full sized image of Radhakrishna.

In early March 1939, Mataji with Her party returned to Dehradun from Her tour in Gujarat. After a couple of weeks She went to Hardwar with Her companions and stayed in a *dharamśālā* not far from the house of Dr. Pitamber Pant, in which the *Anandamayi Nari Siksha Niketan* had started functioning. At Hardwar, Mataji developed some serious liver trouble. Didiji informed Dr. Pant and he persuaded Mataji to shift to his house where he wanted to look after Her. Swami Akhandananda wired to me to Dehradun about Mataji's serious illness. On receipt of this message I immediately started for Hardwar. On my arrival Dr. Pant told me that Mataji had developed cancer of the liver. I suggested to

him to phone to Dr. Neelambar Joshi, the renowned Surgeon of Delhi, who was his brother-in-law, and to request him to come immediately to Hardwar. But Dr. Pant said that Mataji's cancer was no more a surgical case. In his opinion it was incurable and Mataji would not survive for long.

This cancer of the liver had developed within a fortnight from the day of Mataji's arrival in Hardwar. When I went to see Her, I found Her lying flat on the floor in the room adjoining the Kirtan Hall in Dr. Pant's house. She could breathe only with great difficulty and Her whole body had become bluish on account of severe pain. According to Dr. Pant, Mataji had had no sleep ever since She had been brought to his house. He, therefore, was trying to persuade Her to allow him to give Her an injection of morphia, so that She might sleep and have some rest which was absolutely necessary. Mataji then asked Dr. Pant what happened to one in sleep. Dr. Pant said that the mind did not work and thus the body got complete rest. Mataji thereupon told Dr. Pant that She never had such sleep. When She is supposed to be sleeping, She is fully conscious of what is happening all around. Dr. Pant could not conceive how anyone could live in such a state and Mataji agreed that this was not within the grasp of his science. All the devotees of Mataji present in Hardwar including Dr. Pant, who had lost all hope of Her recovery, became extremely worried. We knew that Mataji would not undergo any medical treatment

and so all of us, each in his or her own way, fervently prayed to Her to cure Herself.

Mataji would not permit Dr. Pant to give Her a morphia injection. He retired to his room on the top floor of his house and asked me to share it for the night. When we had gone to the top floor, I told Dr. Pant that he would be well advised not to give Mataji any injection; otherwise Her condition might get much worse, as had been the case a year before when he had treated Her for malaria, after which She developed heart trouble. On hearing this Dr. Pant became furious and asked me to take Mataji away from his house if he as a physician, was not allowed to treat Her to the best of his ability. I thereupon argued that he himself had persuaded Mataji to shift to his place. In discussions of this sort we passed the whole of the night, and after taking Mataji's permission, I left for Dehradun by the 4 A.M. train, assuring Mataji that I would return to Hardwar the same evening after taking leave from office.

However, since I did not want to argue with Dr. Pant for another night, I left Dehradun only the following morning by the 9 A.M. train, reaching Hardwar at about noon. I found Dr. Pant standing at the main gate of his house. To my great surprise he touched my feet and, after embracing me, informed me of the miraculous disappearance of the cancer in Mataji's liver. This had happened abruptly at about 10.30 P.M. the previous night, when he had

finally decided to give Her a morphia injection. Mataji had enquired from him if I had not returned from Dehradun by the last train. At that moment he observed that Mataji's body, while She was lying on the floor, bent like a bow and then immediately She sat up erect in a particular *āsana* and he saw an extremely bright halo encircling Her head. He told me that he felt at that moment that he was standing before the Goddess Durga. While a few minutes before, She seemed in a dying condition, it now appeared to him that She had practically no physical ailment. Mataji then called him to Her side and asked him to find out where the cancer of the liver was, over which he had the day before applied a belladonna plaster which he would not change in the morning for fear that the process of removing it would cause Her excruciating pain. When examining Mataji's body, Dr. Pant, to his utter amazement, found no trace of the cancer which had covered Her whole liver and was developing towards Her heart at a very rapid pace. Dr. Pant now apologized for what he had said to me in his room two nights before and then we both went to Mataji. I paid my humble homage to Her and was overjoyed to see that She had been completely cured without undergoing any treatment, medical or surgical.

Dr. Pant now narrated to me in detail what he had seen from the roof of his house at about midnight while he was standing by the railing. A large sized, black, monkey-like figure, measuring not less

than six feet had jumped into the Ganga from the balcony attached to Mataji's room. The following morning he enquired from Mataji whether it had been the figure of the particular disease that had gripped Her. Mataji did not reply. She only said that it was for him to draw his own conclusions. It must be mentioned here that Mataji had told Dr. Pant some time before that all diseases have subtle bodies just like other living creatures and so they often enjoy Her company as do human beings. Dr. Pant did not put any more questions to Her thereafter. However, he told me that if he related his experience of the sudden cure of cancer in such a miraculous manner to Dr. N. Joshi or any other doctor, they all would consider that he had become a lunatic.

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Some time in October 1939, Mataji, Swami Akhandananda, Didi, Swami Parmananda, Brahmachari Abhaya, Jatish Guha of Calcutta and I visited Suket *via* Baijnath. The Raja of Suket was closely related to Raja Durga Singh of Solan and it was from him that he had heard about Mataji. He therefore invited Mataji on the occasion of Durga Pūja. He was a great *Śakta* and a good devotee. *Navarātrī Pūjā* was performed in his palace compound. On the 3rd day of *Navarātrī*, Raja Suket worshipped Mataji Herself, offering to Her a beautiful silk sari and gold ornaments. Instead of sacrificing a goat, he slightly cut

his little finger with a sword and offered his own blood at the lotus feet of Mataji. His wife and children took part in this *pūjā* with great devotion. At the time of the *pūjā* Mataji Herself was in a special type of *mahābhāva*, which cannot be described.

The Raja of Suket related to Mataji that in the villages of his state some soul which had become a *yaksha* was doing considerable mischief. On many occasions persons sleeping inside their rooms had been thrown outside and the people were therefore in great terror. After hearing this, Mataji, with all of us, returned to the *dharamsālā* at about 9 P.M. Bhai Jatish Guha told Mataji that he wanted to see the *yaksha* that was so much dreaded by the people of Suketraj. At that moment Mataji suddenly observed a change in the facial expression of Jatish. It seemed that he was seeing the horrifying features of that particular *yaksha*, standing just in front of the window, facing him. Mataji asked Jatish why he was so terrified on seeing the figure about which he had been talking all the time. Jatish admitted that he was extremely frightened at the sight of that spirit just outside of the window. It was reported to Mataji later by the Raja of Suket that the spirit had ceased to trouble the people of his state ever since Her visit to Suket.

On our return journey from Suket, Mataji stayed for a few days in the Ashram of Swami Taranandaji at Tarapith, Baijnath near Jogendranagar. The Raja

of Suket and his family had been extremely keen to perform Durga Puja in Mataji's presence in their palace, but Mataji had to leave for Baijnath where Swami Tarananda had a magnificent image of Goddess Tara, made of *ashtadhātu*, consecrated in his temple on *Ashtami* day.

During the night of October 20th, when Mataji was staying at Tarapith, there was heavy snow-fall on the hill tops all round. The following morning when Mataji was sitting with us in Her room, She narrated that the previous night when we were all asleep, She had been physically removed to some other world, far, far away, and that She had taken us all with Her, in our subtle bodies. Abhaya there-upon enquired from Her how She could be taken away physically without Gurupriya Didi noticing it, since Didi slept by Her side and at the slightest movement of Mataji's body would always wake up. He also was curious to hear from Mataji what would have been the reaction of Gurupriya Didi if she had woken up at that time and found Mataji's body missing. Mataji replied that it was just possible that Gurupriya would have seen Her lying on Her bed as usual. Abhaya further asked Mataji, since She had stated that all Gods and Goddesses, including Rama, Krishna, Mahadeva, etc., were present at the time of Her arrival in that world, where She had sat in that great hall into which She had been brought physically. Mataji said that She was offered an *āsana*. Abhaya then wanted to know where that

āsana had been placed. Was it not at a higher place than those occupied by all the Gods and Goddesses? Mataji thereupon disclosed that Her *āsana* had been put on a specially decorated platform at a higher place. Mataji's *Līlā* cannot be understood by ordinary mortals. We can only say that all of us, who have come in contact with Her, are really extremely fortunate.

On returning to Dehradun, the trust deed of the Kishenpur Ashram, which had been drafted in consultation with Sri Chatterji, Bar-at-law, with the consent of Raja Durga Singh, Tankha Bhai, Sher Singh Bhai and other devotees, who had contributed the required funds for the construction of the buildings, was read out before Mataji. With Her blessings, the trust deed was registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar in 1940.

With the liberal donation of Rs. 1,000/- per month, promised by Raja Durga Singhji, a *Vidya Peeth* (Boy's School) was started at Kishenpur with about half a dozen brahmacharis. Ever since the establishment of the *Vidya Peeth*, Raja Durga Singh has met its expenses. It was shifted to the Pataldevi Ashram at Almora after a couple of years. Every winter the *Vidya Peeth* moves to Hardwar or Vrindaban. Over two dozen brahmacharis are at present enrolled in the *Vidya Peeth*. They are given free education, food and clothes and are not permitted to go back to their homes before finishing their schooling, which ordinarily is completed in ten years, when they

appear privately for the examination of the U.P. High School and Intermediate Board. After completing their education, a couple of brahmacharis who have studied in this school are devoting their whole time to the service of Mataji, in whatever manner She has been pleased to prescribe for them. It is now proposed to shift the *Vidya Peeth* permanently to Vrindaban* and affiliate it with the Sanskrit University, Varanasi.

Brahmachari Nirmalananda who was a student of this *Vidya Peeth* for some time, a few years ago passed his Sāstri and M.A. examinations. He is at present the Assistant General Secretary of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha, Varanasi. He, Bharat Bhai of Gujrat, and Kusum Bhai of Bengal performed *Gāyatrī Anuṣṭhān* for three years at Hardwar in the *dharamśālā* of Raja Durga Singh, in the manner prescribed by Mataji after having become *Naishtik Brahmacharis*. Their names are now Nirmalananda, Bhaskarananda, and Nirvanananda. Brahmachari Sivananda, the elder brother of Nirvanananda is in charge of the *Sri Anandamayee Vidya Peeth*.

* This has been done in the meanwhile.

Śrī Śrī Mā Saranam

CHAPTER VIII

Seth Jammalal Bajaj Comes—Visit to Wardha and Sewagram—Meeting with Gandhiji.

(1941-1942)

Resuming the narration of Mataji's *Līlā* at Dehradun, I must record here that it was on hearing from Kamla Nehru about Mataji that Gandhiji directed Seth Jammalal Bajaj to meet Her, when the Sethji was on his way to Mussoorie. He was going to see Indiraji, our present Prime Minister, who had returned from England some time in the summer of 1941 and was staying in Mussoorie for reasons of health. Jammalalji went to the Raipur temple before proceeding to Mussoorie and requested Mataji to fix an hour for a private interview, preferably in the early morning after his return from Mussoorie on his way to Wardha. It may be interesting to mention that Seth Jammalal did not like to be addressed as 'Sethji' and Mataji therefore told him that in future he would be called 'Bhayyaji', which he greatly appreciated.

On returning from Mussoorie, Bhayyaji thus again went to Raipur for Mataji's *darśana* and his private

interview. The following morning, at about 4 A.M., he entered Mataji's room quietly and sat near Her on the floor. Mataji was lying on a mat, covering Her whole body with a white bedsheet. Bhayyaji, seeing that Mataji was resting, began to give a light massage to Her feet. After an hour, Mataji uncovered Her face and Bhayyaji started weeping and begged Mataji's pardon for massaging Her feet without having asked Her permission. He had done this because he felt the same sort of *mātri bhāva* (motherly affection) on approaching Her as he used to feel when visiting his own mother. Mataji related this Herself to Bapuji¹ on the night of February 20th, 1942, at Sewagram, ten days after the death of Jamnalal Bajaj. She also told Bapuji that Bhayyaji had not wanted to go back to Wardha but wished to remain with Her for the rest of his life. She however would not permit him to do so without the express consent of Bapuji, since Jamnalal Bhai regarded him as his father and guru. With Bapuji's permission Bhayyaji stayed with Mataji at Dehradun for about a fortnight. He tried his level best to persuade Mataji to go to Wardha to meet Bapuji with whom he wanted Her to discuss in private many a complex problem facing the country and humanity as a whole. I was at that time posted in Lucknow. With Mataji's permission Bhayyaji had a telegram sent to me by Swami Paramananda asking me to go to Dehradun to meet Jamnalal Bhai, which I did.

¹ Mahatma Gandhi.

