

Jai Guru! We have gathered here to enjoy the satsanga on this special day which happens to be the birthday of our sanghmata Sri Sri Daya Mata ji – the day she came to this earth. Let us start with a special song by Ramprasad: Will that day O come to me Ma? (meditation follows...)

I am so happy to be here with you all on this day. It is the 95<sup>th</sup> birthday of our Sanghmata. I happen to be one of her special children on whom she has showered a lot of blessings and I call myself her special child. Generally naughty children get special attention so I have been a naughty child of hers. Today I will share with you all my special experiences and incidents with Ma so that you all can also feel a bit of her love, her wisdom, her joy.

My memories go back to Feb 1972 or March 1972. That's when I received my kriya initiation. That time I was in the West. After receiving my kriya initiation a sort of divine madness came over me. I decided to dedicate the whole of my life to God in whatever way Guruji thought it best. I wanted to realize my goal of complete dedication and devotion to God as householder, or sanyasi or by staying single. The goal was more important than the path. I did not know my path. The path is generally decided by each one's karma. So I decided to write to Ma and ask her what was the best path suitable for me and if I could become a sanyasi and could I see her to decide my future? Generally it takes 2 – 3 months to receive a reply from Ma but I got a reply in 2 – 3 weeks saying, "Yes, come". I went over and talked to the Secretary. Then I went over to the bank and I found that there was enough money to go back and forth and I finally arrived here in Mother Center. That meeting is still very very vivid to me. I was in the room where Rosy used to sit and give interviews. I went and sat there and Ma walked in like a majestic queen. As she entered she was doing the jap 'Hare Ram, Hare Ram' loudly in the Indian way (prior to being a monastic my name was Ram). She asked me, "Where have we met before?" I sat and she also sat down. Then she said, "In this life, this is our first meeting." I asked her what was the course of my life, and if I could enter sanyas? She said, yes I could enter whenever I felt like. I was then on a job contract in South America. I planned to join as soon as I could free myself from my job obligations.

That trip is very vivid in my memory. After the initiation I was enjoying my spiritual honeymoon. After the spiritual marriage has taken place there are lots of blessings. During my meeting with her she blessed me with a divine experience and also gave me an indication of her divine stature. On the plane I could not sleep. I saw her in a golden body blessing me. In a few months I joined the ashram. She came to India in October 1972 and stayed till 1973 for nearly six months. That was her last visit to India. She kept me there for two years; kept me with spiritual giants of SRF like Sw. Premamoy and Mrinalini Mata to be under them and go through the rigorous discipline.

In February 1974 I was supposed to come to India. I was mentally getting ready to come back to India, when suddenly Sw. Premamoy asked me, "Are you willing to take the Brahmachari vows now. If you are then Ma will give you the vow in Guruji's room." In those days one could get the Brahmachari vows after a training of six to seven years as a postulant. Daya Ma's prayer had been to Guruji – Don't spare me. Give me the same rigorous training that Sw. Sri Yukteshwarji gave to you. In those days one did not get long term visas. During that short visit I had also

asked Ma to give me the rigorous discipline that Guruji had given to her. And I had taken the rigors of the training in the Mother Center - Br. Premamoy would needle me in and out on the basic core problem of ego. Just when I was about to leave he asked me if I was ready for the Brahmachari vows. There was not much of a choice. I asked to be given the Brahmachari vows. That meeting with Ma in Guruji's room, with Ma conducting the havan and I repeating the vows after her are the most memorable memories. No other monk has had that blessing of being given Brahmachari vows by Ma in Guruji's room except perhaps in the golden days when Ma must have given it to Br. Premamoy.

I came back to India. Some years passed. In 1977 we celebrated the diamond jubilee of the YSS. We had our first Kumbh Mela camp in Allahabad. It was a very successful camp and soon after that I went again to the Mother Center for six months training with Br. Premamoy and Mrinalini Mata. That was a very special year, because I got a lot of attention from Ma. Sometimes I would wonder when I would get that much attention from Ma, whether I was spiritually so weak that I had to get so much attention from her.

