

## Badri Vishal - The Sacred Seat of Divine Liberation

It was another blissful late Saturday evening in Akhanda Mahapeeth with some us surrounding Sree Sree Maa after a delightful session of music. Seizing the opportunity, our editor posed the inevitable question, “Maa, how shall we go about writing about Lord Badrinarayana, the theme topic of the next issue? We understand that the holy arena of Badrinath and its surroundings is considered extremely sacred for spiritual seekers and sadhakas aspiring for divine grace for liberation. Please tell us something interesting.”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Sree Sree Maa, “The Supreme Lord has meticulously crafted this universe out of himself within which lie secrets of creation and infinite possibilities of divine life, cutting across time space and beyond - permeating every layer of consciousness. The Dasha-Mahavidyas, the Dwadash-Shivas, Four Narayanas and the Virat Purusha are but some such fundamental principles or tattwas. In the shrine of Badrinath, the Divine Lord Narayana of Vaikuntha - the alter ego of Bhagwan Sri Krishna of Goloka - is worshipped as Sri Badrinarayana, the supreme custodian of the divine spiritual path. In ancient times the great sages and devas or gods converged in this Himalayan region, which was then a

dense forest of Badri<sup>1</sup> trees, and performed intense tapasya (penance) seeking divine liberation for mankind. Their inner prayers pleased Lord Sri Hari, who promised to ensure his permanent presence in this region, transforming it into a holy pilgrimage. Ever since, across the ages, he has revealed his divine omnipresence to true seekers gracing them with spiritual enlightenment. Here he is envisaged as Lord

Badrinath – viewed as sitting under a Badri tree imparting spiritual science to sages, gods and devotees. Considered amongst the most potent kshetras for final spiritual attainments, it is said that even during the dark ages of Kali-Yuga, when the knowledge of Vedas and scriptures appears to be lost from almost



The temple of Lord Badrinarayana at Badrinath kshetra

everywhere, Lord Sri Hari remains surely manifested in Badri-tirtha, as the grand guardian of eternal truth and the holy science.

There are innumerable tales in the Puranas about the vibrant presence of the divine Lord in this region. Lord Shiva once remarked, ‘What is attained after intense penance in other places is easily received through sincere prayers to the Lord at Badrinath-dham, opening up the path of liberation.’ Interestingly, after failing to get any relief elsewhere, Mahadeva finally came

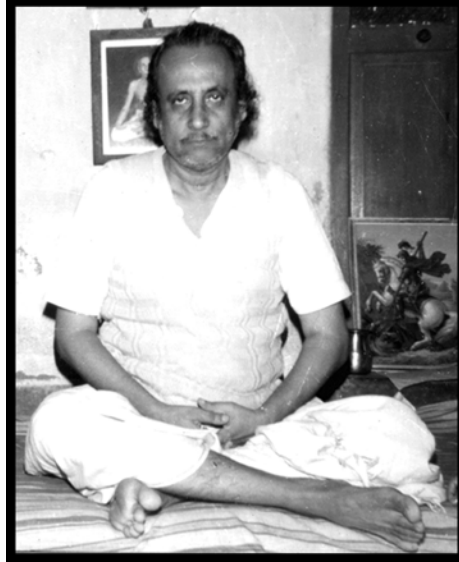
<sup>1</sup> The Indian Jujube, popularly known as ‘ber’ or ‘kul’

to Badrinath and was instantly freed from the deadly sin of Brahma-hathya which he had acquired when he beheaded Lord Brahma, enraged by Brahma's desire-filled advances towards his own daughter. This place is blessed by the purified presence of Agni-dev in Agnitirtha and the powerful tapas of Sages Narada and Markendeya, Avatars Varaha and Nrisingha and the invincible Garuda – which can still be felt in the Panchashilas or the five sacred stone relics. You may find details of these in the conversation between Lord Shiva with his son, the divine Skanda or Lord Kartikeya - a secret about whose identity and birth I shall tell you later. The region is dotted with innumerable pilgrimage spots sanctified by the tales of great personalities including Bhakta Prahlad, Bhagwan Hayagriva, divine sages Nara-Narayana and others.

The Rishi-Sangha or Congregation of Sages is assembled here to advance the spiritual path. Those who have the vision can see hundreds of sages (in astral or divine bodies) within the mountains of Badri Vishal, constantly engaged in unified efforts for the spiritual upliftment of this world. It is said that almost every great rishi keeps an embodiment in the Badri region for participating in upholding, uplifting and universally transmitting brahma-vidya. This region encompassing the Neelkanth Mountain, the Satpanth Hills and the surroundings form a central region which nurtures and sustains world's spiritual heritage. Sri Sri Nanga Baba's Vyaspeeth Ashram, Mahavatar Babaji Maharaj's cave,

Gyangunj, etc., are all located amidst these set of mountains. Many layers of consciousness and astral spiritual worlds converge at this place. I have seen astral vehicles carrying highly emancipated yogis and saints emerge from and merge back into other dimensions of consciousness at this place including the one that came for the samadhi bhandara of Asgar Ali Baba Saheb, carrying none other than their greatest prophets. I will tell you more details of this fascinating episode at another opportune time. The manifested Supreme Lord of this region is Sri Badrinarayana. He co-resides with the Shiva-form of Sri Kedarnath located

nearby. Sri Kedarnath is considered the guru of Sri Badrinarayana on earth in the sense that he was the principal Sadashiva consciousness who seeded the descent of the Narayana-consciousness of Sri Badrinarayana into this world. They uphold universal truth and not any particular religion or sect. Hundreds of great saints have received their final enlightenment at this place or have come here after enlightenment to offer



Sri Sri Baba

their gratitude and seek blessings.

