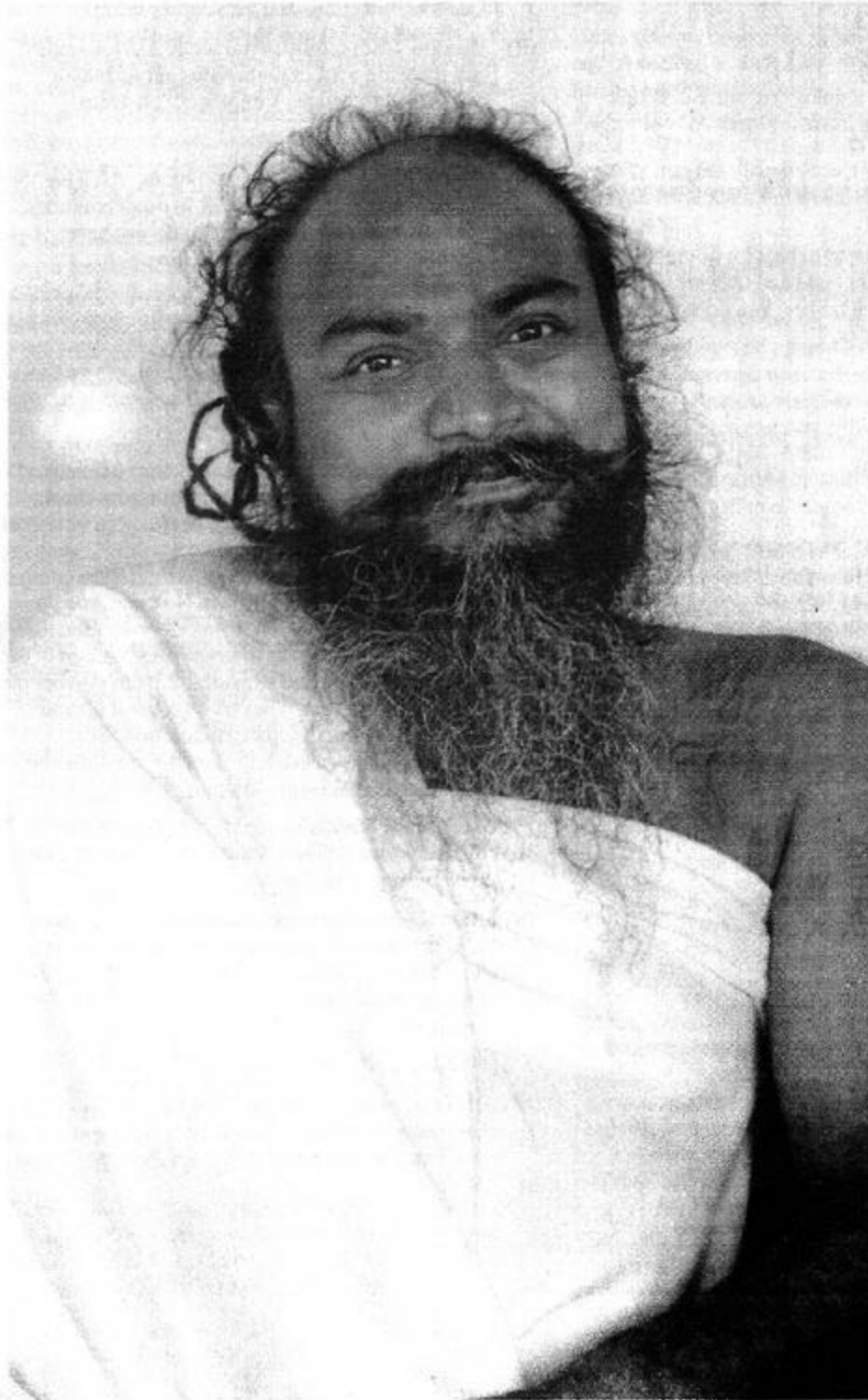


The Shivabalayogi Journal

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Spring, 1997



"The conceptions of what the world is differ from person to person and from time to time. But the person who knows dhyana knows correctly what is the world."

Mahashivaratri

Mahashivaratri, the great night of Shiva, is the major annual festival of Lord Shiva, God in the form of the destroyer of illusion and ignorance. This year Mahashivaratri falls on March 7.

