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*Just as there is a veil of ignorance for the individual,  
so there is also a door to Knowledge.*

## MĀTRI-VĀNI

The Wise keep on declaring and the *Sāstras* also say that if someone is engrossed in the quest of the Supreme, it can never be that he will not find. Constant effort; so long as you have not reached, do not relax your effort. Is not God, Who is Truth Itself, within you? Therefore do not abandon meditation, the contemplation of your Self. Being your very own, it is destined to be found by you. This is bliss and nothing but bliss. Where then are gloom and dejection? HE alone IS.

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To tread the path that leads to the realization of one's Self and cannot be relinquished, this is *dharma*. For every individual the road to Illumination is different. Wherever you may be, from there itself start advancing. For there is only He and no other. He Himself is holding you. He never, never forsakes you. Again, the practice (*kriyā*) that aims at the realization of God is called *dharma*. That which distracts one from the remembrance of God or Truth is *adharma*. There is but one *dharma*.

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Man is born in order to exhaust his karma, he is also born to exhaust the cycle of birth and rebirth. The man of supernormal power, that is to say in whom divine power has been awakened, he can also himself change his karma.

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The Guru manifests from within. When real, genuine search supervenes, real Enlightenment is bound to come. It cannot possibly be otherwise. HE Himself, having appeared as the Guru, reveals Himself or is being revealed.

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The way to God-realization is straight and simple indeed. The mantra which the Guru communicates is certainly the most excellent one. If the mantra received from one's Guru is repeated in the right manner, realization is bound to occur. How wonderful God's dispensation is! When the power transmitted to you by the Guru begins to function, action will not bear fruit anymore. If one enters fire one will of necessity be burnt. Although all names and forms are His, the One is yet again without name and form. For the man who loves the Name, God is truly present in all names and forms. And for the person who feels drawn towards the Absolute, He is beyond name and form.

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Never attempt to do barter with God, do not foster the mentality of a merchant or trader. "For so many years I have practised meditation and yet reached nothing!" This is not the attitude to be taken. HE is the breath of your life, the Self of yourself. HE is one with you.

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The Name and the One Whose name it is are identical: For He Himself appears as Name. The letter (*akṣara*) is indeed God's own guise. When the name becomes alive, it is as when a seed is sown the tree grows out of it. If the name that appeals most to any particular person is constantly repeated, one arrives at the realization that all names are

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His names, all forms His forms. Furthermore, that He is without name and form will also by and by come to light.

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In wealth and property there is certainly no peace. What then does give peace? My own true nature is Peace, Knowledge, Divine Consciousness—unless and until this is realized, how can there be peace? In order to find your Self you must become revealed to yourself. How beautiful!

## Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

(TRANSLATED FROM BENGALI)

*Ranchi, June 7th, 1965.*

**Question :** If a householder devotee is in trouble, is it right for him to pray to God for redress ?

**Mataji :** Various attitudes may be taken. There are those who have dedicated themselves entirely to God. They say : "My Lord, whatever you may do, howsoever you may keep me, it is all right." According to the state of people's minds their conditions differ. Some are at a stage at which they just cannot help praying. Others, when visited by trials and misfortunes feel disappointed with God and drop their religious practices. On the other hand there are persons who turn to God more eagerly when in sorrow. And some remember Him with greater fervour when they are happy. In all circumstances He is the great Healer. Therefore many are moved to appeal to Him in trouble. Then again a state comes when one does not anymore feel the inclination to pray to Him for relief in adversity, pain, ill-luck, and so forth. To invoke God is always good. For whatever reason you may pray, from whatever motive—at least start praying to Him ! Be it for alleviation of distress or for Enlightenment, be it even for wealth and possessions. The Wise ever live in the remembrance of God.

*June 8th, 1965.*

**Question :** Someone who is a *karmayogi*, who believes in the path of action, says, there is no need of God, Guru, the company of saints and sages, and so forth. Is this correct ?

**Mataji :** The Sankhya philosophy also is of a similar opinion. The existence of God cannot be proved by the mind. You concentrate on God in order to transcend the

individual mind .When the Lord Buddha was asked whether God existed or not, He kept silent. One will have to accept whatever anyone advocates, in the light of his particular state, *sādhana* and experience. Each one's practice depends on the stage he has reached and on the nature of his particular line of approach. Where the question of belief and explanation arises, there it is like this. When a salt doll enters the sea, it is dissolved and mingles with the water. In the state beyond mind and intelligence there is no reply. There—about what is one to speak and who speaks? There, I do not see any others, I do not go anywhere, do not accept anything from anyone, do not eat anyone's food. There is no question at all of talking. Whether you call it inert or undecaying—everything is all right. Here to ask questions or not to ask is equal. To be satisfied by knowing this from hearsay will not do : the progress of one's *sādhana* will thereby be arrested. One must experience this for oneself. Someone told the following incident :