Our Sri Sri Baba told me many interesting tales of the region of Badri and took me (by astral means) to various holy places including Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gyangunj, Vyaspeeth, Kaushiki Ashram, Sage Kuthumi's place, Manasarovar, etc. He said that Badrinath-dham is a principal sacred home for the guru-shishya parampara, because of the presence of the great Rishi-Sangha who constantly support the work of

anointed sadgurus. During diksha, there is a norm of dakshina for the Anga-Prayaschitta (inner body purification) performed by the sadguru. Sri Sri Shyamacharan Lahiri Mahashay has prescribed five rupees as dakshina for the Kriya lineage and that is what we follow. This money is meant for the service of the Rishi-Sangha and not for any other purpose. It is not to be used for the diksha guru's pleasure or upkeep. The divine directive to the guru is to (periodically) take the collected amount to Sri Badrinath-dham. There one should pray deeply requesting Lord Badrinarayana and the sacred Rishi-Sangha to kindly accept the same. Inevitably a saint, will come in some form or the other, often incognito, to collect it. This is meant for the service and bhandara of the Rishi-Sangha. In many cases, they also come down to collect it from the locality where the guru resides. Such has happened in my case. I have also seen great saints come in disguise and collect it from Sri Sri Baba. Once, two close aides of Mahavatar Babaji Maharaj, namely Sri Sumerudas-ji (a great yogi known in spiritual circles as Babaji Maharaj's manasputra and a personal friend of Sri Sri Baba about whom you may have heard as the great Yogi-guru of Srimad Nigamananda Paramshansa-dev) and Sri Juhurush Baba (whom you may know as the current divine embodiment of the perfected Sufi saint Khawaja Gharib Nawaz of Ajmer Sharif) came to Sri Sri Baba in my presence, peculiarly dressed as rag-tag beggars, one (Sumerudas-ji) with a Hindu trident in hand and the other (Juhurush Baba) holding a similar but crescent headed staff. They requested for money for bhandara. They had also come to see me along with Sri Sri Baba and visualize the combined Shiva-Shakti presence. In addition to handing over the

requisite amount of money, it was a rare occasion where Sri Sri Baba displayed his yogic siddhi by magically producing out of thin air, a fresh dakshina-varta sankha (a highly prized conch shell) - as if just retrieved from the ocean depths - and gave it to them. Sri Sri Baba would say that it is the duty of a sadguru to ensure that the diksha-dakshina is handed over to the holy Sangha who, through the blessings of Lord Badrinarayana, constantly guide initiated sadhakas and bhaktas in the spiritual path. If any sadhu uses it for any other purpose, he is committing a grave mistake. The Sadhu Sangha is the blessed representative of Lord Badrinarayana. Serving them is akin to serving the Supreme Lord himself. Many self-styled gurus have no idea of all this because they are not ordained by divine directives. Many take whatever amount they feel for giving diksha instead of what is directed by the divine guru parampara, and use it for other purposes, which is wrong.

Typically, a brahmarshi sage, who has attained Narayana-hood, occupies the seat of Veda-Vyasa – the principal commentator of the eternal truth as enshrined in the scriptures. You will remember the story of how the great saint Madhavacharya was called over by Sri Veda Vyasa to his ashram in northern Badri. After spending some time there attaining the full knowledge of the scriptures and completing his sadhana, he was sent back as the world teacher and avatar-like sadguru. Over the ages, this seat has been occupied by several illustrious sages like Vashishta, Krishna-Dwaipayan, etc. All great sages work together with him towards emancipation of spirituality in this world. Mahavatar Babaji Maharaj is one of the principal personalities currently entrusted with such onerous responsibility. That is why he is often called the 'Living

Badrinath'. In fact if you see the rare video made by Rooma's father, the yogi Sri Buddha Bose which shows the priests of the Badrinath shrine performing sringar on the original idol of Sri Badrinarayana hidden within the sanctum sanctorum, you will notice how similar the posture is with the popular picture of Babaji Maharaj as revealed by Swami Yogananda. We could also say, that our Sri Sri Nanga Baba, who is in a sense the father of Babaji Maharaj, is the living Sri Kedarnath. These two personalities are the grand spiritual guardians of this world, maintaining their physical presence since ages. All great

saints of various faiths are connected with them in this work which is performed in harmonious union with the supreme divine. At their request, other great sages take embodiments and come down to this world as sadgurus to maintain the rishi parampara."

Sree Sree Maa completed her monologue. It was already late and time to wind up the session. We silently prayed to the Supreme Lord Badrinarayana, that we ordinary people, may become worthy for his grace and receive the blessings of the divine Rishi-Sangha.

*Her Blessed Child*

**-Dr Partha Pratim Chakrabarti**

### **The Yoga of Sleep**

*It is possible to utilize the natural absence of mental activity for the purpose of yoga. Just as I am alert and conscious when the vibration of mental activity goes on in full vigour, so must I seek to remain conscious and alert when it slows down or stops. Take, for example, the moment when waking and sleep meet each other. With a little effort this moment can be prolonged. At the time of sleep, the mind naturally tends towards cessation of activity; this tendency can be cultivated so that it comes very slowly, feeling its way. One should not snuff out the lamp all at once, but sink into sleep as day light vanishes into the bosom of the evening, as the child falls asleep on the breast of its mother.*

*No this last smile is not yet complete. The child falls asleep, but the mother remains awake. The child may have a sort of trust that his mother stays awake but he is not very aware of it. In yogic sleep (yoga-nidra) that awareness will be pronounced and clear.*

**-Sri Anirvan**