Swamiji's devotees associate Mahashivaratri with Swamiji's Divine Guru and Adivarapupeta, Swamiji's native village where he completed twelve years of tapas. Each year there is the traditional procession of Shri Swamiji through the village, annadanam (mass feeding), puja at the Samadhi, and the wedding of Shiva and Parvati. Devotees sing bhajans all night until sunrise on the following day when thousands of people from the surrounding area come to the ashram for annadanam.

Conversations with Shri Swamiji: YOGI

Q You are a God realized yogi, is that correct?

SBY Whether it is right or wrong, you will have to find out by doing the meditation.

Q What is necessary for a person to become a yogi?

SBY One has to do tapas.

Q Would you please explain what "tapas" means?

SBY First you have to conduct yourself according to the orders of the guru. If you do that, the guru will make you do meditation. When you do meditation, you will get into samadhi. When you wake up from samadhi, you become a yogi. Then the guru will tell you what is the mission you have to do as a yogi.

When you become God realized, then you are called a yogi. If you do not get God realization after doing tapas, then you are called a sadhu. You become a spiritual leader if you do not get God realization.

Conversations with Shri Swamiji: Y O G I

These questions and answers about yogis were collected from conversations with Swamiji in January of 1994, shortly before he took mahasamadhi.

- Q What does it mean to be a yogi?
- SBY If a person starts tapas while a child or youth, that person becomes a yogi. Instead, if a person performs tapas when older, the person becomes a muni. If a person performs tapas when much older, that person is called a rishi.
- Q Is Swamiji a muni?
- SBY Swamiji is a yogi. A muni is very ancient. People who have been doing tapas for thousands of years are called munis.
- Q Have there been many munis who have done tapas for thousands of years?

SBY There used to be a lot of munis, but now there are none and they are here only in their astral bodies. You do not have any real muni now.

Q Is it true that most yogis cannot be recognized by ordinary people?

SBY That is wrong. Everybody knows what a yogi means.

Q How do people know?

SBY Because people can recognize a person who has done tapas. They will look at the face and they can easily make out whether the person is a yogi.

Q There are so many spiritual leaders and teachers in India. How can somebody know who is real and can be trusted?

SBY By looking at the person's face you can find out who is real. If you practice meditation well and then look at the face, you will understand whether the person is a yogi, or a good spiritual teacher, or not.

Q Swamiji once mentioned that yogis are born only every few hundred years. Yet, he also has said that people like Nityananda and Ramakrishna were yogis. How does he reconcile the two statements?

SBY When he said that yogis come only every few hundred years, he was referring to the munis. Yogis come when necessary. Take the example of Ramakrishna. He has to take birth again and again when necessary.

Q People in the West do not know about yogis. How should I explain the greatness of who Shivabalayogi is?

SBY Westerners have forgotten what is a yogi because their culture was destroyed centuries ago. They do not know what happened in the ancient days. They do not know what is the culture of the munis and what are yogis. If people killed Christ, it was because they did not know the value of Christ. They did not know who he was.

That is the reason they killed him.

Q What is the difference between a yogi and a spiritual leader?

SBY A yogi is one who has done tapas. A person who obtains knowledge from reading books and becomes a leader for a spiritual group is called a spiritual leader.

Q Can you name some real gurus of the world?

SBY Buddha, Christ, Adishankaracharya, Mohammed, and there are a lot of maharishis in our Indian culture. All these are examples of real gurus.

Q And today?

SBY For the present, it is the atom bombs which are the gurus. Whether it is in India or in other countries, you only have atom bombs. You do not have anything else. There is no real Guru.

Q It seems that different yogis emphasize different things. Swamiji emphasizes meditation. Ramakrishna emphasized bhakti. Haidakhan Babaji emphasized seva (service). Ramana Maharshi emphasized discrimination, the path of jnana. Why the difference?

SBY It depends upon the way they were trained by their gurus. Depending on the training they emphasize different things. Whatever the yogi's guru taught him, he is teaching that to the world.

Q So these different yogis had different gurus?