Bhayyaji wanted me to resign from government service and go to Wardha to work with him for cow-protection. He proposed to start this work with Bapuji's permission on his return to Wardha and to dissociate himself completely from all political activities. Bhayyaji was keen on my going to Wardha probably because he felt that my stay there would make it easier to persuade Mataji to pay frequent visits to Wardha and thus enable him to bring Bapuji in close contact with Her. I assured him that I would join him provided, of course, Mataji had no objection. At the time of Bhayyaji's departure for Wardha, Mataji enjoined on him to observe complete silence every night from sunset to sunrise, and not to make any plans for the following day's work as it was just possible that he might leave his mortal frame within a short period of six months or so. Bhayyaji followed Mataji's instructions.

Unfortunately he actually died within the specified period of six months, on February 10th, 1942, just one and a half months after my visit to Wardha during the Christmas week of 1941. On February 10th, when Mataji had stayed in Lucknow for about a week, She all of a sudden decided to leave for Kanpur by the first train available which started at 10 P.M., directing me to accompany Her. At Lucknow station, Sri Kamalanayan Bajaj, on hearing that Mataji was travelling by the train that he had boarded on his way to Wardha, came to Her compartment and informed Her that Bhayyaji had pas-

sed away that same afternoon. He tried to persuade Mataji to go to Wardha with him and thus fulfil the ardent desire of his father, though after his death. Mataji did not give any definite indication to Kamalanayanji as to when She would visit Wardha. Just two days before Bhayyaji's death, I had received a wire from him, dated February 6th, asking me to inform him telegraphically of Mataji's date of arrival in Wardha, and requesting me to accompany Her. At Kanpur, Mataji directed me to get Her tickets extended upto Jhansi, where She, Didiji, Swami Paramananda and Abhaya broke their journey to meet a devotee, the Manager of the Imperial Bank. On my return to Lucknow I received a wire from Swami Paramananda asking me to meet Mataji at Jhansi immediately. Mataji then left for Wardha with me, breaking Her journey for a day at Lalitpur where I had requested Her to meet one of Her devotees. We reached Nagpur on February 16th and passed the night at the railway station. The following morning we took the train to Wardha.

On reaching there Mataji permitted me to inform Janakibehnji, the widow of Bhayyaji, of our arrival. We were taken to Gopuri village where Bhayyaji had made arrangements for Mataji's stay. One Swami Atmananda, aged over sixty years, belonging to the Sri Ramana Maharshi Ashram, was also staying at Gopuri. Bhayyaji had asked the Swami to remain there and meet Mataji who was expected to visit the place in the near future. Swami Atmananda narrated

all this to Mataji at Wardha. Bapuji had gone to Calcutta to meet Chiang-Kai-Shek and returned to Wardha on February 19th to attend the 10th day ceremony after Bhayyaji's death. Instead of the traditional *śrādha*, 12 hours of uninterrupted *yajña* of *takua dangal* (spinning *charkha*) was performed. Mataji was invited by Janakibehn to attend the *takua dangal* ceremony which was attended by Bapuji. But Mataji did not come. On the completion of the spinning, when Janakibehn and others returned to Gopuri at about 5 P.M. for the evening prayers of Vinoba Bhave, Mataji suddenly decided to leave Wardha for Nagpur by the first available train, which was at 6 P.M. This greatly upset Vinoba Bhave, Janakibehn, Rajendra Babu, Kamalanayan and all others, as they had the day before at the Wardha station informed Bapuji about Mataji's visit and Her likely stay at Gopuri for at least a couple of days more. But Mataji was not inclined to change Her decision. However, quite unexpectedly we were notified that the train to Nagpur had been cancelled on account of urgent movements of troops. Janakibehn, Vinoba Bhave and others tried to persuade Mataji to go to Sevagram and meet Bapuji, as otherwise he would be greatly annoyed with them for giving him wrong information about Mataji's sojourn in Gopuri. Bapuji was informed by phone that Mataji wanted to leave Wardha. He thereupon sent a message to Mataji that in case She stuck to Her

decision to leave without meeting him, he would go to Gopuri to meet Her.

As it was time for evening prayers at Gopuri, Mataji told everybody to go and attend them. The next moment, She asked me to arrange for a motor-car, and Mataji with all of us left for Sevagram to meet Bapuji. Bapuji thus met Mataji for the first time. My feeling was that in his great eagerness to win *Swarāj* by following the path of truth and non-violence in his own way, Gandhiji was too concentrated on his aim to recognize fully Mataji's Divine Nature during Her short stay of about eight hours in Sevagram. He was certainly immensely attracted by Mataji's radiant personality. But it seems, due to the peculiar circumstances of this meeting at an odd hour and without previous intimation, he could not find leisure to talk to Mataji in private, although this was the cherished desire of his great disciple, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj. This was all Mataji's own *Lilā*.

As soon as Mataji entered Bapuji's room where he was plying his *charkha*, (spinning-wheel) She called out loudly: "Pitaji, your *pāgal bachhi* (crazy daughter) has come to see you!" Bapuji remarked laughingly that if She really were a *pāgal bachhi*, She could not possibly have impressed men like Bhayyaji, whom Bapuji was unable to give inner peace, in spite of his best efforts during thirty years of close association with him. Bapuji also told Mataji that he himself had asked Bhayyaji to meet Her, the Guru of Kamla Nehru. Mataji at once emphati-

cally declared that She was neither Kamla Nehru's nor in fact anybody's Guru. Bhayyaji had been so much attracted by the Divine Personality of Mataji that he had repeatedly written to Bapuji from Dehradun for permission to stay with Her for longer periods. Bapuji consented as he felt that Mataji's presence was helping Bhayyaji to get peace of mind. Bapuji now told Mataji that a mad child could not possibly give peace of mind to persons like Jamnalal Bajaj. Bapuji also related to Mataji Bhayyaji's cherished desire that She should stay in Gopuri for at least a month, so that Bapuji, Bhayyaji, Rajendra Babu and Swami Atmananda could discuss with Her many intricate and complex problems facing the present war-ridden world.

Bapuji did not allow Mataji to move to Wardha that night and succeeded in persuading Her to remain with him at Sevagram. Beddings were spread for Her and Bapuji on two wooden plank's close to each other in the open veranda of Bapuji's cottage. Bapuji, being a patient of high blood pressure, had to go to bed at about 10 P.M., when light massage was administered to his body by his attendants, Dr. Sushila Nayyar, Amrit Kaur, and others. Bapuji got hold of the wrist of Mataji's right hand as She was sitting close to him. While the ladies were busy massaging Bapuji, Mataji asked them what they would do if Bapuji were taken away by Her. Mataji repeated this question three times and one of the ladies replied that they would go with Bapuji. Mataji then told

Bapuji that at an opportune time She would take him away. I was greatly upset on hearing this, as I thought that Mataji was perhaps giving an indication of the early death of Bapuji which might occur within a year or so. Mataji did not appreciate my interruption and ordered me to keep quiet and watch. This I did, though reluctantly.

The following morning, Mataji left Sevagram for Wardha on Her way to Sagar (M.P.) via Nagpur and Itarsi. At Sagar, Mataji wanted to remain in seclusion for some time. Only Gurupriya Didi and Abhaya stayed with Her. From Wardha to Itarsi, I travelled with Mataji in a first class compartment. Thus I could get ample time to discuss with Her in private Her strange behaviour during Her short stay at Sevagram. It puzzled me that She did not give Bapuji the necessary help to understand Her real *Swarūpa* (Nature) and philosophy. This had been the great desire of both Bhaiji and Bhayyaji. Mataji told me many things about the doctrine of non-violence as propagated by Bapuji. I wanted to communicate to him through a letter all that I had heard from Mataji so that Bapuji might perhaps remodel his future plans of action. Mataji at first did not agree to my suggestion but when persistently requested, She finally permitted me to do so. She however told me that all She had stated was meant for my own personal guidance. I then wrote a letter to Bapuji in the presence of the Divine Mother, and after reading it

to Her, despatched it from Lucknow in the first week of March 1942.

A copy of this letter and Babu's reply which was in his own handwriting, and their English translation are reproduced below for the benefit to the readers. They may draw their own conclusions about Mataji's personality, about Bhayyaji's devotion and his spirit of self-surrender to Her after a brief meeting at Raipur, about his full faith in the philosophy of life as explained to him by Mataji which had given him complete peace of mind. I have tried in this letter to give, as far as possible within my own limitations, a correct version of all that I had heard from Mataji in private while travelling with Her in the train. This letter gives in a nutshell some clue to Mataji's teaching, which is universal, and also depicts to some extent Her real Divine Nature. I am confident that a careful reading of the letter with reverence and in a meditative mood will be very helpful to the reader.

श्री हरीराम जोशीजी द्वारा प्रेषित पूज्य बापू को पत्र ।

नजरबाग, लखनऊ

मार्च, 1942

श्री श्री मां शरणम्,

श्री पूज्य बापू जी के चरणों में हरीराम जोशी का सादर प्रणाम ।

वर्धा से लौटते हुये श्री माताजी को उनके आज्ञानुसार एक एकान्त स्थान में छोड़कर 25 ता० फरवरी को मैं लखनऊ वापस आया । श्री श्री मां के साथ इस समय ब्रम्हचारी अभय और

ब्रम्हचारिणी गुरु प्रिया दीदी हैं। स्वामी परमानन्द जी देहरादून गये हैं। वे फिर षोढ़े दिनों बाद श्री मां के पास जायेंगे। श्री मां ने कहा जब तक वे न कहें किसी व्यक्ति को उनके निवास स्थान का पता न दिया जाय। उनके पास यदि पत्र भेजा जाये तो मैं यहाँ से उनके पास भेज दूंगा।

आपके अनुरोध करने पर भी श्री श्री मां इस समय वर्धा अधिक नहीं रुकीं; आपसे विज्ञप्ति करके और आपकी आज्ञा लेकर एक छोटी बच्ची के समान हूठ करके चली आई पर मुझे आज्ञा है कि आपका और श्री मां का दूसरे बार का मिलन विशेष महत्त्व का होगा। इस मिलन से संसार का कल्याण होगा। स्व० श्री भाई जी (श्री ज्योतिष चन्द्र राय जी) और स्व० भैया जी (श्री सेठ जमना लाल बजाज) की प्रबल इच्छा थी कि इस मधुर मिलन से हम लोगों को श्री मां का असली स्वरूप पहचानने में सुभीता होगा और परमार्थ की तरफ जाने का आनन्द मिलेगा। उनकी यह धारणा थी कि आप जैसे शक्तिशाली महानुभाव ही श्री मां के शुद्ध स्वरूप को पहचान सकेंगे। मुझे बड़ी खुशी है कि उनकी यह प्रबल इच्छा अंशमात्र में पूरी हो गई।

वर्धा के स्टेशन पर श्री मां ने श्री भाई राधाकृष्ण जी से आपके लिये एक संदेश भेजा था। राधाकृष्ण भाई ने उस संदेश को आपकी सुना दिया होगा। संदेश यह था — (1) अपने घर में अपने के पास जाना ही होगा। पिताजी को अगर सबसे छोटे बच्ची को अपने पास लेकर खेलने की इच्छा हो सूचना देवें। यदि पिता जी शरीर को ठीक रखेंगे और ध्यान करायेंगे तो बच्ची पिता जी के गोद में

फिर चली आवेगी। श्री मां ने एक बात खाने और कपड़े के विषय में कही। वह इस प्रकार है — “जो कुछ खाना और पहिनता है वह एक ही स्थान से मिलता है। उसी का सब रूप है”। इसी ईश्वर की दृष्टि से श्री मां ने आपसे कहा था :— “मैं तुम्हारा ही कपड़ा पहिनती हूँ”। श्री माता जी को स्व० कमला नेहरू जी ने खदर का कपड़ा दिया था उसको श्री मां ने पहिन लिया था।

हर समय श्री माता जी जिस तरह परमार्थ विषयों में बात करती है उसी तरह वर्धा से लौटते हुए रेल में उन्होंने एकान्त में बहुत सी बातें मुझसे कहीं—जो विशेष बातें श्री मां के मुखारबिन्द से सुनने का सौभाग्य मुझे इस समय प्राप्त हुआ। ऐसा अवसर पहले नहीं मिला था। यह सुअवसर आपके मिलने के बाद प्राप्त हुआ जिससे अत्यन्त आनन्द मिला और प्रबल इच्छा हुई कि इन बातों को आपके पास लिख भेजूं। मैंने श्री मां से विज्ञप्ति की कि वे उन बातों को आपके पास लिख भेजने की आज्ञा प्रदान करें। मेरे हठ करने पर श्री मां ने कहा — “हम सब एक ही के तो हैं। मुझसे पूछने की क्या बात है। परमपिता, परम माता, परमपति, परम बन्धु, एक ही तो हैं। वही राम, नारायण, वही कृष्ण, वही महादेवी, शक्ति, वही ब्रह्म, वही आत्मा है। उसी का तो सब कुछ खेल है”। श्री माता जी की बात समझने की तो मुझ में शक्ति नहीं है, सुनने व लिखने में कभी कभी बड़ा भारी फर्क भी हो जाता है। मैंने जितना समझा लिख रहा हूँ। आपसे मिलने के सम्बन्ध में श्री मां ने मुझे कहा—“प्रेमप्रकाश पिता जी ने बच्ची को बुलाकर प्रेमानन्द से मिल लिया। पिता जी के लिये सब बच्चे जैसे हैं यह