Ma would be sitting giving one of her special satsangas. I would be at the back of the room with other Brahmacharis and she would call out loudly, "Krishnananda, where are you? You come sit here close to me." She would tell Sw. Bimalananda "You go and sit at the back." I would feel very embarrassed – that a Swami was being asked to go to the back for a Brahmachari. When Sw. Bimalananda would go back, she would say, "That's like a good monk." Sw. Bimalananda is one of the ideal monks that one can look up to. He was one of the first monks I met. He is known for his joyous practice of the presence of God. He is radiating joy through the simplicity of his life.

Wherever Ma would go she would call me. In Encinitas, in the desert, wherever she would go, she would make sure I was near her, when she was lecturing. While I was there I had completed my 5 years of being initiated into monkhood and I was thrilled that I was there to be able to take her blessings. I was on that day in the special building in Encinitas where they were editing a film on Ma. She called me just to let me sit by her side. As I came out of Guruji's room that day, she was standing there. I said to her, "Ma, today is a very special day. She asked, "Why?" I said, "Today I have completed five years of being initiated into monkhood." She would often ruffle my hair. So she again ruffled my hair and said, "You are no longer a boy." There was a Brahmachari sitting at the back handling the projector. All of a sudden she asked me to go and run the projector while Ma and Ananda Ma and the others were in the front talking. I could not hear what they were talking. I enjoyed the blessings of being there. When I got up to go, she came up to me and she pulled out a ring from her hand and put it in my little finger. A little time later she gave me another ring (Swamiji points out) and put it in the other little finger. She has been holding her baby by the hand through these two little fingers, making sure that the little rascal doesn't go away from her. He is tied to Ma through the two little fingers.

Once the Counsel General of India was visiting her and I was supposed to make gulab jamuns for the visitor. You must have seen that film of Ma where she is standing beside a pool and feeding the fish and then she stands up to go and waves. She was waving to me. They were filming her in various places. I often look at that film and revive my joyous memory of that occasion. I was to bring Ma to India then for the diamond jubilee.

While I was there, months went by and Ma gave me different projects to work on. There is not one area that I have not worked on. Six months came to a close very fast. Whenever I went with Ma I would never go alone. There would be other monks with me and I remember enjoying the special treats – apple pie with vanilla ice cream – that is supposed to be a specialty of SRF ashrams. One more experience that Ma told me about – this has to do with a nice spiritual message. Ma was then at the desert retreat with Mrinalini Ma and Mrinalini Ma's mother – Meera Ma. Meera Ma has been in charge of the building of the Encinitas hermitage and the Hollywood temple. She would run the restaurant in those days to sustain the ashram. In those days Guruji would have to run restaurants to run the expenses of the ashram. Ma said, she was once trying to push a thread through a needle. She was not efficiently able to pass it through the needle. So she passed it on to Meera Ma – “Please thread it for me.” Meera Ma tried pushing the thread into the needle 5 – 6 times and then she shouted for Divine Mother “Divine Mother, please put the thread” and the thread went through. Ma told Meera Ma, “Why didn't you say that in the first place instead of allowing yourself to be frustrated for so long?”

My next visit to the Mother Center was in 1987-89. This time it was disciplining – no more pampering. Ma thought, he has grown up, let me give it to him. There were lots of spiritual experiences too, when we would be called up to sit at Ma's feet for an informal satsanga. At the end of half an hour once, she was getting up to leave. She walked over to where I was standing; she stopped, I bowed down to her and she took my head between her hands and shook it and said: “Kuduk, kuduk, kuduk...Guruji would do that to me.” She said this was the way in India, they checked whether the coconut has a lot of water or not; so also empty heads make a lot of noise. She did that very often and every time she did that I would get a tingling sensation in my head and I would feel spiritually blessed.

In those days she would attend every convocation. In 1995 I was called to the Mother Center again for 6 months. I had plenty of sittings with her to discuss ashram work and she wanted to see the plan of the Smriti Mandir. She was very happy with the Smriti Mandir. She asked me to prepare the photo display of the Smriti Mandir for the convocation. During one of those meetings when she was disciplining me she told me to be a good karma yogi. She asked me to read Sw. Vivekananda's book on Karma Yoga. Now here we are trying to meditate, practicing pranayama, pratyahara trying to be rajayogi's and to practice karma yoga means to do a lot of service, service to be a karma yogi. She gave an example of how once Ramkrishna Paramhansa totally ignored Vivekananda. Whatever he did, whenever he went to Ramkrishna Paramhansa, he was ignored. This was because some people had become very jealous of Vivekananda. What is so great about him that you shower so much of attention on him; that is what they thought. Ramkrishna Paramhansa was teaching those people a lesson. He showed them that ‘even if I don't pay any attention to him; he regularly comes to me; and goes about his duties.’ Ma told me “I want you to be like him.”