SBY Every one of them had a guru. No one came up without a guru. If Ramakrishna came to samadhi, it's because of his guru Totapuri who put him in the line of meditation and samadhi. But later on people do not disclose that. They try to cover it up and they say he is into the path of devotion. But Ramakrishna could obtain samadhi only after he came into contact with Totapuri.

Q Yet if I read Mahendra's work, *The Gospel of Ramakrishna*, it quotes Ramakrishna over and over again talking about bhakti.

SBY Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a *pujari*, a priest who performs the puja in the temple. Naturally devotion was his line. That is what he practiced. Finally when he wanted samadhi, he had to go to Totapuri.

Q What about Ramana Maharshi?

SBY He used to do meditation. He used to tell people, find out who you are. That is also dhyana. First you find out who you are. That is the foundation.

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The Shivabalayogi Journal



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Experiences

In Bangalore on August 7, 1969, Shri Swamiji completed one year of tapas for world peace. Mr. Chatturvedi traveled from Agra to be there for the occasion and relates this story.

Several devotees from Agra, including members of the Bhadawar Maharaja's family and myself, traveled to Bangalore to be present when Shri Swamiji got up from his tapas on August 7th of 1969. A large dais had been erected in front of the small ashram building. The doors to Swamiji's room were ceremonially unlocked and the great yogi emerged outside to give darshan to the vast crowd that had assembled in anticipation.

We had placed ourselves in front of the dais so we could have a good view of Swamiji when he emerged. I wanted to touch His feet, but the surge of the crowd was so great that we were pushed away and out the ashram's compound wall. Of course we saw Swamiji because he was seated on the dais for several hours. But the crowd was so great that we couldn't come forward and touch His feet.

The next day we returned to the ashram and even then the situation was almost the same. The crowd was too large and although I could look at Swamiji, I could not get close. Yet that was my desire having traveled three days by train from Agra, to touch Swamiji's feet.

I asked several devotees there to somehow get me darshan of Swamiji so that I could touch his feet. Nobody could help me. Finally I went to the Bhadawar Maharaja himself and told him, "We have come all the way from Agra, and you know me very well. So please speak to Swamiji and somehow get me a chance so that I can touch His feet."

The maharaja replied, "With a yogi, recommendations won't work. So don't ask me to do that. I cannot."

I felt very bad. I knew that all the arrangements — including special public transportation services to the ashram and police to control the crowd — had been made by the Chief Minister of the State of Karnataka. I saw that such important people were being invited into Swamiji's room for darshan. I thought, if only I were a minister or an important guest or some politician, then Swamiji would have called me and I also would have gone inside. I could have had His darshan and I would have touched His feet. But I am just an ordinary devotee, an ordinary man. He won't bother about me.

While these thoughts were in my mind, a devotee came out of Swamiji's room and approached the Bhadawar Maharaja who was standing near me. The devotee asked, "Sir, who is Mr. Chatturvedi from Agra?"

The Maharaja turned to me and smiled, "Your wireless message has reached Swamiji."

I said, "I am Mr. Chatturvedi from Agra."

"Swamiji is calling you inside."

I went into Swamiji's room, did pranam and touched

Swamiji's feet. Swamiji asked me, "What is it? What is it that you want?" I understood that Swamiji knew what I had been thinking. I felt so immersed in His love that I couldn't say anything at all. Tears started rolling out of my eyes and I couldn't stop crying.

Valentine's Day is on February 14 of each year and in the U.S. it is a celebration for lovers. This experience recently took place in Seattle.

Seattle devotees decided to have a meditation, bhajan and "American annadanam" (i.e. potluck) party at my house to celebrate Valentine's Day and Swamiji's love. My small living and dining rooms were comfortably packed with some twenty guests and we sang almost two hours of bhajans. Shri Swamiji was present in visions during meditation and through powerful bhava during the bhajans.

As we shared prashad before Shri Swamiji's picture, Karen slowly came out of bhava and began to enjoy the company and conversation. But she felt as if dizzy, like her head was opened up and a breeze of subtle particles was flowing through her, or as if there was a fine veil around her consciousness. She felt that Swamiji hadn't left her completely but was allowing her some ordinary consciousness so she could enjoy the party. She also felt that Swamiji wanted to be with us physically and might come over her again.