In the course of doing puja, a man was performing the ceremony of instilling life into an earthen pitcher. All of a sudden the pitcher began to talk and related to him the story of its life. "When I was still earth I was lying somewhere and people came and walked on me. Then someone eased himself over me. I bore everything. One day a man came with a spade and broke me up. This also I endured. He put me into a basket, carried me away on his head and deposited me in some place. A little later he took a stick and beat me mercilessly. After putting cold water on me he went away. For a short while I felt at peace. But he returned again and kneaded me first with his feet and then formed me into a ball with his hands. Thereafter I was put on a potter's wheel. I was turned round and round and by the potter's hand moulded until I became a pitcher. Carefully he placed me on the ground. For a few days I was exposed to the sunshine. Sometimes I had to bear extreme cold and sometimes scorching heat. Then I was

put on a fire. What a huge fire it was and how terribly the flames burnt! When I had been baked red and hard and solid, I was carefully taken off the fire and put away. One day I was carried to the market together with other pitchers. Those who wanted to buy me took me up and banged me hard. Finally someone bought me for money and took me away. And now I am sitting here, filled to the brim with Gangeswater. Look, if you can develop similar patience and forbearance your life will become a vessel for the sacred waters of the Ganges. Be enduring as earth. Then you also will be worshipped by the people. Divine Life will be awakened in you."

(Translated from Hindi)

Vrindaban, August 1967.

*Question* : Mataji, please give us a talk !

*Mataji* : Here, there is no question of giving talks. Here all are one *tmā* : Just as one's hand is one's own, so one speaks to oneself. For all are one, One must transcend talk and no talk. One should speak about that which takes one beyond the opposites of talking and keeping silent. And what is that? The remembrance of God. Practise *japa*, the name, a *mantra*, whatever anyone has got. *Akṣara* (the letter or syllable) is that which is indestructible\*. Keep that *akṣara* always with you. Practise the awareness of God, contemplate Him so that He may be revealed to you. Don't allow the mind to remain vacant. Otherwise, just as water leaks out of a vessel with a hole, so if the mind is left to itself, the really important thing leaks out of it and the mind turns to vain matters instead of to Him. God is Truth. One should seek *satsang* and read sacred books. Whatever the Guru instructs must be followed.

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\**Akṣara* means 'letter 'as well as' indestructible'.



## From the Diary of a European

MELITA MASCHMANN

( IX )

( Translated from German )

*Ahmedabad, 1st December 1963.*

Mataji's complete gesturelessness ! The only 'gesture' that she makes is that of the Indian greeting : the raised folded hands. With this gesture she does not only greet but also expresses a request and thanks.

The richness in gestures of all religious ceremonies of all civilizations. As for instance in high mass or *pūjā*.

I remember one evening at Varanasi, when Mataji stood before one of the Ashram temples while a *pūjā* was performed there. I was reminded of it when I saw her stand near the fire sacrifice that was celebrated by several priests today. She stood perfectly still while the priest was going through a worship full of gestures. He is a quiet old man, slender and delicate and very reserved. I have often listened to the language of his gestures. It sounded serious and dignified, convincing even for me although I could not understand their meaning.

And yet: when Mataji watched him that day, the poverty of the language of religious gestures struck me with cutting clarity. The *pūjā*—that is to say the divine presence—was not in the worship of the priest but in Mataji's motionless being.

While she stood near the fire sacrifice today, only watching, without any active participation, it overwhelmed me : In her there is Reality, Being of a different order, a different density or quality from that of the priests and all the others who were standing around.

*Poona, December 1963.*

I have the impression that here Mataji is sometimes being left alone in a sense, although many people crowd

round her. Probably she is a responding spirit. When faced with sincere searching after truth or the longing for God, she flashes light—suddenly all fatigue is forgotten—and then it may happen that a current of spiritual intensity forces its way out with great power. But when there is no call that really touches her, she may occasionally sit in front of us like a rock. Of course this happens only very rarely.

I remember one morning in the train after a whole night's travelling, Mataji was sitting on her bed. She had a fear-inspiring expression of unapproachability. I experienced this with Mataji only on that single occasion. Her beautiful, sensitive face all of a sudden appeared as if carved of stone. Her features looked angular and seemed armoured with impenetrability. Her expression was not to be unriddled. As far as I could see, it neither showed anger nor pain nor impatience nor disgust: only immeasurable distance, inaccessibility, remoteness.

Sometimes, while *ārati* is being performed, Mataji seems transported into a contemplation that also takes her far away from the here and now of outer circumstances; but then she remains open to us, so that—provided our eyes are not blind (which unfortunately is often the case) we can catch a reflection of the light radiating from her. That morning in the train she appeared completely walled up in her terrifying unapproachability. Even the movements of her eyes, her arms, her head, seemed empty, as if occurring merely on the surface. Their impulses did not seem to emerge from the centre of her being.

For about two seconds I stood on the threshold of her compartment, then I fled. But soon I returned, sat down in front of her compartment and remained there for a long time. Mataji saw me, but whether she was aware of me I cannot say. I returned to her because I felt that wishing to be in her presence only when she emits serenity and kindness, was wrong. God alone knows what was hidden behind the impenetrable surface of her appearance.

