

MEMORIES OF SRI MAHAPURUSHA MAHARAJ

SWAMI VIJAYANANDA

It was in the year 1919 in the month of October that I first came under the shelter of Revered Mahapurushaji Maharaj. As regards my wordly condition, I had lost my mother and father at a very early age. I had no brother or sister. Hence during my boyhood and in my early youth I was not the recipient of any real affection and love. From the very first day of my arrival at the Math I got them even without my asking for them. As I got up after prostrating to Mahapurushaji Maharaj, he said, "Alas ! I see you have had no food during the night. Hallo, Devan, arrange for some tea for him." His voice rained affection. I then came downstairs.

After just four days of stay at the Math I got an attack of malaria. On the very first day the fever rose very high. In a state of semi-consciousness I was going towards the guest-house. I was led there by one or two persons who held me in their arms. In that condition I cried out several times, "Where have I come — Math, Belur, Howrah ?" On the day when after the cessation of the fever I took my first convalescent food I beheld a wonder. Revered Mahapurushaji Maharaj had prepared with his own hands fish soup for me. When I was taking rice with fish soup he said smilingly, "Well, Pasupati, how do you like the Math, Belur, Howrah ?". My bosom was wet with copious and profuse tears. Here was affection unasked for !

I did not know what sorts of things japa (repetition of God's name) and meditation were. One day he took me to a place of solitude and taught me this prayer : "O God, many say You exist, whilst some others assert You don't exist. I do not know anything regarding You. Be merciful to me and You Yourself make known to my heart what You are." I did this prayer for several days both

morning and evening, and found my theistic sense gradually getting stronger. Soon came the season of the celebration of the birthday of revered Swamiji (Vivekananda). Two or three days prior to the birthday, Mahapurushaji was proceeding one morning from the shrine to his room. He was then in an ecstatic mood and was humming in a sweet voice, *Krishna Kesava pāhi mām, Rama Raghava raksha mām* (O Krishna, Kesava, save me ; O Rama, Raghava, protect me.) He said to me, "Let me see, you tell me whose words these are !" I replied, "Chaitanya Deva's." He then continued, "You have replied aright. When Chaitanya visited the South he moved on the way with both hands upraised, repeating those words in a madness of divine love." Mahapurushaji then reached his room and sat on a chair. As soon as I got up after prostrating to him he said, "I shall give you. Why should I not ? I shall certainly give you." I was dumbfounded, and wondered, "What will he give !" He then said, "On the approaching birthday of Swamiji I shall give you brahmacharya" (initiation into the life of spiritual discipline). In great joy I prostrated to him.

After a few days Sri Raja Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) returned to the Math. As he was sitting on the big bench in the Math courtyard, and smoking, all the inmates prostrated to him one after another. Revered Mahapurushaji Maharaj then told Raja Maharaj, "Raja, this boy's name is Pasupati. It was about him that I wrote to you. He is very fond of all of us." Sri Raja Maharaj and Mahapurushaji Maharaj who were the embodiment of unconditioned love and compassion were slowly building up my life.

Once I was afflicted with acute pain in my chest. Venerable Sri Maharaj and revered

Mahapurushaji Maharaj came one day to see me, accompanied by Doctor Durga. Examining me the doctor said, "The heart is all right. It seems he got a nervous shock in a big way." At this Sri Maharaj and Mahapurushaji Maharaj were relieved and happy, and said, "You will come round soon" etc.

When, once, respected Kali Maharaj (Swami Abhedananda) came to the Math for a few days, revered Mahapurushaji stayed at the guest house. Ananga, I, and two more persons used to reside in the room behind. Every day, early in the morning Mahapurushaji used to sing in his sweet voice in the verandah, "Awake, all indeed are heirs to Immortality". After washing my hands and face I used to sit at his feet and do japa and meditation. My mind would become steady within a short time and I would experience great joy. One day during such a time he told me with great feeling, "Do you know? Sri Thakur has made me his own. By his grace I have become an Iswarakoti. There is no birth or death for me."

I have watched the meditating figure of Sri Mahapurushaji Maharaj in the shrine on several occasions. When all would have departed I would be present all alone on the verandah outside; inside the shrine would be seated Sri Mahapurushaji Maharaj, his body firm and motionless, and tears of deep love flowing down his chest. One day getting up from such a state he was going to his room, when, with his body swaying this side and that, he began singing, "Who says the Mother Kali is black?" etc.

One day he was sitting on his chair in his room and I was sitting near by at his feet. Pointing his finger to the shrine he said, "He is the Master. I am his dog, and you are my dog. Be sitting here firm. Never move out." Then he sang a couplet, "Continue to be sitting at the door, though you get a push. Who knows when he will be propitiated? Don't leave the door, and go."