It was past midnight and seven of us were still talking in the living room. Karen felt her heart racing, a clue she was about to go into deep bhava. We had been joking, but as soon as the subject returned to stories about Swamiji, she was immersed in his presence. I related stories about Swamiji I had collected in India, including how Mataji, Swamiji's second mother, came to him in Dehradun. Swamiji's presence and pleasure were obvious.

It was about one in the morning and I realized it was time to serve tea, just like Swamiji would have us do when he was visiting Seattle. When I brought out the tea, Swamiji indicated he wanted it served upstairs. So I took the tea and led the guests upstairs to the room where I meditate before an altar. That's where we usually gather when friends come over and we talk about Swamiji.

I went back downstairs to help Swamiji come up the stairs. When Swamiji was in his own body,

Swamiji in Adivarapupeta during Mahashivaratri time. He is holding statues of Shiva and Parvati who are wedded on Shivaratri night.



Experiences

I had the joy of helping him in and out of cars, up and down stairs and the like, including in this same house, because Swamiji stayed here for more than two weeks in 1991. This time, helping Swamiji present through bhava up the stairs was exactly the same as Swamiji in his own body walking up those same stairs six years earlier. Swamiji has his own unique sway when he walks and the way he walked up the stairs, and the way the feet were placed were unmistakably Swamiji. Everything reminded me of Swamiji's physical presence.

When we got upstairs, instead of going into the meditation room, Swamiji walked into the big bedroom and sat on the bed. It was in this same bedroom that Swamiji stayed in 1991. He would sit on the bed, make us sit on the carpet, talk with us, ask us about the programs, and gives us prashad to eat. Six years later, the scene was exactly the same. Swamiji was on the bed and the rest of us sat around drinking tea and talking about Swamiji.

Shri Swamiji's physical presence through bhava giving us darshan and late night tea in his bedroom gave so much pleasure to those who never knew him in his own body, and especially to those of us who did.

Afterwards Karen described how much Swamiji had wanted to go upstairs to his bedroom. When we were sharing stories, each time we mentioned Mataji's name, she felt Swamiji respond with so much love, bhava and energy that she felt as if thrown into another dimension. Most of all, she felt how much Swamiji wanted to be with us in this physical way and how he did not want to leave us. ॐ

His Holiness Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj:

Reminiscences of His Grace

This is a second part to an article written by Lt. Gen. Hanut Singh (ret.) in the 1970's, before he wrote *Sri Shivabalayogi Maharaj, His Life and Spiritual Ministrations*, published in 1981, the first book on Swamiji in English available in the West,

Guru Shakti and Dhyana Meditation

I have written about the protective Grace of Shri Swamiji and the curative powers of the vibhuti he dispenses. If that were all there was to it, a casual reader might well be tempted to remark that, "This is all very wonderful, but there are many miracle men in India and Swamiji is just one of the many." Fortunately for us all, this is not the case.

The outer manifestations of powers are only a means to the end which is to grant true and genuine seekers *atma jnan* (soul realization). In this regard, Swamiji himself relates that after his twelve long years of tapas when he emerged from his samadhi on August 7, 1961, Parvati and Maheshwara (Lord Shiva, God the Holy Spirit) appeared before him. Swamiji inquired of Maheshwara

that as he had completed his tapas, what did He want him to do now. Should he go back to his old occupation? To this Shankar Bhagavan replied that he should initiate *sadhakas* (spiritual seekers) into *dhyana yoga* (the yoga of dhyana meditation) and guide them on the spiritual path. Since then, this has become Shri Swamiji's primary mission in this life. Everything else he does is only a means towards this end.

Before writing about Shri Swamiji's spiritual ministrations, I must say a few words on his protective grace and curative powers, based on my own experience and understanding. The protective grace of Shri Swamiji is universal in its dispensation. It is wrong to imagine that this grace is manifested for the benefit of only a chosen few for this would imply that Swamiji has favourites, which is inconceivable. All persons are equal in the eyes of Swamiji and his grace flows out towards all in equal measure.