शरीर भी एक तरह से बँसा ही है। समदृष्टि से पिता जी को इस बच्ची को भी अपना हा समझना होगा। छोटे से छोटा बच्चा जो यह शरीर है उसको तो और भी अधिक देखना होगा।”

श्री माताजी की और विशेष बातें इस प्रकार थीं —

1. विश्व-प्रेम, अखंड शान्ति, पूर्ण शक्ति से ही प्राप्त होते हैं।
2. सर्वज्ञान अर्थात् अखण्डज्ञान के पास सर्वशक्ति का ही प्रकाश रहता है।
3. पूर्ण शक्ति जहाँ विराजमान है वहाँ तो जो कुछ कर्म स्वरूप से प्रकाश है वह स्वयं सिद्ध है, संकल्प इच्छामात्र से ही सर्व कार्य सिद्ध हो सकता है।
4. आत्मज्ञान एक आत्मा का ही ज्ञान है।
5. ब्रह्म-ज्ञान एकोब्रह्म द्वितीयो नास्ति का ही जानना है।
6. ईश्वर के विचित्र चित्र के ज्ञान का प्रकाश जो है वह उसी के अर्थात् ईश्वर के अनन्त शक्ति के ज्ञान का प्रकाश है। उसको छोड़कर और कुछ नहीं है। जो वह रहे तो कुछ न रहे। इसके माने यह नहीं है कि कुछ जो है वह अलग है। अलग नाम-रूप जो है वह भी वही है। वह ऐसे विचित्र हैं नाशवान अविनाशी युगवत् रहते हैं, उन्हीं में ही ऐसा होना संभव है।
7. ईश्वर निर्गुण निराकार और सगुण साकार भी है। देखो कैसे कैसे सुन्दर रूप में तरह तरह से अपने को लेकर अपनी माया का खेल कर रहा है—विश्वव्यापक ईश्वर की लीला इसी प्रकार तरह तरह से चलती है। वह अनादि है, अनन्त है।

वह पूर्ण है; अखण्ड फिर खण्ड भी है। खण्ड और अखण्ड सब कुछ लेकर पूर्ण और अखण्ड है।

इन सब बातों को हर समय याद रखने का प्रयत्न करो। प्रतिदिन एक बार यदि इच्छा हो तो उसको पढ़ लिया करो। बच्चे को जैसे अक्षर बोध होने के लिये पहिले परिश्रम करना पड़ता है। परिश्रम करोगे तो इन बातों का अर्थ समझ में आ जायेगा। प्रश्न भी उत्पन्न हो सकते हैं और समाधान भी हो जायेगा।

8. उसका एक तरह रूप मानकर समाधान मत करो। केवल उन्ही को, नानारूप नानाभाव से जो कुछ है उसको ग्रहण करो। लक्ष्य पूर्ण रखो, सारे कार्य में पूर्ण मिलेगा। देखो तो, एक छोटे बट वृक्ष के बीज में छोटे, मध्यम और वृद्ध वृक्ष और बीज अनन्त रूप से कैसे सुन्दर प्रकार से विराजमान हैं।
9. तुम अपने को जानने की कोशिश करो। अपने को जानने का अर्थ सब कुछ अपने अन्दर पाना है। तुम से अलग और कुछ नहीं है।
10. अपने शरीर से जैसा प्रेम करते हो वैसे ही सब को अपने शरीर के समान मानना। महानुभाव से अपनी की ही सेवा हर एक रूप से हरेक भाव से प्रकाश होती है। पेंड कहो, चिड़िया कहो, पशु कहो, मनुष्य कहो, जो नामरूप से चाहो कहो, अपनी सेवा ही अपने को करनी होती है।
11. विराट या महान विश्व सेवा जो है वही पूर्ण आकार से करने के लिये पूर्ण शक्तिमान के पास प्रार्थना, जप और ध्यान करने

की आवश्यकता है। पूर्ण शक्ति बिना पूर्ण सफलता प्राप्त नहीं होती।

12. किसी तरह का ज्ञान और अज्ञान न रहे इसी को पूर्ण सक्षय रखना।
13. अपने को जड़ बनाकर मत बैठना। सर्वज्ञान के ध्यान का अर्थ जड़ बनना नहीं है। देखो, राम और कृष्ण का कैसा सुन्दर खेल है।
14. अज्ञान से तो अज्ञान का ही काम बन सकता है। एक बात यह है कि अज्ञान के बीच में उन्हीं की प्रेरणारूप से काम बनता सा दीखता है। दूसरी बात है प्रत्यक्ष जानकर सब काम करना। प्रत्यक्ष में सब कुछ जानने का प्रयत्न करो। प्रत्यक्ष होने के माने हैं अपना वही हो जाना। अपनी सेवा अपने आप करना। उसमें फिर यह नहीं रहता 'द्वन्द्व', द्विधा या झगड़ा।
15. वह जैसा है वैसा नहीं भी है। है भी नहीं है, नहीं भी नहा है। उसके भी ऊपर है। वह जो पूर्ण है उसको ऐसे मन बुद्धि से छोड़े ही समझ सकते हो। उनकी महान कृपा से जो चश्मा मिलता है, उसी से ही सब कुछ जानना सम्भव है। प्रार्थना करना अपना धर्म है।

पत्र लम्बा हो गया है। इसलिये क्षमा चाहता हूँ। आशा है आपका स्वास्थ्य अच्छा होगा। श्री मां से प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि आपका संकल्प सिद्ध हो और आपको पूर्णानन्द और पूण शान्ति प्राप्त हो।

आपका
हरीराम जोशी

पू० बापू का उपरोक्त पत्र का उत्तर

सेवा ग्राम

वर्धा होकर (मध्य प्रदेश)

10-3-1942

भाई जोशी,

तुम्हारा खत मिला । बहुत अच्छा किया तुमने लिखा । अब तो जानकी बहन वहां रहती है । श्री मां से कहो जब इच्छा हो तब आ जाय ।

बापू का आशीर्वाद

Letter of Sri Hari Ram Joshi to Bapuji.

Nazarbagh, Lucknow

March 1942.

Srī Srī Mā Saraṇam.

Hari Ram Joshi offers obeisance at the lotus feet of revered Bapuji.

After taking Mataji directly from Wardha to a solitary place as desired by Her, I reached Lucknow on the 25th of February. Brahmachari Abhaya and Sri Gurupriya Didi are with Mataji at the moment. Swami Paramanandaji has gone to Dehradun and will join Mataji again shortly. Sri Ma said that Her whereabouts should not be disclosed to anyone until

She directs otherwise. If anybody wants to write to Her, he may do so care of my address and I shall forward the letter.

This time Mataji did not give way to your entreaties to stay with you longer and, like a small child asked your permission to leave so soon. Yet it is my hope that your next meeting may be an event of great magnitude with far reaching results. By that meeting the whole world will benefit. It was Sri Bhajiji's (J. C. Roy) and Sri Bhayyaji's (Seth Jammalal) great desire that on this special occasion we should be able to recognize Mataji's Divine Nature and to experience the joy of directing our lives towards the Supreme Quest. They felt confident that you were possessed of the rare capacity to understand Sri Ma's Real Being. It is a matter of deep happiness to me that their great expectation has been fulfilled to some extent at least.

From Wardha station Mataji sent you a message through brother Radha Krishnaji which he must have delivered to you. The message was: "One has to go to one's own Self. If Pitaji wishes this smallest of all children to come and play with him, he may kindly send word. If Pitaji keeps good health and reminds her of it, this little girl will come to him again." Sri Ma made the following remark concerning food and clothes: "Whatever one eats or wears is obtained from one source. All forms and shapes are His. From this point of view—the point of view of God—Mataji told you: 'I am indeed wearing

your clothes!' Kamla Nehru gave Mataji *khaddar* (hand spun and hand woven cloth) and Mataji wore it.

Mataji always talks about spiritual things and on the journey from Wardha I had the opportunity to listen to Her words while no one else was present. Never before did I have the good fortune to hear so many significant remarks from Her blessed lips. I feel extremely happy that this should have happened just after meeting you and I am longing to write to you what I have heard Mataji say. I therefore asked Her permission to communicate Her words to you. When I kept on insisting, Sri Ma said: "We are all of the One. Why should I be asked? The Supreme Father, Mother, Friend and Lord is One indeed. He is Rama, Narayana, Krishna, He is Mahadevi, Sakti, He is the Brahman, the Atman. Truly, everything is His play."

It goes without saying that I do not possess the capacity to understand the import of Mataji's utterances. Moreover, there is sometimes a vast difference between what one hears and what one is able to note down. I am writing to you as much as I have understood.

About meeting you, Mataji told me: "Pitaji, who is an embodiment of love, called this little child and received her with the joy of affection. In a way this small girl is as dear to Pitaji as all children are to him. Looking equally on all, Pitaji will have to accept this small girl also as his very own, and since

she is the tiniest of tiny babies, she will have to be looked after with even greater care."

Now to the special things that Sri Ma uttered:

(1) Universal love and permanent peace are won only through Perfect Power (*pūrṇa śakti*).

(2) Perfect Power comes into being where there is complete knowledge, in other words, all-encompassing Knowledge.

(3) Where Perfect Power reigns, there, whatever manifests is perfect in its own right. There everything can be accomplished by mere willing.

(4) Self-knowledge means knowledge of the one Self.

(5) Knowledge of the Brahman is the realization that there is only One-Brahman-without-a-second.

(6) The realization of God in His multifarious images signifies the realization of Him in His infinite Power. There is nothing outside of Him, He is and none else. This does not mean that there can be something separate. All different names and forms that exist are but He alone. The wonder of it is that the destructible and the indestructible exist simultaneously—in Him this is possible.

(7) God is without form, without quality as well as with form and quality. Watch and see with what an endless variety of beautiful forms He plays the play of His *māyā* with Himself alone. The *Līlā* of the all-pervading One goes on in this way in infinite diversity. He is without beginning and without end. He is the whole and also the part. The whole and

the part together make up real Perfection. Try to remember the aforesaid at all times. If you like you may read it over once every day. Just as a child has to exert himself in the beginning to learn the alphabets so, if you labour hard for it, you will come to understand the meaning of all this. Questions do arise and their solution will also come.

(8) To believe in Him under any particular form is not enough. Accept Him in His numberless forms, shapes and modes of being, in everything that exists. Aim at the whole and all your actions will be whole. Just think, how marvellously in the small seed of a banyan tree small trees, medium sized trees and giant trees and seeds in numberless stages of development are potentially present.

(9) Endeavour to know yourself! To know oneself signifies to discover everything within oneself. There is nothing separate from you.

(10) As you love your own body, so regard everyone as equal to your own body. When the Supreme Experience supervenes, everyone's service is revealed as one's own service. Call it a tree, a bird, an insect, an animal or a man, call it by any name you please, one serves one's own Self in every one of them.

(11) In order to be able to really serve the whole world in a universal manner, it is necessary to pray to the Fountainhead of all Power or to repeat His Name or to contemplate Him. Without full power full success does not come.

(12) Look, one has to pay special attention to the following: to become wholly absorbed in the pursuance of anything in particular and to forget the whole world over it, is not right. In such a scheme, ignorance of the essence still persists. One's determined aim must be not to allow partial knowledge or ignorance to persist.

(13) Don't become inert; to contemplate all-encompassing Knowledge does not mean inertia. See how wonderful the play of Rama and Krishna is!

(14) While in ignorance one can only do the work of the ignorant. Yet it must be said that even in ignorance one may be able to achieve something by His inspiration. Whatever is undertaken should be done with direct knowledge.

(15) He is and He is not; and yet neither is He nor is He not—and even beyond this. One who has attained to perfection can grasp this, having risen beyond mind and intelligence. Through the spectacles obtained by His Supreme Grace it is possible to realize everything. To pray for God's grace is man's innate duty (*dharma*).

Pardon me for this very long letter. I hope this finds you in the best of health. I am praying to Sri Ma that your object may be fulfilled and that you may attain to perfect bliss and perfect peace.

Yours,

Hari Ram Joshi.

Revered Bapuji's reply.

Sevagram, Wardha, M.P.

10-3-1942.

Brother Joshi,

Thank you for your letter. You did well to write it. Now Janakibehn has gone there.

Please tell Sri Ma to come any time She feels like it.

With Bapu's blessings.

A year later, namely on February 20th, 1943, when Bapuji was facing a severe crisis in the Ahmednagar jail, I visited the Vindhychal Ashram and prayed to Mataji to save Bapuji's life. She responded by pointing to a Maharastra brahmin, aged about seventy-five years, who was sitting before Her. He was a lifelong brahmachari and a great scholar of the Gita. He had come from Varanasi and was praying all the time to Her to save Bapuji's life. He had been crying before Her for the last three days. Two hours after my arrival at Vindhychal, Mataji ordered everybody in the Ashram to join *Akhaṇḍa Nāma Yajña*, but She would not give any clear indication to us whether Bapuji's life would be saved. Happily for us all, the following day, news was broadcast that Bapuji had passed the crisis under miraculous circumstances, to the great surprise of all his attending physicians, including Dr. B. C. Roy, who had declared that Bapuji had no chance to survive. I feel that a further lease of life was given to Bapuji by Mataji in Her great mercy.