Another day at the suggestion of Ananga I put him this question: "When the Kundalini awakens what sort of experience results?" He went on telling me the account of his own

experience and at the end said, "Mother does not let me say any more."

Many a day as he took a stroll in the afternoon in the Math premises I used to keep him company. During these moments he told me several times, "Keep holding on to Thakur. You will get bhakti (devotion), mukti (salvation), and all. By remembering him and reflecting on him the mind and heart get purified. Apply yourself with determination. I tell you, you will get everything. You have received our love and affection. Maharaj has bestowed grace on you. Whatever you do, never forget that you are one who is sheltered and protected by us."

So long as he was in good health I had to read out to him, now and then, the letters received by him and to write out the replies to them. One day after evening he called me and asked me to write a reply to a letter. The room was dark then and I was going to fetch a lamp from the office. He then said, "Count from the top. The letter is thirty-first in the series. Go to the office and write out this matter as the reply." I was speechless in wonder. I counted the letters, took out the number 31 and went to the office. And the letter 31 was in fact the letter to be replied to. How wonderfully attentive and observant indeed!

Another day he told me, "It is eight o'clock now. Neither 7.59 nor 8.1". I had no watch with me. He gave his own 'Omega' watch to me. This watch is even now kept in the present shrine.

Once during the occasion of Sri Durga Puja the responsibility of preparing pan fell on me. I chewed and tasted the first pan prepared, in order to find out if it had the lime and catechu put in it in the right proportion. As soon as this news reached the ears of Kristolal Maharaj he got infuriated and summoned me to the room of Mahapurushaji Maharaj. When I reached the room I heard, Kristolal Maharaj saying, "Maharaj, this boy is utterly void of any devotion. Drive him out." In this way was he speaking. Revered Maha-

purushaji heard from me what I had to say, and said, "Kristolal, he has not done anything wrong. He regards the Mother Durga as being alive, and in order to ensure that by taking the pan Her mouth does not blister, he chewed the first pan and only tested if it was all right. No offence to the Deity will result as a result of it."

I have committed many offences on different occasions and for them I have been well scolded too, and have experienced mental suffering also. I have shown resentment too. But everytime Mahapurushaji Maharaj has said, "Why should I be living, if I do not rectify your failings and shortcomings? Thakur has kept this body for that alone."

On the day I was leaving India for this country (Argentina) he told me, "May be, you will not behold me in this body again. The physique has completely broken down. My mind has also been lifted above this body. Don't weep. Whenever you are in any difficulty, do but remember me, and you will find that I am at your side. Go now, and propagate the message of Sri Thakur and Swamiji with all your heart. You yourself will be blessed, and good will be done to the world."

Revered Mahapurushaji Maharaj looked upon me as his son and loved me as such. By his grace I am now realizing gradually : *Sa Īśaḥ anirvacanīya prēmaswarūpaḥ* — That Lord is of the nature of love inexpressible.

THE GĪTĀ AND THE UPANIṢADS

SRI V. R. KALYANASUNDARA SASTRI

(Continued from the previous issue)

10. *Jñāne śamādyantaranga sādhanam*
Calmness of mind, self-control etc.
are the direct means to Jnana
(Knowledge).

The Upaniṣads declare that six disciplines like the control of the senses, control of mind, etc., are indispensable for attaining Brahman-knowledge. By a little elaboration we can extend the number of disciplines which are conducive to Self-realisation, to eight. They are as follows : (a) Discrimination between things permanent and things transient ; (b) Renunciation of the enjoyment of fruits of action, in this world and in the next ; (c) Practice of calmness of mind, self-control etc. ; (d) The intense desire to attain liberation ; (e) Hearing of the Text (*Śravaṇa*) ; (f) Critical inquiry into it (*manana*) ; (g) Repeated contemplation of it (*nididhyāsana*) ; and (h) Understanding the meaning of the words 'That' (*Tat*) and 'thou' (*tvam*). Unlike *karma*, which helps only indirectly,

these eight disciplines directly lead one to the attainment of Brahman-knowledge. The description of one who is steadfast in the knowledge of Brahman, as described in the Second Chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā, and also of one who has transcended the *guṇas* (*guṇātīta*) as described in the twelfth chapter of the Gītā is an elaboration of the disciplines enumerated here.

The following Upaniṣadic texts attest to the importance and usefulness of the disciplines listed above : (a) Therefore he who knows It as such becomes self-controlled, calm, withdrawn into himself, patient, and collected ; he sees the Self in his own self ; he sees all as the Self. (b) The discriminating man should merge the organ of speech into the mind ; he should merge that mind into the intelligent self. (c) When the five senses of knowledge come to rest together with the mind ; (d) The intelligent man conquers happiness and sorrow by practising concentration of mind on the