One might ask why this grace is manifested in the case of some and not for others. The answer is that it depends on the individual concerned. As Shri Ramakrishna put it, "*The wind of grace is always blowing, only you have to unfurl your sail.*" It is this unfurling of the sail that is required in order to make the power of grace manifest. This depends upon the individual's own faith and *guru bhakti* (devotion towards the guru). The more a disciple surrenders to the guru, the more will the guru's grace manifest. This is an automatic process which is in the power of all to experience.

Physical Healing

The curative powers of the vibhuti that Swamiji gives serves a twofold purpose. First, it evokes faith and devotion in the recipient, which in turn leads the person to seek the spiritual blessings that Swamiji wishes to give. As Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi put it, "*I give my devotees what they ask in the hope that they will ask me what I wish to give them.*" Second, as anyone who has been doing *sadhana* (spiritual practice) knows, it is a strenuous discipline and only those who are in perfect mental and physical health can hope to undertake these practices successfully.

In my own case, when I first came to Shri Swamiji I was suffering from a chronic stomach ailment. Shri Swamiji remarked to me that it was necessary for me to be restored to proper health before I could engage in serious dhyana meditation. The curing of a devotee's physical ailments, therefore, is primarily meant to assist in the pursuit of *sadhana* more vigorously. As a matter of fact, dhyana and the cure proceed together. I have often heard Shri Swamiji tell a devotee when giving vibhuti to do plenty of dhyana as the more dhyana a person does, the more effective will the vibhuti be.

Dhyana Diksha (Initiation into Dhyana Meditation)

Swamiji's *guru shakti* (guru's power) works primarily through the *dhyana diksha* (initiation into meditation) that he gives. This *dhyana diksha* is available to all who seek it, which in itself is a remarkable fact because I have not known, heard or read of any other *mahatma* (great soul) whose blessings were so universal and who was

prepared to initiate anyone who cared to be initiated. On the contrary, gurus are very selective about the choice of their disciples and an aspirant is normally only initiated after a period of testing by the guru to ensure his or her fitness for receiving the guru's *diksha* (initiation). After giving initiation, Swamiji instructs the initiates in the technique of dhyān meditation and exhorts them to do as much dhyān as they can, gradually increasing the period of dhyān. To those who follow these instructions faithfully, the results are at once manifest.

Spiritual practices and their results are a very personal matter normally to be discussed only with the guru, and hence it would not be proper or desirable to talk of my personal experiences in an article of this nature. I will, therefore, write only in very general terms.

The power that Shri Swamiji gives at the time of initiation, grows in strength with the practice of dhyān. Like a powerful magnet, this power draws the mind inwards and holds it there. If thoughts or other distractions arise in the mind and prevent it from concentrating, this force increases in strength until it becomes almost painful to bear and the only way a *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) can obtain release from this pain is to clear the mind of distracting thoughts and submit to this power. The *sadhaka* is almost forced to concentrate.

Spiritual Experiences

Once proper concentration is attained, a *sadhaka* may have varied spiritual experiences. However, this is not a must, nor is it an essential stage in the progress of one's dhyān. Swamiji has often affirmed that it is not at all necessary to have visions or other spiritual experiences. They come to some and not to others. Many *sadhakas* make the mistake of trying to almost will a spiritual experience and often talk of having had a spiritual experience when it has only been the work of an over active imagination. This is wrong. A *sadhaka* must merely concentrate as he has been instructed to do by Swamiji and not try to see anything. A spiritual experience, if it has to come, will come of its own accord. As a matter of fact, spiritual experiences hardly ever come when a *sadhaka* is purposely seeking them. Such experiences typically occur when they are least expected, and it is not necessary that such experiences occur during dhyān. They may come at any time of the night or day and under varied circumstances.

The Practice

There are two other aspects which I want to stress with regard to the practice of dhyān. They are regularity and a fixed time. The need for regularity cannot be over emphasized. It is my experience that if one misses dhyān for one day, it takes one week to make up for that loss. As regards having a fixed time daily for dhyān, though helpful, it is not essential. It is helpful in the sense that just as we feel hungry at our regular meal times so, by doing dhyān at a fixed time daily, the mind automatically becomes contemplative and calm at that hour and the power that I have written about manifests itself strongly, making it easier to concentrate the mind.