She told me that Guruji had asked her to hold two people as ideals before her: 1. Anandmoyi Ma and 2. Sr. Nivedita (disciple of Vivekananda). Guruji wanted Daya Ma to follow these two examples. In 2002 when I had gone to the Mother Center for 6 months, I had only two meetings with Ma, on the first day of my arrival and on the last day before we departed. There is that photograph on the back of the Yogoda magazine of myself, Sw. Bhavanandji and Sw. Smaranandji sitting at the feet of Ma during that last visit. It was my last meeting with her.

Whatever I am it is because of Ma, she allowed me to enter the ashram, she allowed me to serve in various capacities and there is not one area where I have not served and she sustains me.

Until now I have been telling you personal stories of Ma's love and blessings. Now let us come to her universal blessings. In 1974 when I came to the YSS ashram I was the only Indian monk in Ranchi. Sw. Nirvanandji was a Brahmachari then and there was Sw. Vishwanandji in Calcutta. I was apparently her first Indian monastic child. I read a story in 'Only Love' where Gurujji had given Ma an egg for Easter. He had told her then, "You are my Easter Egg." When a chicken is not laying eggs, you place a fake egg so that she feels motivated by that fake egg to lay more eggs. So in 1931 when Daya Ma joined the SRF as a nun, Gurujji told her, "You are my nest egg; with you more and more people will join the ashram permanently." At that time there were many people coming and then leaving the ashram. I told Ma, "Just as you were Gurujji's nest egg, make me your nest egg, so that more and more monks come to stay." Now there are 35 monks in the Ranchi ashram.

Organizationally how much more grateful we should be to Ma. Gurujji before leaving his body asked Ma to promise that she would take the same interest in India, the way he took an interest in SRF by ignoring his own India and looking after SRF all his life. Until she came to India, YSS was only synonymous with Brahmacharya Vidyalaya. There were only a handful of centers all over India, and only about 1200 students all over India; nothing in the way of lessons, kriya initiation etc.

Sw. Bidyananda who was called --- then, had established a school in West Bengal. Gurujji had asked him to take charge of the schools in Ranchi. Sw. --- who had taken his vows from the Shankaracharya of Puri was also looking after YSS then. Gurujji had painted such a wonderful picture of India. Ma came to India to learn. She would often write back to the monks and nuns in USA of her experiences in India. These letters were often published in the travel diary in the SRF magazine then. She travelled in trains, cars, she met saints like Anandmoyee Ma. She also met Upendranath Sanyal in Bhagalpur, Sw. Satyananda and Sitaramdas Omkarnath. Sitaramdas Omkarnath was well known for his humility and Guru devotion. The Shankaracharya of Puri called Ma his "American daughter". She also met the Maharaja of Puri. In 1961, 1962, 63 – 64, 69 – 70 she came to India 4 – 5 times and tried to put YSS on a firm footing. She saw to it that lessons were sent out in India in the same way as in the SRF and the number of meditation centers grew. By the time of her last visit in 1973, the no. of lesson members had grown to around 7000. One of her visits at that time was to Babaji's cave where she had that divine experience which is mentioned in 'Only Love'. Soon after that YSS acquired 5 acres of land near Babaji's caves (The Chapter – A Blessing From Mahavtar Babaji, Pg. 172 of 'ONLY LOVE'). Sometimes I have a doubt in my mind, whether my entering the ashram in 1974 has something to do with her not coming to India any longer. But then I remember she is very much aware of what goes on in our minds, in our lives whether she is physically present with us or not.