Śrī Śrī Mā Saranam

CHAPTER—IX

Great Sadhus and Bhaktas—Ashrams Grow up in
Various Places

(1942—1945)

In summer 1942, Mataji stayed at Bhimtal in the newly built cottage of Dr. Pitambar Pant, to fulfil his keen desire that She should spend one summer with him at Bhimtal. A couple of months after Mataji returned from there to the Kishenpur Ashram, Dr. Pant died. After his demise Sri Hira Ballabh Tripathi, M.P., Chairman, Municipal Board, Hardwar, helped a great deal in putting the *Anandamayi Nari Siksha Niketan* on a sound footing. The gift made by Dr. Pant in the name of Mataji in 1938 is being well utilized in imparting education upto the B.A. standard to more than 1500 girls.

While Mataji was at Bhimtal in summer 1942, my younger brother, Dr. Madan Mohan Joshi, died at Bhumiadhar (Bhowali) in the presence of our parents and his wife and children. Two days later I went to communicate this news to Mataji. I learnt that Mataji had told Gurupriya Didi two days before at 3 P.M. that crying had started at Bhumiadhar. She

however had not stated plainly that She saw Madan Bhai on his death-bed and that his relatives were weeping. Just before his death, Madan Bhai told our mother that Mataji was standing before him. Our mother and his wife did not believe him, but when I went to Bhimtal, Mataji Herself told me that She had been watching Madan Bhai at the time of his death. A day before his passing, when he was so weak that he could not even turn in his bed without help, Madan Bhai suddenly got up and started reciting *Rāma nāma* and *Śiva nāma*. He had completely lost his voice a few months before, as his throat had been badly damaged by T.B. Our mother and his wife became very anxious when he started reciting *Rāma nāma* and *Śiva nāma* and made him lie down in bed quietly. Madan Bhai had been admonished by Mataji to write *Rāma nāma* every day 28 times into a note-book and also to write every morning before taking any food the mantra 'Om Namah Śivāya' with sandal paste on eleven bilva leaves. Madan Bhai carried out this injunction to the last day of his life. Before passing away he requested his mother and wife not to weep for him since he was dying in peace, and he also begged of his wife not to worry as she and her children were under Mataji's protection. These incidents clearly show that by Mataji's grace Madan Bhai, who had been extremely attached to his wife and children, was able to shake off completely his family attachment (*moha*) before he passed away.

Another younger brother, Janaki Bhai, settled in Solan after Madan Bhai's death. He had lost his wife who left behind three daughters and a son. Mataji gave me an indication that Janaki Bhai should not marry a second time. Unfortunately he ignored Mataji's advice and married again. Two years later, he died of tuberculosis and his wife, within a year of his death, succumbed to the same disease. Mataji often says that whatever is destined must take place in spite of Her advice for doing or not doing a particular thing. In his helplessness one is unable to follow Her instructions, as destiny has its own way. The story of the death of my second brother and his wife amply illustrates this point.

In 1943, after my return from Vindhyachal to Lucknow, I visited Vrindaban in the month of March to see my uncle, Pt. Padma Datt Joshi who, in his old age, after giving up the practice of law, had left his home at Almora and decided to pass the rest of his life in Vrindaban. He was eager to invite Mataji to Parvatiya Dharamsālā in Kishoripura which he had established for the comfort of pilgrims from the hills. Mataji had come to Vrindaban from Vindhyachal and was staying in Sri Uria Babaji's Ashram. When I had gone to Vrindaban in 1939 to pay respects to my uncle, I also had visited the Ashram of Uria Baba Maharaj for his *darśana*. On that occasion I had related to him how I had met Mataji first in Raipur, Dehradun, and how I was attracted by Her Divine Personality, though I had heard nothing

about the supernatural powers that She possessed. But I did tell him that I had at once felt that I was in the presence of a *Sthitaprajña* as defined in Chapter II of the *Gita*. Babaji at that time did not express his views about Mataji but only smiled.

When I went to Vrindaban in 1943, I was happy to see that Mataji was staying in Sri Uria Babaji's Ashram along with Sri Hari Babaji and others. In that Ashram, *Rāsālīlā* used to be performed every morning between 9 and 11 A.M. It was invariably attended by Mataji, Uria Babaji, Hari Babaji and others. One day I requested Mataji to grace by Her visit the Parvatiya Dharamśālā which was located in Kishoripura, not far from Uria Baba's Ashram. Mataji agreed and when the *Rāsālīlā* was over She came to the *dharamśālā* with Didiji and Swami Paramanandaji. Although my uncle was a great devotee of Lord Krishna, he performed *ārātī* of Mataji with sincere devotion and recited some *stotras* (hymns). After offering *prasāda* to Mataji, he told Her that though he belonged to the *Sakta* cult by birth, he had become a *Vaiṣṇavite* ever since settling down in Vrindaban. He narrated to Mataji how he had received a *tulasi mālā* (rosary) from his *Iṣṭadeva* Sri Krishna in a mysterious way. He then asked Mataji when and how he would be blessed with his *Iṣṭadeva's darśana*. At that moment, I intervened and told my uncle: "Was not the *ārātī* performed by him a few minutes back in such a devotional mood of his own *Iṣṭadeva*, who had

appeared before him in the form of Mataji?" On hearing this, Mataji in a stern voice rebuked me for making such a statement and pointed out that if I myself were really convinced of the truth of what I had said, my whole life would have been totally transformed. In reply I told Mataji that I was discharging the function of a messenger who delivers a letter to the proper addressee without himself knowing or making an effort to know the contents of the letter. I also told Her that in case She was pleased to tell us that She had not appeared in the form of Lord Krishna thousands of years ago, I would never again make such a statement. Mataji only smiled as usual and remained silent.

Uria Baba Maharaj, while listening to *Bhagavata Katha* in his Ashram at Vrindaban, was murdered by a devotee of his, who in turn was killed by the infuriated crowd assembled there. Consequently the reasons why Babaji was murdered by his own follower could not be investigated. Uria Baba Maharaj was a saint of great fame in that part of Northern India. As a young man he had practised *sādhana* on the bank of the Ganga in Anupshahr. He had a very large following. Hari Baba Maharaj, who often stayed with Mataji upto his death, was very much attached to Uria Baba Maharaj. The daily programme of *Rāsālilā* continues in the Ashram even now.

* * *

The Ashram at Kishenpur has expanded consider-

ably during the last 25 years. Sri S. K. Ghosh (Sachida), Assistant Income Tax Commissioner, Bengal, purchased eleven bighas of land on Rajpur Road, less than half a mile above the Kishenpur Ashram. It is now a garden full of fruit trees and flowering shrubs and has been called "Kalyanvan" by Mataji. A small shrine for Śiva was consecrated there together with the temples of the main Ashram in 1959 and a temple for Rama, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman in 1964. Six cottages have been built in Kalyanvan. For the last so many years Sri Haribabaji and his party used to stay there almost every summer for about two months.

Sri Haribabaji was not an ordinary *sādhu*. He was a saint of a very high order. He was born in Hoshiarpur on *Phālgun Holika Pūrṇamāsi*, the birthday of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Haribabaji was a great devotee of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and, with a group of disciples, used to perform *kīrtana* regularly three times a day with intense fervour and concentration. About forty years ago, he, without any government help, got a large dam about eighteen miles long, constructed in the district of Badaun, to protect the villages of that area from the ravages of the recurring devastating floods. Sri Haribabaji himself would recite *Rāma Nāma* together with the villagers while he and everyone carried baskets full of earth on their heads for building the dam. This extensive dam was thus constructed by *shrama dāna* (offering of labour) through the whole-hearted efforts of this extraordi-

nary saint, Sri Haribabaji had thousands of disciples both in the U.P. and Punjab. He never looked at the face of any woman. During the last twenty-five years of his life,* he spent much time in Mataji's company, mostly in Vrindaban and Dehradun. Mataji often used to adjust Her programme to suit his convenience. His devotion and veneration for Mataji were quite outstanding. Although older than Mataji, he never hesitated to pay respectful homage to Her on every occasion. In December 1955, Sri Haribabaji was dangerously ill and was operated in Dr. Sen's Nursing Home at New Delhi on the advice of Mataji. One day, when his condition was precarious, Mataji came to the Nursing Home. At the door of Sri Haribaba's room his Gurudeva appeared to Her and requested Her to save his life. Mataji then entered Sri Haribabaji's room. By Mataji's grace he passed the crisis.

Sri Triveni Puri Maharaj of Khanna (Punjab), another remarkable sage, had the privilege of Mataji's visit on two occasions. He was intimately known to Haribabaji. Sri Krishnananda Avadhutaji was an ardent devotee of his. Triveni Puriji was a great Vedantist. He once told me that all those who could come in contact with Mataji were very fortunate as it was not easy to get an opportunity to meet such a Divine Personality.

* Sri Haribabaji took Mahāsamādhi in January 1970 in Varanasi in Mataji's presence.

At Jullunder (Punjab), there was a great devotee and disciple of Mataji, Sardar Sadhu Singh, a retired teacher. He had four sons whom Mataji named Rama, Lakshman, Bharat and Satrughna. One of them died a few years after meeting Mataji. The eldest son, Rama, a bachelor has retired as a teacher and is now the Manager of a Girls' College established by him in Mataji's name. The second son Lakshman is known as 'Sant Gulab Singh' and has an Ashram at Chandigarh. Before settling there he stayed much in the company of Mataji. In his meditation he sometimes would remain in *sāmadhi* for hours together in the presence of Mataji. The third son of Sardar Sadhu Singh is a practising Doctor in Jullunder.

In the year 1943 Mataji visited Lucknow twice on Her way to Varanasi. On the first occasion She stayed in A. P. Sen Road in a newly built bungalow near the Charbagh station, and on the second occasion in a *dharamśālā* on the bank of the Gomati near the iron bridge of Daliganj. From there She went to Sitapur where I was then posted. She put up in a newly built room in the compound of Sri Pal Singh, the Secretary of the District Board, in whose bungalow I was living at that time. Many inhabitants of Sitapur became Mataji's devotees, specially Sri Prayag Narain Saigal, who is a great philanthropist yet very unassuming. He maintains "*Sada Vrata*", a centre for feeding the poor in Naimisharanya Kshetra,

about 20 miles from Sitapur on the Balamau motor road.

Naimisharanya, where the sage Vyasa is said to have compiled the eighteen *Purānas* thousands of years ago, is considered one of the most sacred places in India. Recently one of Mataji's devotees from Gujarat has had a *Purāna Mandir* constructed there in Mataji's name for the preservation and regular recitation of the eighteen *Purānas*. A cottage has been built there for Mataji by a devotee from Calcutta and a Satsang Hall from contributions made by some other devotees. A temple of *Purāna Purūsa* is planned. Mataji now pays frequent visits to this Ashram. After staying in Sitapur for two days in 1943, Mataji came back to Lucknow and then proceeded to Varanasi.

Dr. Panna Lal, I.C.S., Adviser to the Governor of the U.P., met Mataji for the first time in February 1942, when She visited Lucknow before proceeding to Wardha. He met Her again in 1943. Dr. Panna Lal became a great devotee of Mataji and until his death in 1967 tried his level best to pass his old age in the constant recitation of his mantra and in the remembrance of God. Whenever he came to stay with Mataji, he lived a very simple life and would mostly sleep on the floor. His son as well as his three daughters and their husbands are also greatly attached to Mataji. His eldest son-in-law, Sri Rameshwar Sahai, Chief Conservator of Forests, has settled in Lucknow after retirement, and in his newly

built house has got a suite of rooms reserved for Mataji's exclusive use. She has stayed there on several occasions for a day or so. His only son had all the makings of a great scientist and was considered a genius. He died suddenly under mysterious circumstances while conducting research in atomic energy in Paris. It is most creditable for Sri Rameshwar and his wife Leilaji that both of them, by Mataji's grace, could bear the shock of this irreparable loss in such a composed manner. Like Dr. Panna Lal, they are trying to pass their time mostly in the constant remembrance of their *Iṣṭadeva*.

Dr. Panna Lal was a great devotee of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Once when meeting Mataji in Lucknow in 1943, Dr. Panna Lal became totally engrossed in narrating some story from the life of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. At that moment Mataji in Her *bhāva* told Dr. Panna Lal in a low voice, which I could hear, that he too had been with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, when he had appeared in this world in Nadia. Dr. Panna Lal did not hear what Mataji had said and so I drew his attention to it. Dr. Panna Lal afterwards requested Mataji to disclose to him his identity of that time. But Mataji only replied that at that moment She had no *kheyāla* to say anything more on the subject. She asked him to see Her early the next morning in Her room when Dr. Panna Lal had a private interview with Her. From what he told me the following day, it appeared that he was

greatly satisfied as he had received specific directions for his *sādhana* from Mataji. Dr. Panna Lal got images of Nityananda and Mahaprabhu sculptured of *ashtadhātu* metal costing about Rs. 4,000 installed in a temple built at his initiative in Sri Anandamayi Ashram, Vrindaban.