One thing is certain : what takes place within Mataji is far more incomprehensible for us than we realize when we are daily with her. Even when she appears quite 'open' to us, we can only by the vaguest intuitions touch the outer fringe of her being.

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*Calcutta, December 22nd, 1963.*

The journey from Bombay to Calcutta has taken us 58 hours what with trains running late. For the first days of her sojourn, Mataji is the guest of a wealthy family of devotees. Their property is situated in a quiet street. Behind the house a small pandal has been erected. In a thatched garden-house Mataji receives people for private interviews. Multi-coloured electric bulbs have been fixed on bushes and trees in the garden, the tent is profusely decorated with flowers and garlands. Already the first evening two or three hundred men and women gather and everyone is eager to welcome Mataji with ardent veneration. Gradually the enthusiasm rises to such a degree that Mataji can hardly cope with the situation. From all sides simultaneously people are trying to embrace her. Never before have I witnessed Mataji allowing her devotees to get physically so close to her. She sits laughing amidst the impetuous throng and indefatigably distributes blessings by the touch of her hands. Occasionally she catches hold of a head with both her hands. Then again she caresses the face of an old woman ; with a humorous expression she pulls the hair of a boy kneeling before her, all the while making jokes with everyone at the same time.

Then an old gentleman starts a discussion about religious problems. A fencing with repartees ensues, interrupted by crackling volleys of laughter. Someone whispers to me that the old man is a hard-boiled atheist. In the midst of all this hilarity Mataji's face suddenly turns serious. She shuts her eyes and remains silent. It takes some time until

the stillness emanating from her penetrates to the farthest corner of the pandal. Then only Mataji begins to talk. For a long time she speaks with great intensity, at moments almost vehemently. From the fact that she repeatedly addresses the old gentleman I conclude that she is out to shake his atheism. He listens quietly and attentively, without ever uttering a word. Occasionally remarks are thrown in by the congregation, but Mataji dismisses them with a gesture of her hand. This also, I have never before noticed with her. Usually she at once responds to exclamations from the audience, but here the welfare of the one is at stake.

After Mataji becomes silent, the hostess celebrates *ārati* to offer the homage of all of us to the revered guest. Mataji's head is slightly tilted to one side. From her expression we can guess that she at once becomes absorbed in deep contemplation. Strange, how strikingly she now resembles the pictures from her youth. Again and again there are moments when her age appears to be blotted out. One senses the agelessness of the spiritual power functioning through her and giving the appearance that even her body is not threatened by the decline of old age. It seems endowed with the pliability, elasticity and charm of unimpairable youth.

Even the next morning this youthfulness is still very tangible. Narayana Swami reads from a sacred book and comments on it. Mataji interrupts him frequently with great vivacity and soon an animated discussion is in full swing.

*Calcutta, December 25 th, 1967.*

Mataji with her 'retinue' has moved into one of the liveliest business streets of the city. The family of a merchant, in whose compound the ceremonial recitation of the Bhagavad Gita is to be performed, has invited Mataji to grace the function with her presence. One can hardly

imagine how, in the narrow space between his house and his neighbour's, our host has succeeded in putting up a pandal to seat about a thousand people. Behind the pandal there is a courtyard in which a small cottage for Mataji has been specially constructed. The entrance to the courtyard has to be constantly guarded against the multitude of persons clamouring for private interviews with Mataji. She does not seem to have a minute's quiet throughout her stay.

Every morning a few chapters of the Gita are recited by all present. In the afternoons and evenings learned men comment on what has been read. In between Mataji receives on some days the *pranāmas* of innumerable people. At times the rush is really terrific.

While Mataji is subjected to such a "mass-*pranāma*," often the superpersonal in her existence can be clearly observed. The homage which by most is directed to her person—for people love her—she receives as a representative of the Godhead. HE is then present in her. Everything that makes for the very personal charm of her behaviour recedes into the background. Her face is strangely 'emptied' on some of those occasions, it shows no personal reactions. The God in her does not express any like or dislike, no moods, no desires. Of course, now and then there are also "mass-*pranāmas*" when one feels that Mataji cannot or does not want to deny to her devotees her personal attention, tenderness and cheerfulness. She then does not vanish behind the representation of the Godhead, but 'remains' with us with all her personal charm.

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Yesterday, while sitting among the crowd waiting for Mataji, I had a talk with a distinguished elderly Indian lady who related to me how Mataji had saved her son from enslavement by a dangerous vice. She did not disclose the nature of the evil, but I had the impression that the young man

must have been addicted to drink or drugs. She said : "He always wanted to shake off the bad habit but had not the strength to do so. One day, Mataji said to him : 'Listen, I know how difficult it is to break a habit of this kind. Therefore I am not asking you to relinquish it altogether. My request is : promise that you will never give into it in my presence.' My son gave his word. From that day Mataji appeared before his mind's eye every time he was about to give in to his craving. This helped him more than all the doctors ; he got over his vice."

