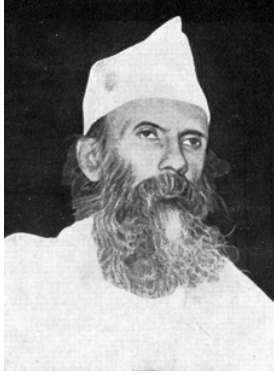


## My Life With Sri Anirvan

**20/8/08.** It was in February 1953 that I first heard about Sri Anirvan. I was then posted at



Sri Anirvan

Gauhati, Assam as sales manager of Hind Hurricane Lanterns manufactured by India Industrial Works, Salkia, Howrah. I was then staying at Smt. Amalprabha Das's house at Panbazar, Gauhati. Amalprabha was a social worker, head of the Kasturba

Gandhi Trust in Assam. She was closely associated with me during the great Assam earthquake relief activities from August 1950 to December 1951.

One day, in the third week of February 1953, I was going in a bus to Lijanbazar. I saw a signboard, "Mother's Centre," in front of a residence. I got down from the bus and met the owner of the house Dr. Mahadev Agarwal. He was a devotee of Sri Aurobindo, and informed me that they are establishing a Mother's centre in Gauhati on Mother's birthday, 21st February 1953, and cordially invited me to attend the function and speak a few words. Soon we became good friends, and I often visited his house.

In the first week of March 1953, Mahadev informed me that Sri Anirvan had come to Gauhati. "Would you like to come with me to see him?" he asked. Till then I had not heard about Sri Anirvan. It was Dr. Mahadev Agarwal who first informed me about Anirvan, about his being very popular amongst Sri Aurobindo's circle, especially in Bengal, because of his marvelous translation in Bangla of "The Life Divine," the magnum opus of Sri Aurobindo. He also told me about the Ashram "Haimavati"

of Sri Anirvan at Almora in UP, which he and his wife Shanti had visited. He told me, "You need not talk to him. You simply sit in his presence, and you are overwhelmed by the silence, by the peace emanating from him."

One day in the first week of March, we went together to a place near Gauhati Railway Station, but were told that Sri Anirvan had gone to the Himachal Ashram of Swami Shivananda. Next day we went to the Kamakhya hills, but to our regret we heard that the same morning, he had left by bus to Shillong where he would be staying for some days. I did not make any further effort to see him and the matter ended there.

I released myself from business in June 1953 and returned to Kolkata. We, the Dharmapals under the leadership of Sri Bandhu Dharmapal were then staying at 18/4D, Fern Rd. It was now nearly eight years since we had come to Kolkata from Ahmedabad with ten young men under the leadership of Sri Babubhai Shah (Bandhu Dharmapal) taking vows as Dharmapal for working and dedicating ourselves to the cause of Sanathana Dharma, Eternal and Universal Religion, in the footsteps of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. As nothing concrete was taking place initially, I was getting restless. A sense of detachment and renunciation was growing in me. I thought of taking sannyas (monastic vows), and even went to Belur Math of Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, whose Swamijis were well known to me. I met the then Vice-President Swamiji. He said, "You are welcome, but you would at least have to pass seven years as a brahmachari (celibate) before getting sannyas. Of course, in your case, it may be reduced to three years." This rather depressed me and at this juncture I remembered Sri Anirvan. I wrote a letter to him asking if I could go to his ashram and stay there for some

time. He soon replied that he was closing down his Haimavati Ashram at Almora, as Lizelle Reymond who had been staying with him since the last four years, was returning to Switzerland and he himself had decided to go to Shillong and establish Haimavati there. He said that on the way to Shillong he would stay at Kolkata for a few days during February 1954. He would stay then at Sri S. B. Roy's house at 55, Dr. Sarat Banerjee Road near Deshapriya Park. He asked me to come and meet him at Sri Roy's house.

**22/8/08** Thus in the morning of 17th or 18th February 1954 I went to meet Sri Anirvan at Sri Roy's house at the appointed time at 10.00 am. As I sat in the drawing room, Anirvanji came out from the adjacent room, a dark (shyam) bearded sadhu wearing a lungi and a yellow colored alkhatta (robe) and a white cap, small but deep and sparkling eyes with serious though gentle smiling face. I got up and bowed down formally to him, as is the custom. Then we sat and conversed for about half an hour. I did most of the talking, and he listened. I told him about our past activities, social and political, in Ahmedabad, about our taking part in the "Quit India" movement launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, about our leaving politics and founding the Dharma Sangha and taking the vows of a Dharmapal and dedicating our lives for the cause of Sanathana Dharma. Then I confided in him the present state of my mind, my urge for God realisation, to live in isolation, if possible with a holy person like Sri Anirvan. All the time he was watching me intently, and nodding his head from time to time. He said that he would be going to Shillong in March, and it would take some time to organize Haimavati there. Then I could go to him for some time. He said, "You carry on as you are doing now, and I would try to help you as much as possible." He told me how he himself would like to stay alone; why he is against establishing