While Mataji's birthday was being celebrated in Kanpur in May 1967, Mataji directed Dr. Panna Lal's eldest daughter Leilaji, who had come to Kanpur, to go to Delhi and move her father from the Nursing Home to the residence of his son, as Dr. Panna Lal was likely to pass away very soon. Mataji gave her a garland to be put round Dr. Panna Lal's neck. In spite of Mataji's advice, Dr. Panna Lal's family did not like to shift him in that critical condition. Thus Dr. Panna Lal breathed his last in Dr. Sen's Nursing Home.

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In April 1943, my second son, Hari Mohan, who was then a student of the ninth class, had a severe attack of typhoid. I kept him under the treatment of my friend Dr. Girjadayal, a homoeopath of great repute who was a colleague of mine in the co-operative department. I had planned to go to Dacca that year to attend Mataji's birthday celebrations. But because of Hari Mohan's condition I could not possibly leave unless his temperature came down to normal. It so happened that a week before Mataji's

birthday celebrations were to start, his temperature did not go beyond 99° for two days and so I decided to stick to my programme and on the appointed day proceeded to Dacca, where I reached on May 2nd. The following morning the birthday celebrations commenced in the Ramna Ashram. Bhaiji had often asked me to go with him to Dacca, but unfortunately I could not do so during his lifetime. Devotees from all parts of India had collected, including Sri Gopal Thakur of Allahabad, who was a great *bhakta* and whom Mataji liked immensely. Together with him I went to pay my respects to Bhaiji's widow. I tried to persuade Her to go and stay with Mataji for the rest of her life. She welcomed me and Sri Gopal Thakur warmly, but we failed to convince her of the soundness of our advice to live in Mataji's company in order to attain to inner peace. Several years later Bhaiji's widow of her own accord came to Mataji in Calcutta, having left Dacca after the partition of Bengal. She expressed before Mataji that she had lost all her property at Dacca and that she wanted a small place in Calcutta for herself and her only son Ramananda, who was still without employment. She needed for this purpose about Rs. 6,000/-. Mataji narrated all this to me when soon after I came to Varanasi for Her *darśana*. I suggested to Mataji that the money could easily be raised by inviting contributions from devotees of Bhaiji. It is unfortunate that Bhaiji's widow passed away before the amount thus collected could be given to her. Mataji later

related to me how Bhaiji's widow shortly before her death had expressed to Mataji her repentance for having harboured uncharitable ideas about Mataji during the last few years of Bhaiji's life, and she earnestly prayed to Mataji to forgive her for her shortcomings.

On my return to Lucknow from Dacca, I found that my son had a relapse of typhoid and had been unconscious for a couple of days. However, with Mataji's blessings he recovered completely within forty days and very soon resumed his studies regularly.

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During the Magh Mela at Prayag (Allahabad) in 1944, Mataji stayed in a camp on the bank of the Ganga. Brahmachari Prabhu Dattji Maharaj of Jhusi performed a big *yajña* (fire sacrifice) lasting for about a week. Mataji used to attend this *yajña* daily. Prabhu Dattji at one time had become very worried on account of shortage of funds required for the purpose, but by God's grace there was no serious difficulty in solving the problem and the *yajña* was successfully completed to his entire satisfaction. Prabhu Dattji is an ardent *Vaiṣṇavite* and a very good scholar of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāna*. He has written '*Bhāgavati Katha*' in Hindi, which is very interesting and instructive and has been published as a monthly magazine. For the last several years he is observing silence except for reciting *kīrtana* of Rama or Krishna.

name. He is in close contact with Mataji. Although a saint of a high order, his interest in politics, especially in maintaining the old spiritual and cultural heritage of Bharat in tact, dominates his mind. In his youth he was an active Congress worker and during the early non-co-operation days he also underwent imprisonment. In recent years he took a prominent part in organizing cow protection and was in jail for some time when he took a vow to fast unto death. It was broken by him on persuasion from many quarters who were equally interested in cow protection. He has Ashrams in Jhusi and Vrindaban, where he now mostly stays so as to organize the cow protection work.

After the Magh Mela, Mataji went to Vrindaban and then to Dehradun. She visited Almora in the middle of April 1944 and stayed at Pataldevi where Her birthday was celebrated in May. Devotees in hundreds assembled from all parts of India to attend Mataji's birthday celebrations. Dr. Panna Lal, the late Kanti Bhai Munshaw of Ramkrishna Cotton Mills, Ahmedabad, Mukund Madhav Thakore, Principal of the Ahmedabad Law College, Sri Sachikant Ghosh, Assistant Income Tax Commissioner, Bengal, and many others including Pt. Parasurama Dhami of Dehradun came to Almora on the occasion. They all stayed in tents at Pataldevi as we had no buildings there as yet.

The evening before Mataji's *Tithi Pūjā*, Pt. Parasuram was telling us that Baba Neemkaroli

Maharaj, who had promised to visit Almora during this function, had not turned up. At that very moment Neemkaroli Babaji shouted loudly from the road above that he had come. We were all taken by surprise. Mataji did not approve of what Pt. Parasuram had said and warned everyone not to make such statements about the behaviour of saints in future. Neemkaroli Babaji went back and passed the night in Almora town. The next day he did not arrive at the Ashram at midday as promised, to take his meal prepared by Kanti Bhai Munshaw's wife. The Munshaws felt greatly disappointed and finally reluctantly took their meal late in the evening. No sooner had they finished their dinner, than Babaji appeared at Pataldevi, just as Pt. Govind Prasad Pande was remarking to some devotees that Babaji had not kept his promise. Mataji rebuked Govind Prasadji for talking about Babaji in this manner. Babaji told Munshaw Bhai that the Gujarati dish specially prepared for him by Srimati Munshaw had really been quite delicious. Everyone present felt puzzled as Munshaw Bhai had said nothing about that particular dish to Babaji or to any of us. Thereupon Mataji indicated to us indirectly that even without being physically present, Babaji could partake of the food specially prepared for him. He had obviously enjoyed the dish in his subtle body.

On this occasion of Mataji's birthday celebrations, Pt. Parasuram gave me an undertaking which he fulfilled, that he would pay the estimated cost of

building of the Pataldevi Ashram, amounting to Rs. 40,000/-. The story of this unassuming devotee is very interesting. It is an example of an ideally selfless person who was born in a very religious family but not highly educated. He started his career as a motor driver in the Dehradun and Saharanpur districts and later owned a fleet of about a dozen motor buses, trucks and station wagons. He became an ardent devotee of Mataji when first meeting Her in 1936, on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Kishenpur Ashram to which I had invited him. Parasuram Bhai was a very simple and modest person. He never talked to Mataji and always used to sit quietly in front of Her during his visits to the Ashram. He was a great philanthropist. Over and above the Rs. 40,000/- he had donated for the Pataldevi Ashram, he got a Śiva temple constructed in the Anandamayi Ashram at Vrindaban to fulfil the special desire of his daughter Mohini, who is living mostly in Mataji's company, having decided not to get married. Mohini later also had a suite of rooms for the exclusive use of Mataji built on top of her father's house near the railway station, Dehradun. Parsuram Bhai also spent more than Rs. 15,000/- on constructing a cottage for Mataji in Raipur, at a short distance from the *dharmasālā* attached to the Śiva Mandir where Mataji had stayed in 1932-33 when first coming from Dacca. This building is now being used by genuine *sādhakas*. Mataji declared that this cottage should be regarded as a memorial

for the eldest son of Pt. Parasuram who had died in Dehradun after a very short illness. Sri Hari Babaji repeatedly prayed to Mataji to save the life of this boy whose sacred thread ceremony had been performed a few months before in the presence of Mataji at the Kishenpur Ashram. However, Mataji told Haribabaji that the young brahmachari had developed complete desirelessness (*pūrṇa vairāgya*) and did not want to continue to stay anymore in this world. This was the end of a highly developed soul at a very young age.

In spite of the death of his eldest son, Parasuram Bhai's devotion for Mataji never wavered. He had of course several other children. His spirit of renunciation was very great. He would not spend any money on his personal comforts and lived on a very simple diet taking only one ordinary meal in the evening. Parasuram Bhai took *Gāyatrī mantra* once again under the direction of Mataji who with Her own hands gave him a new sacred thread and got him initiated at Hardwar just a couple of years before his death. On one occasion he told me that he only prayed to Mataji in silence that he should be granted to die of heart failure in complete consciousness and in remembrance of Her. It is really noteworthy that while nursing one of his sons who suffered from typhoid, Parasuram Bhai breathed his last due to heart failure within a couple of minutes in the year 1960. His son soon recovered. By Mataji's grace and on account of Parasuram Bhai's unflinching faith

in Her and his spirit of complete self-surrender, he died in peace in full remembrance of Mataji.

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In 1943 a three storied building in Almora, situated on the main motor-road above the Girls' Intermediate College and below the Ramsay High School, had been purchased by members of our family from Dharma Devi, a school teacher, for starting the '*Ma Anandamayi Dharamśālā*'. In 1957 this building was disposed of for Rs. 10,500/-, and the proceeds were utilized partly for repairs of the buildings of the Pataldevi Ashram and partly for the construction of an Ashram at Dhaulchina on the 10 acres plot of land given on lease for 30 years by the Forest Department, U.P. It was the desire of my younger brother Leeladhar before he died that a public library should be established at Almora in memory of late Pt. Durga Datt Joshi. I have told Mataji and Swami Paramanandaji about this and I hope that a good library will be opened at Pataldevi at an opportune time to commemorate my uncle.

The Durga Pūjā of 1944 was also performed at the Almora Ashram in Mataji's presence. I was then on leave and stayed with Mataji at Pataldevi. Mataji asked me to write to my father in Lucknow to come to Almora for the festival as he was a great worshipper of *Śakti*. However, in spite of my repeated requests, my father did not come. The image of

Goddess Durga was brought from Lucknow, and after the *pūjā* taken for immersion to the river Kosi. The *pūjā* was a unique success, due largely to the full co-operation of the people of Almora. They had never before witnessed a *pūjā* of this type. Mataji once told Swami Paramananda and Gurupriya Didi that it might be a good idea to instal an *ashtadhātu* image of Ma Durga at the Pataldevi Ashram so that Durga Puja could be performed there every year. It is more than 25 years now that this suggestion was made by Mataji but we have not yet been able to instal a permanent image of Goddess Durga at Pataldevi. We are, however, confident that this may become possible sooner or later, whenever Mataji will have the *kheyāla*.

After the Durga Puja in 1944, Mataji and all of us visited Uttara Vrindaban, sixteen miles from Almora on the way to Jageshwar. Mataji was taken in a dandi to both places. She stayed for a night at Uttara Vrindaban, the Ashram of Sri Krishna Prem (formerly Prof. Nixon of Lucknow University) and Haridas (formerly Dr. Alexander) who lived there with their Guru Sri Yashoda Ma, the widow of the late Rai Bahadur G. N. Chakravarti, I.E.S., Ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Lucknow University, and her daughter, Moti Rani. A very fine temple of Lord Krishna had been built at Uttara Vrindaban. The *ārati* performed by Sri Krishna Prem was quite unique, lasting not less than an hour. The hymns recited by Sri Krishna Prem and Sri Haridas, in both

Sanskrit and Bengali, were very elevating. A couple of years or so after Mataji's visit, Yashoda Ma died at her Ashram and several years later her daughter Moti Rani also passed away after a protracted illness. During her illness she was nursed by Sri Krishna Prem and Haridas. Sri Krishna Prem was a very exalted soul. His devotion to Lord Krishna was exceptional in every respect and he was a great scholar of the Gita. He was in close contact with Mataji. Sri Haridas had been Principal of the Medical College, Lucknow, and after his retirement from service he spent the rest of his life at Uttara Vrindaban, rendering all possible medical aid to the poor people of that area. Both of them were ideal devotees and had embraced *sannyāsa*. They are no more; but a couple of *sannyāsīs* also hailing from foreign countries are still performing *sādhana* and *pūjā* at Uttara Vrindaban.

After Uttara Vrindaban, Mataji visited Jageshwar where She also spent a night. Mataji very much liked the quiet atmosphere of Jageshwar Mahadeva, a temple located on a river bank in a picturesque dense deodar forest. On our way back to Almora, Mataji halted for a couple of hours at the Golla temple, Chitai, where my brother-in-law persuaded Her to have Her morning meal of simple *khichuri* (rice cooked with dal).