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It often happens that someone says to me : "What a pity that you have come to know Mataji only now. During the last few years she has become 'so 'normal'. Nevertheless she is still highly attractive to thousands, although there is really nothing very special about her. Formerly she would often go into *samādhi* or *bhāva* or work miracles. Already many years ago, when we were afraid that, she might stop talking altogether or not return from *samādhi*, she told us : "Don't you worry, a time will come when I shall be so ordinary that you will be amazed." Of course, she is even now very, very far from ordinary, although she does not show any ecstatic states.

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Today I was standing near the bookstall outside of the *satsang* tent. Suddenly, emerging from the twilight of the back-ground, Mataji advanced towards us with quick steps, heading a group of *sādhus*. It was like a dream. The people who stood around fell at her feet. I remained standing. For a second I had a sensation as if I were at the seashore. I saw a large, luminous wave coming towards us and was wondering why all the others threw themselves on the ground. Everything in me waited with hushed jubilation to be swallowed up by the wave.

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Across the stooping backs Mataji smiled at me. At that moment I understood what a tremendous power accumulates in the joy of those who see God. Not only Mataji's face, but her entire body radiated this overwhelming joy. Joy that draws its sustenance from the dust of the road, from the voice of a beggar, from the fragment of a passing conversation, from the greeting of a child--from everything, for all is God.

I ran out into the street behind Mataji and watched her disappear into a black car and drive away. The dream-like quality of the situation could again be distinctly felt. It was bewildering and at the same time also strangely comical: a mighty blazing fire slips into a car and rolls away.

When I returned to the bookstall, an old gentleman who daily comes dressed in a snow-white European suit, said: "What really is it that is so fascinating in her?" "God!" I blurted out. The old man nodded. After a little while he remarked: "Yes, God, who loves Himself in enlightened souls. In them alone resides all the peace of the world. It is those souls that save the universe from annihilation."

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## Sacred Places of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladhak

A devotee.

(Continued from the previous issue)

### ANANTA NĀG

यस्येदं क्षितिमण्डलं भगवतोऽनन्तमूर्तेः सहस्रशिरस ।  
एकस्मिन्नेव शीर्षणि ध्रीयमानः सिद्धार्थ इव लक्ष्यते ॥\*

[*This world resting on one of the heads of the thousand-headed god Ananta is looking like a grain of mustard.*]

Ananta Nāg is a sacred town, the distance of which by road from Srinagar is about sixty kilometers towards south-east. It owes its name to the famous spring sacred to the great serpent god called Ananta Nāg. The sacred spring issues from the foot of the tableland to the west of which the town is situated.

There is a temple of Shiva in the midst of the spring at Ananta Nāg.

At a distance of about one hundred metres east of Ananta Nāg there is another spring called Sonar Pukur, in the neighbourhood of which there are two more springs called Sulik Nāg and Mulik Nāg which are also regarded as sacred.

### ARPHAL

Arphal village is about eleven kilometers from Tral by road and twenty-one kilometers from Tsurus (or Sursu). It is picturesquely situated on the left bank of the stream called Chulabul Nala.

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\*Srimadbhagavatam, fifth skanda, twenty-fifth chapter, second sloka.



There is a very sacred spring on the right bank of the stream, to the west of the village. Its crystal clear water gushes out from a cleft at the foot of the Mainzawan mountain. The pilgrims perform *śrādhā* (obeisance to the departed parents and relatives) here. The pilgrimage to Amarnath is regarded as complete after these religious observances at this place for the peace and upliftment of the departed souls.

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः देवर्षिपितृमानवाः ।  
 वृष्यन्तु पितरः सर्वे मृतमातामहादयः ।  
 अतीतकुलकोटिनां सप्तद्वीपनिवासिनाम् ।  
 मया दत्तेन तोयेन वृष्यन्तु भुवनत्रयम् ॥\*

“May the people of all regions beginning from Brahma to this universe, the gods, the sages, the forefathers, and all men, the fathers and grand-fathers, the mothers and grand-fathers from mother’s side, all be propitiated. May all people of the three worlds, the people of the seven islands, beginning from crores of generations in the past, be propitiated with this water offered by me.”

At Narastan, which is also a picturesque village, situated about six kilometers north-east of Arphal and sixteen kilometers in the same direction from Avantipura, there is an ancient temple in ruins. The ancient name of the place is Narayanasthan, which indicates that the ancient temple was sacred to Narayana.

### AVANTIPUR

Avantipur is at a distance of about thirty kilometers south-east of Srinagar City. It is midway between Ananta Nag and Srinagar. In ancient times there was a city here called Avantipur. It was founded by the great king Avanti-varman (855–883 A.D.) of Kashmir.

There are ruins of two ancient temples in and near Avantipur. They were dedicated to Vishnu called Avanti-

\*Sacred words for offering water to all departed souls.

swamin and Shiva called Avantishwara. One of them is on the bank of the river in the village and the other at Jaubyor to the north of Avantipur. Both the temples were constructed by Avantivarman. They were destroyed by the iconoclast Shikandar-But-Shikan (1394-1416 A.D.).