A *sadhaka* may have to face many obstacles in *sadhana* but all these obstacles can be overcome by writing to Shri

Swamiji, or by merely remembering him and mentally seeking his blessings.

One unique method that Shri Swamiji employs to remove both mental and physical obstacles is *bhava*. This is often referred to as trance, but I have never liked this word because it conveys a sense of mental lassitude which is a purely physical condition and can also be induced by drugs and intoxicants. *Bhava* is essentially a spiritual condition which removes mental obstructions, cures

physical ailments and induces spiritual qualities such as bhakti and self surrender in the person who is thus blessed. I call this unique because I have not heard or read of any other spiritual guru employing this technique en masse as Shri Swamiji is wont to do.

Shri Swamiji's Philosophy

Some ask what is Swamiji's spiritual philosophy? What are his teachings and what path does he advocate? In this regard all I can say is that apart from giving primacy to *dhyān* as a spiritual *sadhana*, there is no particular path or philosophy that I have known Swamiji to advocate. He upholds all the paths and systems of philosophy given in our scriptures as being equally true and I have never heard him tell anyone to change his or her spiritual outlook. He advises each *sadhaka* to continue following the path he has chosen for himself. He insists only that the *sadhaka* do dhyān regularly, as instructed by Swamiji during initiation.

Shri Swamiji did mention once that the teachings given in the *Yoga Vāsishtha Ramayana* conform to his own teachings and hence those who wish to particularize and learn more about Swamiji's teachings would do well to study this scripture.

Those who yearn or strive for spiritual attainment need only take refuge at the lotus feet of Shri Shri Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj and their salvation is assured, both in this world and for all time to come. ॐ



The Bangalore Ashram

Shri Swamiji was staying at the Nandi Hills ashram of Tapaswiji Maharaj when he received a donation of property on Bannerghatta Road from a Bangalore businessman. This man had been troubled by evil powers and Shri Swamiji had sent a devotee to his house, came in trance upon that devotee, and removed the bad influences. In appreciation, the business man invited Swamiji to come to Bangalore.

A small ashram building was completed and His Holiness inaugurated the Bangalore ashram on August 7th, 1963. Gradually more and more people learned about the yogi from Andhra and his blessings, and the numbers coming for bhajans and darshan increased. Many devotees came from the Cubbonpetta district, most of them poor weavers who could barely earn enough to feed their families.

On one occasion, one of these weavers asked Swamiji's blessings to hold bhajans in his house. Swamiji asked the bhajan group and other devotees to attend and he gave the man a blessed coconut. Many people came that night and many were in powerful bhava. After the bhajans were over, Swamiji through bhava gave instructions that the blessed coconut should be broken, grated and distributed as prashad. There were well over a hundred people there and they were all served from that single coconut. There was enough grated coconut left over the next day to serve another ten people at morning puja.

When news of this miracle spread, many more people came to the ashram for Swamiji's darshan and blessings. But the crowds really got big when on August 7, 1968, Shri Swamiji sat for a one year tapas for world peace. During that year he remained inside his room at the ashram and no darshan was permitted. He emerged on August 7, 1969, and gave public darshan to a crowd estimated in the hundreds of thousands. Devotees say that after this one year tapas, large numbers of people would regularly come for bhajans and darshan.

Shri Swamiji gave a lot of bhava at the Bannerghatta Road ashram and the trances were very powerful, whether of Lord Shiva, Devi, Hanuman, many other god and goddesses, or of Swamiji himself. Shri Swamiji would give out so much power that people would already

start passing into bhava as they reached Dairy Circle, about a kilometer away from the ashram. Shri Swamiji was very strict that no one should demean or trouble the devotees in bhava and often when skeptics doubted the validity of the trance, they themselves would get it immediately. All the while this trance was going on in the open area of the ashram, Swamiji was sitting out of view in his room.

Some people troubled Shri Swamiji and his devotees so much and for so long that he threatened to leave Bangalore. Quickly some influential people obtained a four acre tract of land in the nearby J. P. Nagar area and offered it to Swamiji so that he would stay. That land became the new Bangalore ashram and two close devotees, the Maharaja and Maharani of Patna, made a large private donation to pay for the construction of a 20,000 square foot meditation hall complex which, like all the buildings at the ashram, Swamiji designed. The design is architecturally unique because of the large area covered by the poured concrete roof. Swamiji worked closely with the building's architect, directing his work. Swamiji would design and give technical instructions during construction, and the International Center for Indian Culture was inaugurated on August 7, 1977.

