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At age 73, the dearly revered co-head of the renowned international Brahma Kumari World Spiritual University, Didi Manmohini, left her body on July 28, 1983, after a month in a coma in Bombay, where unsuccessful attempts had been made to remove a brain tumor. Her life had been a model of deep personal communion with and selfless service to Lord Shiva - or "Shiv Baba" (Father Shiva) - as the Sisters endear themselves to Him.

Immediately, her body was transported by ambulance to the Brahma Kumari international headquarters majestically perched atop Mt. Abu, in Rajasthan state. Undistracted by torrential monsoon rains, thousands of prayerful devotees and respectful townspeople thronged the car showering it with flowers as it passed through the dozens of small village on the way to Mt. Abu.

Sister Denise, Director of the San Francisco Center, flew right away to Mt. Abu, and shared this very intimate account of the traditional 13-day period of sacred ritual and vigil which honored Didi: "Large piles of red rose petals covered her - offered by nearly 1,500 devotees who managed the difficult ascent up Mt. Abu, braving the driving rains. After two days, we put her on a wooden litter and carried her through the city of Mt. Abu, pinnacled high above the flat plains of Rajasthan far below. Ghee, sandalwood and other substances were applied to her body. She was placed on the wood pyre and cremated. Soon afterward, messages began to come from Didi through one of previous month, while apparently in a coma state, had been in trance, in total God-consciousness, enjoying the fulfillment of all her deep spiritual sadhanas. Didi shared detailed accounts of everything that was transpiring in the so-called "transition experience." One message said that the sincere and deep meditations performed by so many of the Brahma Kumaris worldwide during this time had purified the womb that Didi would enter for her next birth on the 13th day. On that 13th day, rather than just deliver a message through the medium, she came fully into the body. I was there and saw this. She did not speak verbally, just through the eyes. Throughout this 13-day period there was no grief, but waves of love and shakti."

The Brahma Kumari organization began in 1937. One day in 1936, after many sudden spiritual awakenings, Dada Lekh Raj - by profession a wealthy jeweler - was pulled into a deep state of meditation. He felt someone enter into his body. "There was great power, a great light. The room vibrated with energy. Taking over his physical senses it started to speak: "I am the Blissful Self, I am Shiva, I am Shiva/I am the Knowledgeable Self, I am Shiva, I am Shiva/I am the Luminous Self, I am Shiva."

He soon afterward left his business and surrendered himself to God's work, developing over the ensuing years the Brahma Kumari organization, today expanded into over 800 centers in 52 countries. Their teachings include emphasis on Raja Yoga, worship of the personal aspect of the Deity, purity, service to humanity and celibacy for the sisters and brothers. The University is presently administered almost exclusively by women, as "the words of God stated that women were now to perform the special role as His divine instruments for world change...with their qualities of surrender, mercy and wisdom.

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