### BARAMULA

वाराहं रूपमास्थाय महीं सवनपर्वतान् ।  
उद्धरत्येकदंष्ट्रेण तस्मै क्रीडात्मने नमः ॥\*

“I bow down to the Lord in the form of a Boar, who assuming this form lifted with his one tusk the earth with its forests and mountains out of the ocean.

Baramula is a town on the right bank of the sacred Jhelum (ancient Vitastā) river situated at a distance of about fifty kilometers north-west of Srinagar. It is identified with the ancient place called Varāhamula.

In ancient times there existed a famous temple of Adi Varāha, the Boar incarnation of Vishnu, at Baramula. This ancient shrine was destroyed by Shikander-But-Shikan (1394-1416 A.D.). It is now identified with Koti-tirtha at Baramula where there is a large emblem (Linga) of Shiva. It is said that the god Vishnu incarnated as the great Boar at Baramula.

### BARSHALO

Barshalo is a village on the right bank of the river Chenab situated between Doda and Kishtwar in Kashmir valley. It is about twenty-two kilometers east of Doda.

There is a noted shrine of the goddess called Barshala in the village.

न मन्त्रं नो यन्त्रं तदपि च न जाने स्तुतिमहो  
न चाह्वानं ध्यानं तदपि च न जाने स्तुतिकथा : ।

\*The Mahabbarata, Shantiparwan.

न जाने मुद्रास्ते तदपि च न जाने विलपनं  
परं जाने मातस्त्वदनुशरणं क्लेशहरणम् ॥\*

“O mother ! I do not know any sacred words, symbols and hymns. I do not know any meditation, praise and how to call thee. I do not know thy signs and how to lament before thee. I know only how to take shelter in thee, which relieves me of all pains.”

### BHANIYAR

Bhaniyar is a village on the right bank of the Harpetkai stream situated at a distance of about three kilometers from Naoshera in Kashmir.

There are remnants of a sacred shrine near the village. It is still visited by the pilgrims.

### BHARIANGAM

Bhariangam is situated to the east of Achhibal which is about eight kilometers south of Ananta Nag in Kashmir valley.

There is a sacred spring in the village.

आपो हि ष्ठा भयोभुवः  
ता न ऊर्जे दधातन  
महे रणाय चक्षसे ॥†

[ O waters, you are the source of happiness, so bestow strength on us, endow us with vision, great and beautiful. ]

### BHAVAN

Bhavan is situated at a distance of about sixty-four kilometers south-east of Srinagar. The place is also called Mattan, a corruption of Martanda which means the sun.

The spring of Bhavan is sacred to the sun-god.

It is said that the sun was born here.

\*Devyaparādhakshamāpanastotram by Shankaracharya.

†Rig Veda X, 9,1.

Bhavan is a noted place of pilgrimage in Kashmir. People on certain months of the Indian leap year visit this sacred spot and perform religious ceremonies (*śrāddha*) for the benefit of the departed souls.

रश्मिन्तं सुसुहन्तं देवासुरनमस्कृतम् ।

पूजयस्व विवस्वन्तं भास्करं भुवनेश्वरम् ॥\*

“Worship the sun rising with all his rays, the lord of the universe, the creator of light, who hides other lights by his splendour, who is ever active and to whom both gods and demons bow down’.

The ruins of the famous temple of Martanda (Sun) are at a distance of about two kilometers south-east of Bhavan.

### BHUMZU

Bhumzu is situated on the left bank of the Lidar river at a distance of about two kilometers north of Bhavan and ten kilometers from Ananta Nag.

There are very old artificial caves at Bhumzu which are regarded as sacred. In one of these there existed a temple of Kāla Deva. Two temples at the foot of one cave have been converted into Muslim Ziarats. The larger temple has been identified with the temple of Bhimakeshava (Vishnu) built by Bhima Shahi of Gāndhāra\*\*, the maternal grandfather of queen Didda who ruled in Kashmir in the later part of the tenth century A.D.

### BIJBIHĀRA

यन्नाम जन्तुरवशोऽपि गृणन् कदाचित्

यामी न याति भयदामिह यातनालिम् ।

तस्मै जरामरण जन्मभयातिगाय

गन्धर्वगीत यशसेऽस्तु नमः शिषाय ॥†

\*Valmiki's Ramayana, VI, 107th chapter.

\* Modern Afghanistan.

† Shri Namashivastakam—stotrarnavah.

I bow down to Shiva, the remover of the fear of old age, death and birth, whose praise is being sung by the Gandharvas, and by uttering whose name even on very few occasions and that also unknowingly, man is saved from moving towards the fearful and painful realm of Yama (Death) ”

Bijbihāra is a town on the left bank of the sacred Vitasta ( Jhelum ) river situated at a distance of about ten kilometers from Ananta Nag and about forty-six kilometers south-east of Srinagar. The town was originally founded by King Vijaya (80—72 B.C.) of Kashmir.