Shri Swamiji's mother, Parvathamma Allaka, took mahasamadhi on June 15, 1976, while the new ashram was still under construction. She is greatly revered for the love and care with which she received every devotee. Her body rests in the Samadhi which Shri Swamiji had built for her at the at the Bannerghatta Road ashram. It is a place most sacred for Swamiji and his devotees.

On August 7, 1987, at the North side of the new ashram, Shri Swamiji consecrated the only Brahma-Vishnu-Maheshwara temple in the world today. It contains three sanctuaries: one for Brahma and his consort Saraswati; another for Shiva (Maheshwara) and his consort Parvati; and the third for Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi. By the sanctuary of Shiva are Ganesha and Subramanyan and facing Lord Shiva is Nandi. Worship is done there daily and the ashram food is offered three times a day.

The development of the ashram continues today. The construction of a kitchen, dining hall, and kaya kalpa complex was consecrated by Shri Swamiji before His mahasamadhi. The basic structure is being completed and the trustees already have relocated the Sunday mass



The Samadhi of Smt. Parvathamma Allaka, Shri Swamiji's mother.



The Bangalore Ashram

feeding (annadanam) to this building.

The Bangalore Samadhi of His Holiness was established after his mahasamadhi as a result of his specific instructions through trance. As with all construction at the ashram, the Samadhi was built according to his design and it was consecrated on April 10, 1994. Since then, the Bangalore trustees authorized a family of devotees to assume responsibility for the completion of a beautiful structure around the Samadhi. The casting of the slab for the basic structure has been completed and the plans include the installation of a large Shivalingam on the Samadhi itself, as requested by His Holiness.

All devotees are welcome and encouraged to visit the Bangalore ashram and take Shri Swamiji's darshan, whether at the Samadhi or at the dais in the meditation hall where his holy jata is reverently kept. Shri Swamiji continues to assure us of his very real presence and he urges us to continue visiting his ashrams and take his blessings. The only treasure a yogi has, he says, is the devotees, and devotees from all throughout India have experience the continued power of his presence and blessings at the Bangalore ashram. ☸



NEWS CURRENTS

The Shivabalayogi Journal brings news of local activities as an indication of how Shri Swamiji's blessings and energy currents flow and expand throughout his great family of the seekers of God.

Three Day Function at Ratnagiri Ashram. Shri Swamiji's ashram at Ratnagiri is in remote, sparsely populated countryside a few hours drive north from Bangalore. More than two thousand five hundred meals were served over three days of celebrations last December 10-13. On the second day over a hundred devotees participated in an evening meditation class in which seventy people, including many children, received Shri Swamiji's initiation.

In India after giving initiation into dhyana, Swamiji used to make the initiators specifically ask each initiate to speak out his or her experiences during the initiation meditation. Although Shri Swamiji did not follow this practice during his 1987-1991 visits to England and the United States, it was something he insisted upon during the 1960's and 1970's. As per that practice, Mr. Thippanna, the donor and one of the trustees of the Ratnagiri Trust, asked the initiates in Ratnagiri to relate their experiences and several devotees spoke of having visions of light (*jyoti*).

During that meditation, Shri Swamiji gave bhava to a devotee from Ratnagiri. That was a wonderful treat to the devotees, particularly the Ratnagiri ashram committee members, as this was the first time Swamiji gave such bhava to a devotee from Ratnagiri.

Christmas in Bangalore. When devotees gather together, we can feel Shri Swamiji's presence in the deeper meditation, the bhava during bhajans, and in the

the peace and joy we feel when we talk about him. Every devotee's home can be an ashram, a place where Shri Swamiji's devotees gather and his presence resides.

A Bangalore devotee organized Christmas Day celebrations in his house and invited all devotees to an installation of a large photograph of Shri Swamiji. The celebration had all the ingredients of one of Shri Swamiji's meditation programs: invitation flyers were distributed, Shri Swamiji's initiation and some forty devotees sat in meditation for about forty minutes, written meditation instructions in Telugu and Kannada languages were passed out, and bhajans sung with devotees passing into divine bhava.