A couple of days after our return from Jageshwar, on November 17th, 1944, *Margsīrsha Krishna Panchmi*, I received a wire from Lucknow announcing the

death of my father. I was to leave Almora a day before with Sri Arun Banerji, but I did not do so as it was *Sankrant*, the first day of the Hindu month *Margasīrsha*. Arunda however stuck to his programme. Had I left Almora with him, I would have reached Lucknow in the morning and been present when my father breathed his last. When I went to Mataji to inform Her about my father's death, She told me that when I had entered Her room in the morning to do *praṇāma*, She had had the *kheyāla* to enquire from me about my father. However, for some undisclosed reason She had kept quiet. She directed me to go to Lucknow and perform my father's last rites and then to meet Her again at Pataldevi. It is my personal feeling that my father must have remembered Mataji at the time of his death and thus had his salvation. My conviction is based on Mataji's statement that She saw my father die, although he was in Lucknow and Mataji at Almora. This is another illustration of Mataji's Divine Mercy. My mother died two years later in Allahabad where, shortly before her death, Mataji went to see her along with Didima, who was my mother's Gurudeva. Both my parents were devoted to Mataji and so they both died in peace and in constant remembrance of Her.

After performing the *kriyā* for my father, I returned to Almora about a fortnight later and related to Mataji how my father had passed away in the morning hours in his *pūjā* room, while sitting for

Gāyatrī japa, and how my mother, with the help of a priest, perforce had taken him to a cot nearby in spite of his protest. I also told Mataji that at the time of my father's death, Bhai Govind Prasad Pande of Dehradun had been present. He was to leave the previous evening but postponed his departure at my father's request. My mother called Govind Prasadji. On seeing my father's condition, he fetched Mataji's *charaṇāmrit* which he always used to keep with him, and poured it into my father's mouth. He also applied to his forehead some *vibhūti* (ashes) of the *havan* performed in Dehradun in the presence of Mataji several years back. He arranged to take my father's body to Kanpur and thus fulfilled my father's desire to be cremated on the bank of the holy Ganga. Mataji only smiled on hearing all this.

In the second fortnight of December, Mataji with me and others descended from Almora. We went to Varanasi where arrangements had been made for the construction of an Ashram. A building of imposing size has now been constructed at Bhadaini on a ghat purchased from the Court of Wards, U.P. for Rs. 23,000/- or so. This ghat is now known as Ma Anandamayi Ghat and is located between Harischandra and Assighat, just at the spot where the holy Ganga starts flowing northwards (*uttarbāhīnī*). After the setting up of the Varanasi Ashram, Gurupriya Didiji established there a *Kanyapeeth* which is imparting education to girls upto the *Śāstri* and *Achārya* standards. The bramacharinis do not attend

any other Government or private school, but are mostly taught by qualified lady teachers, who are unmarried and have dedicated their lives to Mataji's service. A good number of highly educated, unmarried women belonging to the best families of almost all parts of India, such as Bengal, Gujarat, Bombay, U.P., Kashmir and the Punjab, who have dedicated their lives to the search after Truth, are staying in Mataji Ashrams and practising their *sādhana* in the manner prescribed by Her. They are also discharging such duties as are assigned to them by Mataji from time to time.

The Anandamayi ghat was badly damaged by the high flood of 1948. Mataji's devotees contributed about one lakh and fifty thousand rupees towards the repairs of this ghat. An equal amount was spent by the U.P. Government when Pandit G.B. Pant was the Chief Minister. However, the ghat could not be properly reconstructed and was washed away soon after. A part of the Ashram buildings had to be destroyed. The Government therefore refunded to the Ashram the contributions of the devotees. The Government later reconstructed that ghat in several phases. A temple of Annapurna was built in this Ashram to accommodate the images brought from Dacca after the partition. A large block for girls was constructed on a plot purchased out of funds offered by the Rajmata, Tehri. An extensive charitable hospital is still under construction. The outdoor department was opened several years ago. One wing of

the hospital has been completed and the hospital has started functioning. Its opening ceremony was performed by Srimati Indira Gandhi in December 1968, in Mataji's presence. A big temple of Gopalji with an adjoining *satsang* hall costing about six lakhs, has also been built recently. The temple of Gopalji is considered to be unique in its architecture. Before its consecration the image of Bal Gopalji was taken out in procession by Sri Gourinath Shastri, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Varanasi Sanskrit University. Mataji and all the sadhus who had assembled on that occasion joined the procession.

Śrī Śrī Mā Saraṇam

CHAPTER X

Durga Pujas and Birthday Celebrations—Sāvitrī Mahāyajña—Foundation of Kanya Peeth and Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha

(1945—1964)

In 1945, Mataji's devotees, specially Sri Sital Prasad Jaiswal of Udaiganj, Lucknow, made arrangements for the performance of Durga Puja in Rae Bareilly in Mataji's presence. Many devotees from all over India attended this festival which was a great success. Sri Sital Prasad was a contractor and dealer in kerosene oil. He had his first *darśana* of Mataji on February 1st, 1942, when Mataji stayed for three nights in Clay Square, Lucknow, in the Puja Mandir of Sri Chandra Datt Sanwal. *Akhaṇḍa Nāma Kīrtana* had been arranged at that place the very day Mataji arrived from Dehradun. Only *Mā Nāma* was recited for twelve hours on that occasion. Three or four times during the night, Mataji took part in this *kīrtana* for short periods. Bhai Sital Prasad felt greatly attracted by Mataji's Divine Personality and subsequently became an ardent devotee. Bhai Sital Prasad had a wife and only one daughter. At the time

of meeting Mataji in 1942, he told us that since over a dozen years he was living on milk and fruit only. He had a very charitable nature. He subsequently came in touch with Baba Neemkaroli Maharaj and, as directed by Babaji some time in 1943, started keeping *mouna* all the 24 hours. He never broke his silence till his death in 1967. Two years before he died, he transferred the profits of his business in the name of Hanumanji installed in a magnificent temple popularly known as Hanuman Setu Mandir, built on the bank of the Gomati by Babaji.

Sri Prabhat Kumar Banerji, M.A., Deputy Director of Education, U.P., after his retirement got a suite of rooms constructed for Mataji's use on the top floor of his house in Nazarbagh, Lucknow. Sri Prabhatda and his wife are disciples of the late Sri Gopal Thakur Maharaj of Allenganj, Allahabad, who was a great devotee of Mataji. They took initiation from him after consulting Her. Sri Gopal Thakur's *pūjā* of Ma Durga used to be unique. Mataji more than once attended his *pūjā* during Navarātri. Whenever She visits Allahabad, Mataji still goes to his Ashram and every year spends three nights there. The room constructed by Prabhatda, in which Mataji passed one night, is reserved for *pūjā*, meditation, *kīrtana* and the reading of scriptures. No worldly topics are discussed there. On the last Thursday of every month, people gather there for *nāma kīrtana*, *jaṇa* and meditation from 7 P.M.

to 9 P.M. The atmosphere of this room is greatly helpful to the devotees in their *sādhana*.

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In 1946 Durga Puja was performed at Solan at the invitation of Raja Durga Singh and his wife who made all arrangements. This Durga Puja was a grand success. Devotees from all parts of India attended. A new Ashram had been built for Mataji on the tennis court just below the palace, and was inaugurated on this occasion. Mataji subsequently stayed in that beautiful Ashram several times during the summer months. In 1955 Her birthday was celebrated there and Mataji remained for Gurupūrṇimā as well. She also stayed in Simla in 1952 in a cottage specially built for Her, adjoining Raja Durga Singh's house on Jacko Hill.

In 1948, just before the integration of the state with the Himachal Pradesh, Raja Durga Singh's wife died. She was a sister of the late Narendra Shah, Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal. Though very much pressed by all his relations and friends, Raja Durga Singh did not agree to marry a second time. Mataji gave him the name of Yogibhai as he leads a most unassuming, simple life and passes a considerable portion of his time in *dhyāna*, *jaṇa*, *ṇjā* and *swadhyāya* (recitation of Scriptures). He spends a large portion of his annual income in the service of Mataji in one form or another. After the death of his wife,

Yogibhaiji had a Śiva temple and a *dharamśālā* built at Kharkari, Hardwar, in memory of his father. The consecration of the Śiva temple was performed in Mataji's presence and under Her direction. A portion of the *dharamśālā* is reserved for Mataji and Her party. It includes a spacious *kīrtana* hall. In 1953 Mataji's birthday was celebrated there and Mataji remained in Hardwar for a month on this occasion. During the winter months Yogibhaiji now stays in this Baghat House. The Brahmacharis of Ma Anandamayi Vidyapeeth sometimes spend the winter months there.

In January 1947 Mataji was in Allahabad on the occasion of *Maharsankranti* (January 14th). My mother, who had taken *mantra dīkṣa* from Didima, was then staying with my younger brother in Allahabad as she was suffering from fever and cough. Mataji and Didima went to see her before leaving for Vrindaban in the last week of January. I was at that time working with Mr. Albert Mayer, Town Planner, who had been appointed as Planning Adviser to the Government of U.P., Lucknow. I talked to Mr. Mayer about Mataji. In December 1946, he and a friend of his, who was working in the American Embassy in New Delhi, went to see Mataji in the Kishenpur Ashram at about 9.30 P.M. and spent nearly one and a half hours with her. They wanted to sit quietly before Her when She was alone, so they had been advised to go to Her after 9 P.M. Both

of them were very much impressed by Her Divine Personality.

In the first week of February 1947, I had gone to Delhi with Mr. Mayer to meet Mr. Moon, I.C.S., Planning Secretary to the Government of India. I requested Mr. Mayer to permit me to go to Allahabad to see my mother, whose condition was reported to be very serious. Mr. Mayer advised me to return to Lucknow for some important work after spending *Vasant Panchami* day at Vrindaban with Mataji, and to go to Allahabad afterwards *via* Lucknow. When on my return to Lucknow from Vrindaban I went to the office at 10 A.M., a telegram was received informing me about the death of my mother. Mr. Mayer immediately arranged for a motorcar for me to go to Allahabad to attend the funeral of my mother, who had by Mataji's grace died in peace and in full consciousness about a week after Mataji and Didima had given her *daršana*.

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The great *Mahā Sāvitrī Yajña* at Varanasi, about the performance of which Mataji had given some indication soon after the Kali Puja of 1926, was celebrated with the same sacrificial holy fire which had been preserved ever since at the Dacca and Vin-dhyachal Ashrams. It was brought to Varanasi for starting this *Mahāyajña*, which continued for three years (1947—50). One crore (10 million) *ahutis* (oblations) with *Gāyatrī mantra* were offered in this *havan*

by about a dozen brahmacharis, under the supervision of Brahmachari Nepalda. After the completion of this *yajña*, Nepalda embraced *sannyāsa* and is now known as Swami Narayanananda Tirtha or Narayana Swami. He has been a brahmachari all his life and is one of the most ardent devotees of Mataji.

Extreme care was taken in everything connected with this *yajña*. The brahmacharis engaged in its performance had to observe very strict rules of purity and lived on a special diet. For the oblations only pure cow's ghi was used which was supplied by aeroplane regularly for three years by the devotees of Ahmedabad, who for this purpose maintained a farm with a large herd of high milk yielding cows. For a whole month before the *pūrṇāhuti*, daily feasts for three to four hundred people were arranged in the Varanasi Ashram, under the supervision of Swami Paramanandaji. *Sannyāsis* from all *akhāras* in Varanasi, as also *brahmins*, *daridra Nārāyaṇas* (poor people), lepers, etc., were entertained with delicious dishes. It is estimated that at least ten thousand people were served meals during that month, not including thousands of persons who had collected from all over India on the occasion of the *pūrṇāhuti*, and daily took *prasāda*. Mataji presented to everybody who had come to attend this *yajña* some cloth that had been sent to the Varanasi Ashram by devotees from Ahmedabad, Bombay, Kanpur, etc.

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In 1950 the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha with its headquarters at Bhadaini, Varanasi, was organized by some of the foremost devotees of Mataji for the control and management of the various temples, ashramas and institutions which had gradually been established in Varanasi, Vindychal, Rajgir, Calcutta, Puri, Dacca and many others that were to come into existence later. The Ashrams at Dehradun and Almora were then under the management of the Ma Anandamayi Trust, Kishenpur, Dehradun, which had been registered in 1940. I had repeatedly suggested to the devotees of Mataji to obtain Her permission for dissolving that Trust so that the institutions affiliated to it might be amalgamated with the newly registered Sangha.

The Anandamayi Trust, Kishenpur, was subsequently dissolved in 1960. The deed of revocation was registered on my behalf in Dehradun by Raja Durga Singh on the authority of a special power of attorney given to him by me, as advised by Yogi-bhaiji and Swami Paramanandaji.

Before the registration of the Sangha, Sri Kamalda, who is now known as Brahmachari Virajananda, was in charge of the Varanasi Ashram. He also succeeded Sri Ashutosh Bhattacharya, M. A., (Ashuda), Reader in English at the University of Lucknow, who was the first General Secretary of the Sangha. Ashuda and his wife and children are staunch devotees of Mataji. Kamalda was several years later replaced by Sri K. Bose, M.A., (Panuda), who had been the Joint

Secretary of the Sangha. Virajananda had come in contact with Mataji in Dacca as a young man. He then married the sister of Abhaya Brahmachari. After leading a householder's life for a few years, he left his wife and children in the care of his father-in-law in Calcutta and joined the Ashram. He worked hard for about twelve years to establish the institution on a sound footing, and is now devoting all his time to *sādhana*, trying to follow scrupulously Mataji's instructions.