At Bijbihāra there is a noted temple built by a former Mahārāja of Kashmir in 1871 A.D. The temple stands near the site of an ancient and famous temple dedicated to Vijayeshwara (Shiva) of which the origin is lost in antiquity. This temple was finally destroyed by Sikandar. But Sikandar, who on a second visit to this place it is said, discovered among the ruins a slab of stone on which the following sentence was inscribed in Sanskrit :

विस्मिल्लाहि मंत्रेण नाशयन्त विजयेश्वरः ।

It means that the temple of Vijayeshwara will be destroyed by uttering the sacred words of Bismillah. It may be noted that while beginning any difficult task the Muslims utter the word “Bismillah”. On seeing this inscription understanding its meaning Sikandar's heart was full of remorse realizing that he had become nothing but an instrument in the hands of time.\*

### BUNIAR

Buniar is a village on the Jhelum Valley Road situated at a distance of about twenty-two kilometers west-south-west of Baramula.

There is a very ancient temple supposed to have been originally built in the fifth century A. D. The emblems of

† A type of semi-celestial beings.

\*\* See Archaeological remains of Kashmir by Pandit Anand Kaul.

† Sri Ramacharitamansa by Tulsidas.

Shiva (Shiva-Linga) are installed in the temple. According to Major General Cunningham the temple was originally dedicated to the goddess Bhawāni and Buniar is a corruption of Bhawānipur.

भवानीशङ्करौ वन्दे श्रद्धाविश्वासरूपिणे ।

याभ्यां विना न पश्यन्ति सिद्धा-स्वान्तस्थमीश्वरम् ॥\*

“I bow down to Bhawani and Shankara, who are embodiments of faith and confidence, without which even the sages do not realize the God residing within each one's own self.”

### CHIMRAY

उपेमि बुद्धं सरणं धम्मश्चापि अनुत्तमम् ।

सङ्घञ्च नरदेवस्य गच्छामि सरणं अहम् ॥\*\*

“I take refuge in the Buddha, the highest dharma. I go to take refuge in the Sangha\* and the god among men (i.e., Buddha).”

Chimray or Chimre is an ancient village between Tikshay and Zingral in the Ladhak area of Kashmir. It is about ten kilometers north-east of Hemis Gompa which is about thirty kilometers below Leh, the capital of Ladhak.

There is an ancient Buddhist monastery at Chimray.

### GANDARBAL

Gandarbal is a sacred lake on the north-east slopes of the Harmukh mountain situated at a height of about 12,000 feet above sea-level. In order to reach this lake one has to travel a distance of about fifty-six kilometers towards north-west from Srinagar. The lake is about two kilometers long and two hundred metres wide.

An annual fair is held here on the eighth day of Bhadra (August-September).

\*Sri Ramacharitamānasa by Tulsidas.

\*\*Dhammapadathakathā.

†Buddhist Church.

## GANESHBAL

सर्वविघ्नविनाशाय सर्वमङ्गलहेतवे ।

पार्वतिप्रियपुत्राय गणेशाय नमो नमः ॥

[ 'I bow again and again to Ganesha, the favourite son of Pārvati, who destroys all obstacles and is the cause of all good'. ]

Ganeshbal is a village on the right bank of the sacred Lidar situated at a distance of about five kilometers south of Pahalgam in Kashmir. The ancient name of the Lidar river is Lambodari. Sri Ganesha is called Lambodara, which means one having a large belly. The Lidar river is sacred to Ganesha.

At Ganeshbal there is a sacred rock in the midst of the torrent of the Lidar. This rock is an image of Lord Ganesha.

Sikandar But-Shikan, it is said, tried to break this sacred rock. When he struck the knee of the image with a hammer, blood gushed out of it. On seeing this horrible sight, the iconoclast got terrified and thereafter desisted from further destruction of temples and images of gods\*.

## GATA

Gata village is at a distance of about three kilometers north of Bhadarwah situated on the road to Doda, near the left bank of the river Neru. Bhadarwah is about two hundred kilometers east-north-east of Jammu by road.

There is a noted temple of Sri Vāsudeva at Gata. There are other temples also.

कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय हरये परमात्मने ।

प्रणतक्लेशनाशाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ॥

'I bow again and again to Krishna, Vāsudeva, Hari, the supreme soul, Govinda, who destroys the pains and sorrows of his devotees'.

\*See Archaeological remains of Kashmir by Pandit Anand Kaul.

## Sri Thirumangai Alvar

T. KRISHNAJI

Thirumangai Alvar is the last of the galaxy of the twelve Alvars, who dived deep into the depths of bhakti and found the grace of Lord Narayana. He belongs to the heroic type among God's devotees. Though he strayed into evil ways, the '*Ahaituki Kripa*' of God is illustrated by his life. God is "*Patitoddhāra*" and *Patita Pāvana*". In the Gita (Ch. 9,30-32) *Bhagavan* declares that in spite of evil conduct or *durāchāra*, He saves if one has devotion for Him. Ajāmila, a sinner, was redeemed by the unconcious utterance of God's name. That is the glory of God and His Name. It is the glory of His devotee as well.

Thirumangai Alvar lived from 660 to 765 A.D.