After the bhajans, red beet juice was given to all present, a Christmas practice which Shri Swamiji started a few years before his mahasamadhi. Shri Swamiji remained in bhava samadhi upon a devotee to give darshan until all the devotees had eaten from the prashad, blessed food.

A similar program was organized at another Bangalore devotee's house the following day. He distributed flyers to invite many devotees, friends and relatives, and some two hundred and fifty people attended the program. Shri Swamiji's initiation was given to forty people and six devotees passed into powerful bhava during the bhajans. Again Shri Swamiji remained in bhava samadhi on a devotee to give darshan, bless vibhuti and talk with the devotees until after midnight.

Birthday Function, Roanoke. Shri Swamiji's birthday on January 24 is celebrated throughout the world with meditation, bhajans and prashad. The increasingly active Roanoke Dhyana Meditation Circle in Virginia, United States, is a typical example. This group publishes its own newsletter and holds weekly meditation and bhajan programs in Roanoke every Sunday evening. On Shri Swamiji's birthday, the local devotees organized

Shri Swamiji sitting before the idols of Lord Shiva and Mother Parvati at the Brahma-Vishnu-Maheshwara Temple at the J.P. Nagar ashram in Bangalore. The photograph was taken immediately after the installation of the idols on August 7, 1987.

News

Currents

meditations, bhajans, prashad and video tapes of Swamiji throughout the day. The group also holds special functions for Mahashivaratri and Shri Swamiji's mahasamdhhi anniversary. For details, contact Chris Visscher at (540) 342-6291.

Birthday Function, Bangalore. During this year's birthday celebrations in Bangalore, the ashram trustees organized the installation of a life-sized marble statue of Shri Swamiji in the meditation hall. The statue is installed in the place where Shri Swamiji would sit and give darshan during the mass feedings every Sunday and for bhajans every night.

Birthday Function, Jhansi. The largest annual mass feeding given in Shri Swamiji's honor may very well be in Jhansi, North India. Every year on Swamiji's birthday Mr. R. C. Nanda organizes a huge, public *bandhara* (open house and mass feeding). When he began in 1982, some fifty people came. The next year there were a hundred, then two hundred, then a thousand so that for the last few years some five thousand people are fed to celebrate Swamiji's birthday. The amount of provisions purchased gives an idea of the magnitude of this annual *bandhara*: 40 kg. (90 lbs.) of suji (similar to cream of wheat), 70 kg. (150 lbs.) of milk curds and 40 kg. (90 lbs.) of sugar, 150 kg. (325 lbs.) of ghee, two and a half quintals (550 lbs.) of wheat flour which is made into puris, and five to six quintals (1,100-1,300 lbs.) of vegetables. The feeding goes on all day and as they see the food running low, preparations are in place to buy

and cook more.

Open Meeting for All Devotees. On March 9, 1997, beginning at 9:00 a.m., there will be an open meeting for all devotees at the Adivarapupeta ashram to discuss the mission of our beloved Swamiji and to exchange and discuss ideas, thoughts and plans. The meeting is being called by the trustees of the Shri Shivabalayogi Maharaj International Trust.

Welcome to New Trusts. Before his mahasamadhhi, Shri Swamiji established four independent Trusts, one in Bangalore, another in England, and two in the United States. Since then, several additional Trusts have been established in his name, including the Adivarapupeta, Ratnagiri and International Trusts. Recently made public is the establishment of another Trust in Doddaballapur, a small city located a few hours north of Bangalore. Doddaballapur is the site of Shri Swamiji's second ashram (Adivarapupeta is the first) which was established in 1963. For some time now, devotees in Delhi have been getting together once a month for meditation, kirtan and bandhara at the house of D. S. Walia at C-77 Pandav Nagar, Delhi 110 092 India (011) 221 4103 and they are now planning to establish their own Trust in Swamiji's name. Similarly, devotees in Agra are planning to form their own Trust to manage the activities at the large ashram where kirtan and bandhara is performed every Sunday, which would bring the number of Shivabalayogi Trusts throughout the world to ten. ॐ

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