any big and permanent ashram. I then gave him the invitation of Bandhu Dharmapal to visit our residence in Calcutta. Immediately Sri Anirvan looked at his small diary of appointments, and fixed the time, 10:00 am on 21st February. He asked me to take him to our place from 3, Swinhoe Street, where he would be addressing a meeting of the Physical Association of Mother's Centre organised by Sri Pramod Sen, a devotee of Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Thus, it was on the morning of 21st February 1954 that Sri Anirvan visited our house at 18/4 D Fern Road. Ramswarup, Sitaram Goel and their Congress leader friend also came to the first meeting. In the small room, Anirvanji was seated on Bandhu's cot, and the rest of us sat on chairs opposite him. Ramswarup and Sitaram asked some questions about the present state of the nation and how to work for its regeneration. Anirvanji stressed on the individual spiritual development, on personal sadhana and to do whatever one has to do in the spirit of non-attachment as Karma yoga as ordained by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. Talks continued for an hour or so and after light refreshments the meeting was over. Ramswarup's friend took Anirvanji and myself in his car back to Sri Roy's house. I had brought him to Fern Road from Swinhoe Street by rickshaw. In those days Swamiji – as we called him later, did travel in trams and buses.

After this meeting on 21st February Bandhu and I visited Anirvanji on three to four occasions, once at Tollygunj at the residence of the daughter of his friend Biren Sen. Bandhu talked mostly about his life and mission, and asked for his help in the work. Anirvanji said that he would extend all his help to the work of Dharma Sangha, as he felt there was no difference between his thinking and our work. But he emphasised that he would never hold a post of responsibility in any organization, neither as a guru nor an official teacher. "I would always work in freedom. I would always

remain like a Baul,” he said. Then he talked about Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Rabindranath Tagore, and various Bauls. He quoted from Kathamrita, ”The Baul came, sang and went away.”

**23/8/08** Anirvanji left for Shillong in the first week of March 1954. In Shillong he had already gathered around him a group of friends and devotees. The main person among them was Smt Usha Bhattacharya, Principal of Lady Kean College for Girls, Shillong. She was a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and was attracted to Anirvanji after reading the Bangla translation of “The Life Divine,” the best known work of Sri Aurobindo. She even visited Haimavati at Almora, during the period when Lizelle Reymond was living with Anirvanji. Every year when Sri Anirvan visited Himachal Ashram at Gauhati during winter, he would go to Shillong and stay at Usha’s house. There, along with Usha’s other friends, the girls from Lady Kean College came to him. Sandhya Das and Rema Chakravarty were chief amongst the group of girls who were closely drawn towards Anirvanji. In fact, this was the group of girls who were to join the proposed Shanti Ashram at Almora under the guidance of Lizelle Reymond and Anirvanji who planned to

be the titular heads, but at the last moment all the girls except Sandhya and Rema dropped out because of the strictness of their parents, who would not allow their daughters to go to such a faraway place. This was the main reason why Lizelle became frustrated and depressed, as she wanted to do something active. That was the time when Anirvanji had found some books of Gurdjieff, especially the famous book of Guspensky-The Fourth. He saw that Gurdjieff’s philosophy is akin to the Sankhya philosophy of India, and advised Lizelle to go back to Switzerland and work with the Gurdjieff group and contribute to the group what she had learnt all these years in his company. This was how they parted. Lizelle returned to Switzerland, and Anirvanji decided to stay at Shillong.

Thus Sri Anirvan established his Haimavati first at Nong-thy-mai, Shillong, from April 1954. Later in April 1958, he shifted Haimavati to the spacious grounds of Sri Aurobindo Path-Mandir, Shillong, behind the Assam Governor’s Bungalow on Camel-Back Rd near the Words lake, where Usha’s brother Karuna Bhattacharya had a contractor build a small house for him according to his specifications.

–Sri Gautam Dhramapal

---

## Akshay Varta - Eternal Message

On hearing about a great saint called Sri Shiva Teja Baba residing in the twin cities of Hyderabad-Secunderabad from Sri Alwar Baba of Pushkar, our Guru-brother Shri Lakshmipat Sekhani immediately rushed to Hyderabad to meet the Mahatma there. The night of the same very day when Lakshmipat-bhai had got the gracious audience of Sri Shiva Teja Baba, Sree Sree Maa received the blessed enlightened inner darshan of the legendary saint, Sri Shirdi Sai Baba. While he was taking

leave, Sri Shiva Teja Baba presented Lakshmipat with a small laminated photo of Shirdi Baba saying, “Keep this with you and show it to your Guru Maa”. Lakshmipat-bhai returned to Kolkata and described his experience to Sree Sree Maa in vivid details. Hearing everything a visibly delighted Sree Sree Maa said, “Sri Shiva Teja Baba is a Paramhansa Mahatma of a very high order. I think that he is another embodiment of Shirdi Sai Baba because he came to me in the form of