Swami Paramanandaji, who after finishing his education in Bengal, went and stayed in Uttarkashi for about a dozen years to do *tapasyā*, is an ideal person in every respect. Late Devigiri Maharaj of Uttarkashi was the saint with whom Swami Paramananda studied Yoga Vasistha thoroughly during his stay at Uttarkashi. Devigiri Maharaj had seen Mataji first when She visited Uttarkashi in 1933 with Pitaji and again in 1935 when the Kali Temple was consecrated. Devigiri Maharaj was in very close contact with Her. He was so much impressed by Her Divine Personality that in spite of his hoary age, he agreed to undertake the long journey from Uttarkashi to Varanasi in January 1950 to attend the completion of the *Sāvitrī Mahā Yajña*. He died at the age of about 100 years soon after returning to Uttarkashi.

Swami Paramanandaji came to Mataji at Dehradun in 1937 after Bhaiji's death. Ever since he joined Her, he has been supervising the construction work of the Ashrams, big or small, which have sprung up

so far in more than a dozen places scattered throughout North India. Swamiji is now nearly 70 years old. For the last over 30 years he has been constantly busy with the activities organized by Mataji's devotees at various places. All the big functions like *Samyam Mahavrata*, Mataji's Birthday Celebrations, *Durga Puja*, *Bhagavata Saptah*, etc. are invariably in overall charge of Swamiji, because of his great organizing capacity and devotion to Mataji. He has very little ego and has an unassuming nature. He is not only a *sannyāsi* but also an expert cook, a born engineer and possesses extraordinary managing capacity. He moreover has an astounding memory and accomplishes all tasks most efficiently and economically and always with a smiling face. Swamiji does not wear any warm clothing even in the winter months and sleeps on *kushāsana*. He mostly lives on one meal a day and for about a dozen years he abstained altogether from salt and sugar. He is living only on *khichuri* (rice mixed with dal and vegetables) or on *chapaties* and vegetables but takes neither sweets nor fruit.

Abhaya Brahmachari met Mataji first in 1938. For many years he travelled constantly with Her. His *kīrtana* used to be most attractive. He composed many good prayers and songs in Bengali and also wrote a number of books about Mataji in Bengali. Having developed a serious type of asthma, Abhaya Brahmachari does not sing nowadays, and has been replaced as a singer by Brahmachari Vibhu (now

Brahmananda) who was a student of the Ma Anandamayee Vidyapeeth. Brahmananda has a sonorous voice and his *kīrtana* is inspired and very charming. He is much in Mataji's company though he too is suffering from asthma. All the same, by Mataji's grace he is able to sing at all functions.

Sri B. K. Shah, Managing Director of the New India Assurance Company, Ltd., is a devotee of a high order. He is unassuming and so is his wife, Lilabehn. When I met him for the first time in 1948 in Bombay, where I had gone on official business, it seemed to me that he was a religious person and I thought if he could come in touch with Mataji, he might become one of Her ardent devotees. It was three or four years later that Sri B. K. Shah came in close contact with Mataji, about the time of my retirement in May 1952. Sri B. K. Shah got a small cottage constructed for Mataji within the compound of his bungalow in Vile Parle, Bombay. He and his wife are the foremost devotees in Bombay, along with Sri Sopory, Vasudeva Bhai, Muljibhai Patel and a few others who have been mainly responsible for successfully organising various religious functions such as the *Samyam Saptah*, Mataji's birthday celebrations, etc., in Bombay. A few years ago, Sri B. K. Shah met with a serious accident, fracturing his leg bones. It was by Mataji's divine grace that he was fully cured and regained his normal health.

In 1952 after my retirement as Additional Registrar, Co-operative Societies, U.P., the Government of

India, Ministry of Home Affairs appointed me as Registrar, Co-operative Societies, Director of Industries, Director of Panchayat Raj, and Director of Civil Supplies, Himachal Pradesh, Simla. The co-operative movement there was not in a flourishing condition and I was specially directed to reorganize it for the economic development of that backward area. Lt. General Himmat Singh was then the Lt. Governor of H.P. and Dr. Parmar, the Chief Minister. Within four months I had prepared the scheme for the reorganization of the Co-operative, Panchayat Raj and Industries Departments, which was approved by the Cabinet of the State. I stayed in H.P. for seven months, though the Minister in charge of the Development Department and the Chief Minister pressed me very much to stay and work in the new State for at least a couple of years.

* * *

In March 1953, the Ashram at Vrindaban was inaugurated. It is spacious and magnificent in every respect. Its main building contains three beautiful temples which open out into a hall of imposing size, called "Bhagavata Bhavan". A temple of Lord Siva with five lingas is on the right side, a temple of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with the life-size *vigrahas* of Gouranga and Nityananda on the left, and in the centre an exquisite temple of Krishna Chheliya with two sets of images of Radha-Krishna; one set presented

by Raja Durga Singh, and the statute of Chheliya as well as the *ashtadhātu* one of Radha, a gift of the Rajmata of Gwalior. The Ashram also comprises a 'Gītā Bhavan' with an adjoining guest-house, a beautiful cottage for Mataji built by the Raja of Mandi, and several other large and small buildings including some cottages amidst extensive gardens erected by devotees for their own use.

In April, 1954, on *Vaisakhi* day, the installation ceremony of a Śiva linga over the Samādhi of Bhaiji was performed at Pataldevi, Almora, in Mataji's presence and under Her guidance. I had been called to attend the ceremony and Yogibhaiji was also present. Mataji named the linga "Yogeshwar Mahadeva". No one is allowed to talk inside this temple by Mataji's order. *Sādhakas* are permitted to enter only for meditation, *japa* or *pūjā*.

In May 1954 Mataji's birthday was to be celebrated in Shillong. But the devotees who had undertaken to make all arrangements were obliged to leave Shillong suddenly and so, to our great joy, the birthday was celebrated at Almora. People flocked in hundreds from all over North India. Hari Babaji Maharaj, Swami Krishnanandaji Avadhuta, and a *Rāsātīlā* party of Vrindaban were present. Mataji and Sri Hari Babaji stayed on until June 30th.

After the completion of the birthday celebrations, Mataji told me that everybody who had come to Almora from all over the country had been greatly satisfied with the arrangements made for their stay.

At the same time She directed me to shift permanently to the Ashram at Pataldevi or elsewhere and to have no more connection with my family. She also suggested that I should maintain silence for 23 hours every day and talk only for at the most one hour daily. Unfortunately I did not follow Mataji's advice to sever my connection with my family. The dominating idea in my mind was that if I carried out this order of Mataji, who would look after the six minor children of my two deceased brothers, as the wife of the one had become insane and the wife of the other was dead. I forgot altogether that I was not the controller of their destiny and that Mataji Herself would take care of them. This was all due to my ego. As a result of my disobedience I have since 1954 not passed a single year in a peaceful manner.

In 1954-55 I invested a part of my savings in the hope of getting some additional income, which would help to maintain and educate my orphan nephews and nieces. Unfortunately this investment proved to be a losing enterprise. It was so destined as I had disobeyed Mataji's instructions to hand over all that money to my younger brothers for managing the affairs of the family, and to leave my home and stay in the Pataldevi Ashram.

In the summer months of 1955, I put myself under the treatment of a Bengali physician for curing my fistula and piles. In the course of that treatment my condition became very serious. Mataji was informed

about it and in Her mercy sent Brahmachari Kamla-kanta to nurse me properly while I was practically confined to bed at Lucknow. By Mataji's grace I recovered in about a month's time, though, at one stage, my condition had become alarming and the members of my family had abandoned all hope of my recovery.

In 1957 and 1959 both my lungs had developed T.B. The doctors attending on me declared in 1959 that there was little chance of my recovery, but again, with the blessings of Mataji I got over this serious trouble. Following Her instructions I went to Almora and stayed in the cool climate of the hills for two years. Mataji did not allow me to move down from Almora even in the bitter cold of the winter. I was completely cured of this serious ailment although I did not take complete rest in bed as advised by the doctors. I used to pass my time in reciting *Rāma Nāma* or *Mā Nāma* even when my fever rose to 101° or 102°. In that condition, I used to bathe with cold water. During that period of my illness in 1959 I visited the Dhaulchina Ashram which had been newly constructed. I climbed up the Dhaulchina peak, a distance of about 1½ miles, without any aid, on foot though I had a pony with me. In Her *bhāva*, Mataji had told my younger brother and my son Rama in Delhi that, for reasons which She was not prepared to disclose, I had passed the crisis. For myself I am convinced that though I was meant to die that year, I had been given a fur-

ther lease of life by Mataji in Her divine mercy, but I cannot guess for how long.

In the winter of 1960 Mataji allowed me to go to Dehradun for her *daršana* and from there to Delhi in January 1961 to stay with my son Hari Mohan for four months. During that period, Pandit G. B. Pant got an attack of paralysis about a fortnight before the Holi festival. Mataji was then staying in the Ashram at Kalkaji, New Delhi, and I used to inform Her daily about the condition of Pantji, which became extremely serious on the eve of *Holi Pūrnimā*. That very morning, Gurupriya Didi was directed by Mataji to enquire from me by phone about Pantji's health. Sri Jiwan Chandra Pant, father-in-law of my son Hari Mohan, who was at that time reciting the Gītā in Pantji's room, received Didi's message and informed her that the patient's condition was more or less the same as on the first day when he had a stroke of paralysis. Didi told Sri Jiwan Chandra Pant and the Private Secretary of Pantji that throughout the previous night Pantji in his subtle body had been in the presence of Mataji in great agony, as disclosed by Her. Pantji's Secretary however told Didi that, according to their observations, Pantji had passed a peaceful night. In the evening Mataji visited the Lakshmi Narayana temple, known as Bal Mandir, for an hour's kirtan arranged by Sri J. K. Birla. I went there for Her *daršana*. She repeated to me how during the whole of the previous night Pantji in his subtle body had

appeared before Her in great agony. She then gave me a garland of roses to be put round Pantji's neck whose condition, She said, had again become very critical. She gave me another garland for Pantji's wife and two more garlands for his son, Sri K. C. Pant, and his daughter-in-law. Mataji told me to hire a taxi and go straight to Pantji's residence. When I reached there at about 8.45 P.M., I found Sri Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India, also present at that late hour. The attending doctors had lost all hope of Pantji's recovery and he was at that moment groaning as is usual with dying people. I delivered all the garlands as directed, and the garland meant for Pantji was given to his son to be put round Pantji's neck or just over his pillow. Pantji somehow passed the crisis that night, but died two days later. The day after the Holi festival I went to the Ashram at Kalkaji with Sri Jiwan Chandra Pant and related to Mataji all about the condition of Pantji the previous night when I had delivered the garlands. Srimati Indira Gandhi, our Prime Minister, was also at the Kalkaji Ashram when I was talking to Mataji. A day before Pantji's death Mataji left Delhi for Hoshiarpur with Hari Babaji Maharaj. Before leaving She told some of the Ashramites that Pantji would die within two days, but I should not be told about it before it happened.

In 1961, before leaving for Almora, I met Mataji at the New Delhi Ashram and She advised me not to have my eyes operated for the removal of cataract,

since the eye specialists were of the opinion that the cataract was not yet fully ripe. Unfortunately, I did not abide by Mataji's advice and had my one eye operated on June 4th by the eye specialist in the local branch of the Sitapur Eye Hospital. The operation of the second eye was performed just a month later. Both operations were quite successful but a month later one eye showed detachment of the retina and the same trouble developed in the second eye on December 6, 1961 in spite of all precautions. For about three months I was again confined to bed in the Sitapur Eye Hospital when another operation was performed on my second eye. I slightly regained my sight but lost it completely in July 1964, soon after Mataji's birthday celebrations at Almora. On that occasion, the Sacred Thread Ceremony of my grandson Shankar and a dozen other boys was performed in the presence of the Divine Mother at the Pataldevi Ashram. A day before the Tithi Puja, Kumari Puja of 108 *Kumārīs* and of 11 *batuks* (boys) was performed in Mataji's presence. Mataji in Her playfulness took *prasāda* from the dining plate of each *kumārī* and *batuk* to the great surprise of all the devotees assembled. Shankar was the first boy from whose plate Mataji took *prasāda*.

I must plainly confess here that it was because of my disobedience to Mataji's advice that I completely lost my eyesight. I however feel that whatever has happened was to be destined and is for my improvement in this life and the life to come. With this idea

I try to console myself and to keep fully contented. The loss of vision is really a blessing in disguise inasmuch as in this helpless condition I have begun to realize that if I had not lost my eyesight I would be taking interest in politics.