Avinadudayar was a Kallar chieftain, owing allegiance and paying annual tribute to the Chola King. Being of a Saivite persuasion, he lived at Thirukkuriyalur (Kamalapuram). He was blessed with a son, named Nila, who after his change to Vaishnavism took the name of Thirumangai Alvar. Nila was a precocious lad. Quickly he learnt all the arts and excelled in physical and military prowess. Famous for his valour, he was a terror to his foes. He was known as Parakala. After the death of his father, Nila was recognized as the local chieftain. Prof. Varadaraja Iyengar is of the opinion that Nila was a hereditary King of Alinadu, Mangalnadu, Mangai and Kuraiyalur and a feudatory chief of Pallava Malla of Kanchi.\* Probably he was a feudatory chief of both the Chola and Pallava Kings. Nila had wealth power, valour and youth, and he had desperadoes as his companions. So he led an unrestrained life of amours and pleasures.

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\* Vide Journal of Indian History, Univ. of Travancore Vol. 126. p. 131.



A celestial nymph took human birth and was found by a Vysia near a lotus pond in Nagapatam. Being childless, he was happy to adopt the child. He brought her up as his foster-daughter, naming her Kumudavalli, and she grew up in devotion to Lord Vishnu. The charming maiden was noted for her beauty, wit, and religious devotion. Nila came to hear of her beauty. He lost no time and went to see her himself. He brought rich presents for Kumudavalli and her father and offered to marry Kumudavalli. She, however, declared that she had taken a vow to marry none but a Vaishnava who would agree to feed 1008 Vaishnavites for a whole year. Nila was ready to do anything to please Kumudavalli and agreed to comply with her vow and wishes.

He hastened to a Vaishnava Nambi, received the sacrament and change of faith to Vaishnavism by having *Pancha Samskāras* or five essentials according to its creed. *Pancha Samskaras* comprise 1. *Tapta*-imprinting or branding *Sankha-Chakra* on the shoulders. 2. *Pundra*-12 *namas* or *tilaks* over the body. 3. *Mantra*-initiation into any Vaishnava *mantra*. 4. *Yaga-Ārādhana* or *pūjā* of Saligrama or idols. 5. *Nāma*-Vishnu's name in any form. Nila was then called Thirumangai Alvar, as he happened to be the King of a place called Mangai.

He hurried back to Kumudavalli and gave her a solemn assurance that he would carry on the *Tadiya Ārādhana* feeding 1008 Vaishnavas daily. The marriage took place. True to his promise and as a Vaishnava he carried on the mass feeding with religious zeal. Hinduism extols *anna dāna* (gift of food) as the greatest charity. None but the poor and hungry will participate in any public feeding. The Mahabharata says that feeding godmen is greater than the worship of God.

“*Ārādhanaṁ sarveshāṁ, Vishno ārādhanaṁ param  
Tasmāt parataram proktam Tadiya ārādhanaṁ Nripa.*”

The Alvar gave up his wayward life and devoted himself to

the feeding of Vaishnavas. He spared no pains and did not grudge the expense. Kumudavalli, his wife, instilled into him the spirit of faith, fellowship and service to God and men. Love, human or divine, easily breaks the shell of the human ego.

When gradually the wealth of the Alvar got depleted, he utilized the funds reserved for payment to his suzerain, the Chola King. When he thus failed to pay the tribute, messengers from the Chola King came demanding it. The Alvar entertained the messengers to rich dinners and sent them away with promises. The Chola King dispatched a military force to extract payment. But the Alvar was a match for any army, he defeated and they had to flee. Then the Chola King himself came with his troupes. Though the Alvar was strong enough to beat him into retreat, he pondered over the situation and over the fact that the Chola King was his Suzerain and should be respected, so he appeared before him and made promises. The King was not content with mere words. He insisted on prompt payment. The Alvar was put into custody. He did not worry about his personal discomfort but was deeply distressed at the interruption of *Tadīa ārāḍhanā*. In his plight, he addressed prayers to God. Lord Varada Raja of Conchi responded to his prayers and in a dream disclosed to the Alvar a treasure trove on the banks of the Vegavathi river in Conchi. The Alvar pleaded with his guards to take him to Conchi, promising payment of all dues. He found the treasure and paid all dues to the Chola King, who felt reverence towards the Alvar as one "chosen of the Lord Varada." The Alvar returned home with surplus wealth and carried on the Vaishnava feeding with even greater zeal.

When all the riches were exhausted by public feeding, the Alvar fell into gloom. He belonged to the Kallar community, noted for robberies, and so he thought that he might continue the feeding with stolen wealth. Together with his desperado companions he took to highway robbery. Public

# GRAPHIC PICTURES

of some

Holy places connected with the Life

of

Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee

at

## TARAPITH

*—By courtesy of Sri M. K. Thacker*

*Dhanbad*

## TARAPITH

Tarapith, a tiny village in West Bengal, situated at a distance of about 230 Km. from Calcutta, has been acclaimed from the olden times as the foremost place for *Shakti-sadhana*. Thousands of devout men and women visit the famous temple of Tara Ma every year and are immensely benefited by the powerful spiritual vibration which pervades the whole area.