I used to often ask her "when are you coming to India, Ma?" and every time she would say, "When it is Divine Mother's wish." When I ask others when she will be coming to India, they say that there is a strong possibility that if she came to India, she would leave her body in India. That fear makes everyone feel it is better to have her in the body for a longer time than to let her go to India and not have her at all. Since 1977 Mrinalini Ma, Ananda Ma, has come to India, In

1981 Sw. Anandmoyji came to India, to help the YSS become stronger. Sw. Bhaktananda and Mukti Mata also came to India. Sw. Anilananda has also been to India. One by one most of the direct disciples have left their bodies. At present most of the time Ma is in seclusion and it is very difficult for anyone to get even her darshan.

When I was in 1977 she herself told me this story. She had just taken a bath and had tied her hair high up on the head in a towel the way ladies do. She was going from the bathroom to her room. As she passed Guruji, Guruji looked at her and gave her a 'funny kind of look.' Once I asked Ma if Guruji was interested in Western music and Ma said, 'Guruji has no interest in Western music'. When he saw her with the hair in the towel on the head, he started imitating the Western singers like Amallita Galli Curci – "Ou, Ou, Ou, Haa, Haa, Haa..." Guruji went on to say, "You know I am seeing your next incarnation. I will incarnate again in 200 years in Kashmir. At that time you will be born as an opera singer. You will be born as a boy and at the age of 6 you will come searching for me in Kashmir." So why worry about Kashmir problem? Guruji is going to come back and Ma will be there too.

There is another very inspiring and instructive story. Ma said that in those days there were some monks of Indian origin in the west who severely criticized Guruji about something because basically they were jealous of Guruji as he was a shining star. Ma was very upset. On one occasion when they were insulted by some such monks in a hotel Ma asked Guruji, "Why are they talking to you like this? Can I go and ask them why are they doing this to you?" Guruji said, "Don't ask." He picked up a rose from the vase on the table, crushed its petals and had Ma smell the crushed petals. He said, "Become like a flower; if you pick a beautiful rose and crush it in your hands, it gives off a sweet fragrance. That's the way a devotee of God should be. No matter how he is crushed by unkindness from anyone, he gives off the sweet fragrance of forgiveness, of kindness." He told her that even if she was criticized she should continue to radiate more love. The story did not end there. Several years later, Dr. Radhakrishnan became the President of India and was visiting Los Angeles. There was a party being held in his honour and people from different areas were called to attend that party. The SRF was also invited. There was a long table and when Ma looked across the table there were those same monks who had long before criticized Guruji in the hotel. Their eyes met and Ma started sending love in their direction. After some time, Dr. Radhakrishnan came, he shook hands and as they were leaving, one of those monks came over to Ma and said, "We are glad we have come to know you. On that exchange of good note they departed. The story still did not end there. When Ma came to India, she had gone to Bangalore. In Bangalore, she had a severe pain and the doctors said she must be transported to Calcutta because there was a need for her to undergo an operation. As she was flying to Calcutta, lo and behold, who was there at the airport? The same monk who had exchanged greetings with her at the banquet in honour of Dr. Radhakrishnan. He came over, greeted Ma and all through the flight he kept on inquiring after her health and asked her to call on him if she needed anything. What was the formula: Only Love. So whatever the others do to you; you give them only love.

These stories have to be put into practice. If you really surrender to God then God takes over your life. He radiates his love and if Ma experienced it, you and I can also experience it. Let us wish Ma a very good day and let us pray that she may continue to shower her blessings on all of us. Ma has an album on her desk with the photos of all the monks and nuns, of her visits to India,

of the programs being held in various kendras and centers. She daily flips through the album, looks at the pictures and sends her love and blessings to all those people.

In 1977 when Ma visited Anandmoyee Ma, Anandmoyee Ma presented Daya Ma with two blessed apples. In 1995 the disciples of Anandmoyee Ma were celebrating the centenary celebrations and they sent an invitation to Ma to come to India and take part in the celebrations. Daya Ma expressed her apologies for not being able to come to India personally but she spoke about the two apples which Anandmoyee Ma had given to her and which she had preserved. It was a miracle that even after 25 years, the two apples had not got spoilt.

Ramesh Bhai (Chairman, Mumbai Kendra) added that “When the Swamijis touch something, it changes the very atoms. Both Anandmoyee Ma and Daya Ma had touched those apples and so the atoms changed and the apples were preserved over such a long period.” Therefore he requested that Sw. Krishnanandji hand over Prasad to the devotees.