On June 7th, 1964, Mataji visited the Dhaulchina Ashram and stayed there for a night to the great delight of Brahmachari Vijaiananda (Adolphe Wein-trob), a quiet devotee of Mataji who hails from France where he was a practising doctor about twenty years ago. Vijaiananda now mostly stays in the Dhaulchina Ashram. He comes down for a couple of months or so to Vrindaban or Dehradun in winter when it snows heavily at Dhaulchina. The Ashram is situated at the top of the Nilgiri Hill facing almost on three sides the snow covered Himalayan range. No ordinary *sādhaka* can live in that solitary place which is surrounded by thick forests. Vijaiananda Bhai is an ideal *sādhaka* and passes most of his time in meditation, *japa* and the study of scriptures. His daily diet is very simple, consisting of half a litre of cow's milk, 50 gms of rice, 25 gms of pulses, 100 gms of wheat flour and a few nuts. Fruits are not available at Dhaulchina and vegetables only occasionally. Vijaiananda came to India about twenty years ago. He first stayed for a little while in the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi (South India) and then in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry and in other Ashrams, seeking guidance in his *sādhana*. He then visited Varanasi a few days before he was to leave

Mataji thereupon indicated to him to go to Rajgir where the Lord Buddha, whom he revered so much, had lived for years and that he should take complete rest for at least a couple of months to recoup his health. But Jawaharlalji felt that he could not give up active life and sit idle even for two months. He passed away on May 28th, 1964, within three months of his last meeting with Mataji.

During the last few years our country has been passing through a critical period, highlighted by rising prices, increasing unemployment, student indiscipline and political defections and deceit. The country can never progress on a sound basis unless the characters of our youth are built on moral and spiritual foundations. It appears that the vision of the leaders of our country is blinded by the glamour of the material advancement of the west. The noble principles of Gandhiji seem to be altogether sacrificed, though the country is celebrating his centenary.

In this critical condition the only hope for our emancipation is to earnestly pray to the Divinity Incarnate to change the minds of our leaders for giving the youth proper guidance to build their characters on a moral basis and to set an example by following themselves the path of Truth, Non-violence and Non-possession, the noble principles of Bapuji which have come to be altogether ignored during the last twenty-two years of Independence. Gandhiji advised his followers to lead a simple life and a life of true renunciation.

If we are really anxious to establish a new order of society, we must shake off our egoism entirely and try to perceive the one Brahman pervading everywhere. So long as the spirit of duality is not abandoned completely, there cannot be real peace in this country and all over the world. This is the mission of Mataji as conceived by Bhairji. Various Ashrams have been established in different parts of this country so that seekers after Truth might live in a suitable environment and have the opportunity of being guided and inspired by the Divine Universal Mother, Sri Anandamayi Ma, and be in personal contact with Her. We have, therefore, only to earnestly pray to the Divine Mother for Her blessings so that the noble aspirations of Bhairji, Bhairyyaji and Baba Bholanath may be fulfilled.

Śrī Śrī Mā Saraṇam

CHAPTER—XI

The Quintessence of Mataji's Teaching

Some of Mataji's teaching in Her own words, as recorded by Bhaiji, is given here for the guidance of seekers after Truth.

"In order to advance towards Self-realization it is absolutely necessary for an aspirant to yearn constantly for his sublime Goal. He should practice *sādhana* regularly, whether he feels in a mood for it or not. Just as a married lady, while discharging her duties in her home takes care that the conch bracelets worn on her wrists and the red mark in the centre of her forehead are always intact, even so the *sādhaka* must ever remember his *Iṣṭadeva* (God), in the same manner as a mother while performing her house-work is ever aware of the needs of the child on her lap. The aspirant while attending to his normal worldly duties, must take special care to ensure that at every moment of his life he is absorbed in the remembrance of God. If at any time the *sādhaka* fails in this, he should be full of remorse. The *sādhaka* should be engrossed in such remembrance more and more, ever keeping in mind that this is his prime duty.

"An aspirant should not indulge in useless conversation or gossip but speak only when it is really necessary, which means that he must be a man of few but gentle words. He has to be extremely careful to keep aloof from all worldly attachment. Not only must he control his speech but also refrain from listening to idle talk. He should therefore try to restrict his association with worldly people and occupations to a minimum. On the other hand, talk and discussion about spiritual things ("*Hari Katha*") is helpful and should be encouraged. All else is futile and painful. Where there is Rama, there is *arāma* (rest and peace), where Rama is not there is *vyarāma* (discomfort and disease).

"One should always remember that the power of discrimination and correct thinking grows in proportion to the time spent in meditation. The *sādhaka* will then come to know intuitively what is essential for him in his search. He will observe that as his mind gets more and more absorbed in the remembrance of God, his attachment to sense objects (*rūpa*, *rasa*, *gandha*, *sparsa* and *śabda*) will diminish correspondingly. The positive proof that the aspirant is centred in God is that he ceases to hate any person or object, and that good qualities such as love, forgiveness, patience, forbearance go on increasing in him. Then the *sādhaka* will not make any distinction between a *Vaiṣṇava*, a *Śakta*, a *Sivaite* and so forth. When this change takes place in the aspirant, he will come to see that the one Brahman pervades

each and every form, all sects, creeds and religions, just as the same person is addressed by his son as father, by his nephew as uncle, by his wife as husband, and by his parents as son.

“A *sādhaka* must allot a fixed time of every day for his meditation and *japa* or *kīrtana* in seclusion, closetting himself at that hour in his *pūjā* room. He must keep in mind that progress towards God-realization is not possible if one is half-hearted and one's attention is divided between spiritual practices and temporal matters.”

APPENDIX

Sri Hari Ram Joshi was a staunch devotee of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi. He left this mortal world for his heavenly abode at the age of seventy-three, on April 13th, 1970 at 1.15 P.M. in Lucknow. Although for the last two years he had been running a temperature off and on, he was, nevertheless, quite active and alert till he breathed his last. Even while confined to bed, he dictated to a close relation, Sri D. P. Tewari, his own reminiscences of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi for about four months in the summer of last year, devoting six hours daily to this work. Since his first *daršana* of Sri Sri Ma at Dehradun in 1933, he lived only to propagate Mataji's philosophy and ideology and died, as he fervently wished, with *Ma's* sacred name on his lips.

On April 1st, 1970, a very sad news was received about the tragic death of his nephew, aged about 24 years, in a truck accident at Moradabad. This boy was very promising and was the eldest son and mainstay of Joshiji's younger brother, Shri N. K. Joshi, Chief Dairy Development Officer, U.P. Hari Ramji was much attached to Sri N. K. Joshi and his wife, who were all the time in attendance on ailing Hari Ramji even when they were battling with the greatest tragedy of their life, having lost their eldest son. There is a feeling that Hari Ramji's condition

worsened due to the tragic death of his nephew. This was perhaps too great a shock for him to bear in his failing health.

From the day his nephew died, Hari Ramji stopped taking any kind of food, and asked only for Mataji's *charaṇāmrita*, which he relished and sipped every two or three minutes. In the evening of April 3rd, 1970, Bhai Badri Datt asked him whether he would like the Srimad Bhagavad Gita to be read at his bed-side in the morning and evening. He appreciated this idea very much and thus the recitation of the Bhagavad Gita was performed every morning and evening for about one hour in Sanskrit with Hindi translation.

On April 11th, his nephew Vidya Sagar who has a very sweet voice, came from Chamba and Hari Mohan, Hari Ramji's second son, and another nephew, Naveen also arrived the same morning from Delhi. With the arrival of Vidya Sagar and Hari Mohan (two good singers), *Mā Nāma kīrtana* was started in his room. He liked this *kīrtana* very much, so much so that on April 12th at about 7.30 P.M., he actually participated with his feeble voice. Bhagavad Gita recitation and *Mā Nāma kīrtana* was continuously going on in his room at fixed hours.

On April 12th, Hari Ramji asked his brothers to remove the wooden bed on which he was lying and allow him to lie on the bare ground. In spite of their requests to him to remain on the bed, he stuck to his desire and was laid on the bare ground with only

one quilt under him. He then asked for the *purohit* (family priest) to be called so as to perform the last ten *dānas*, as ordained by the *Sāstras* for every departing soul. With the *purohit's* help, Hari Ramji performed nine *dānas* with his own hand and in full consciousness. In fact, he asked the *purohit* to chant mantras for performing the tenth *dāna* as well, which the *purohit* politely refused.

At about 2 A.M. on April 13th, his pulse became very feeble. Fearing that the fateful end was fast approaching, recitation of the Bhagavad Gita and *Viṣṇu Sahasra Nāma* was started and continued till 4-30 A.M. At about this time, he wanted his cotton vest to be removed and his entire body to be sponged with a towel dipped in water. Thereafter, at his request he was clothed in a clean shirt and trousers and helped to sit, leaning with a pillow on his back against the wall of the room. Seeing him sitting in this way, he seemed much better than before. For about an hour from 5 A.M., he had been mentioning matters connected with family affairs. At about 8.30 A.M., it was noticed that his condition was fast deteriorating and the doctor found him critically weak.

At about 10 A.M. he enquired if his younger brother Sri D. P. Joshi and the widow of his late brother Dr. M. M. Joshi had returned from Hardwar, where they had gone to perform the *kriyā* for his nephew, the son of Sri N. K. Joshi. They were expected back in Lucknow on this very day. They

arrived at about 11 A.M., bringing with them *prasāda* and a garland given by Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi for Hari Ramji. Ma had sent a message that continuous Bhagavad Gita recitation should be kept up by his side. They had also brought two bottles of holy Ganga water from Hardwar. Hari Ramji swallowed Mataji's *prasāda* (*misri*) mixed with Ganga water and put on the garland sent by Ma. At about 12.15 his favourite *mālā* (*rosary*) was put in his right hand and with trembling fingers he revolved all the 108 beads with *japa* on his lips. Then the *purohit* performed the tenth and last *dāna*.

From 8.30 A.M. till 1.15 P.M., when he breathed his last, continuous *Mā Nāma kīrtana* and recitation of verses from the Bhagavad Gita and *Viṣṇu Sahasra Nāma* were going on by his side. Throughout this period, he was constantly sipping holy Ganges water (brought that very morning from Hardwar) mixed with Tulsi leaves. The end was so touching and peaceful as his last breath oozed out of him just at the close of the last sentence of *Mā Nāma kīrtana*—
"Morā mili prāṇe prāṇe pranāmi Srī Charaṇe Jai Ma Jai Ma Jai Jai Ma."

It was *Vaisakhi* day—*Vaisakh Shukla Ashtmi*—when he left all relatives and friends to mourn his death. The day was very auspicious for a departing soul. It was also a rare coincidence that due to the tragic death of his nephew, almost all the members of the family and near relations were present at the time of his demise. He was very attached to each

and every one in the family, and therefore he must have felt very happy to find all of them assembled around him at that critical hour.

This is how a very pious soul and a staunch devotee of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi left this mortal world with his head resting on the lap of his eldest son, Rama Krishna, and his feet on the lap of his other son, Hari Mohan, leaving all the members of his family and his brother devotees to ponder if a better death could be desired by a truly religious person having faith in Hindu philosophy and *Sāstras*.

May his soul rest in peace, in Ma!

Post Script

A letter from Didī Gurupriya, containing Ma's blessings received by Rama, the elder son of Joshiji, is reproduced below:

देहरादून

20-4-1970

भाई रामा,

तुम्हारी चिट्ठी सुन कर मां ने कहा, 'सौभाग्य है आखिरी निशवास ऐसी स्थिति में। अन्तिम क्रिया भी ऐसे सुन्दर अच्छे समय में। इतने दिन का परिचय था हरिराम भाई से—वह जगह आज खाली—मन में लगता है लेकिन बड़े कष्ट में थे। मां ने कहा, "भगवान ने उस को चरण में ले लिया। उसका कष्ट समाप्त।

मन में जो उन का लक्ष्य था वही पूर्ण हुआ। अन्तिम कार्य अच्छा तरह सद् अनुष्ठान के बीच करना। स्थिर धीर होकर मन को शान्त रख कर पिता का कार्य पूरा होय। प्रियजन की ऊर्ध्वगति की प्रार्थना होना। दोनों भाई शान्ति से रहने की कोशिश करो। बीच में कैसा रहों चिट्ठी देना।” मां आज पटियाला जा रही हैं। दोपहर में ठाकुर प्रतिष्ठा होने पर मां 24 ता० को दिल्ली होती हुई भोपाल पहुंचेंगी।

पी०एस० मां ने कहा, ‘हर समय भगवत् स्मरण की कोशिश होना।’

दीदी गुरुप्रिया

Translation

Dehradun, 20-4-1970

Brother Rama,

Mataji listened to your letter and said, “It is very fortunate that he breathed his last in that condition. The end also occurred so beautifully at such an auspicious time.”

We knew Brother Hari Ram for so many years. His place has now become empty. One cannot help feeling grieved, although he suffered much. Mataji said, “God has given him a place at His Feet. His suffering is over. The goal he had set before himself has been reached. Perform the last rites with

great care and thoughtfulness. Accomplish this work for your father with steadiness and concentration and a calm mind. One should pray for the salvation of one's loved ones. Both brothers must try to remain at peace. Now and again write and say how you are getting on."

Mataji is leaving for Patiala today. On the 24th afternoon, after the consecration of a temple, Mataji will proceed to Bhopal *via* Delhi.

P.S.

Mataji said, "Try to sustain the remembrance of God at all times."

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