It was this holy place where Mataji came for the first time after leaving Dacca by the end of 1929. Sri Bholanath, who was advised by Mataji to proceed to Tarapith all on a sudden, practised *sadhana* in Tara Ma's temple and attained the state of a *Siddha*. Mataji also arrived a few days after and stayed in the old Shiva temple for some time. The account of her stay in Tarapith is still fresh in the minds of many old villagers, who are still alive. It is learnt that Mataji used to wander about all alone in the country side throughout the day. Village women, who had already been much attracted by her personality, used to feed Mataji with great loving care. She was looked upon by the village folk as the *Bhagwati Mā* (Divine Mother).

Mataji and Bholanath visited Tarapith almost every year till February, 1936 and stayed there for varying periods. Many simple village people, particularly late Jatin Panda and his whole family, honoured them both and looked after their physical comforts. Many a supernatural incident and interesting anecdote relating to Mataji, Bholanath and Bhaiji is even this day remembered by the local people.

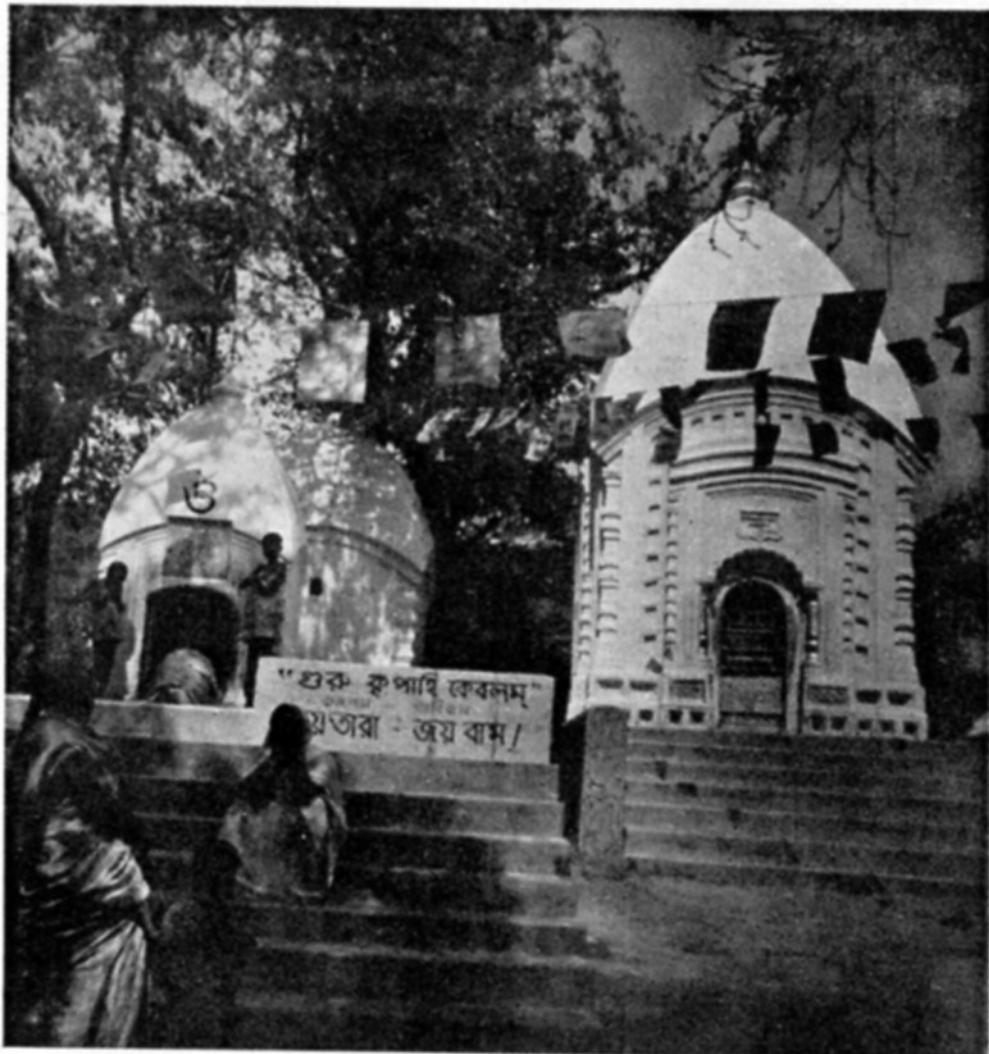
It was in the precincts of the famous Tara Ma's temple that the *Upanayana* (sacred thread ceremony) of Didi Gurupriya and Marani, Bholanath's adopted daughter, was held in February, 1936. The simple marriage celebration of Marani was also performed here under Mataji's instructions.

Several years after through the ardent zeal of late Jatin Panda and a few other devotees of Mataji a plot of land was acquired in front of the Tara Ma's temple and a Shiva Mandir was constructed. Lately a small Ashram has also been established there through the untiring efforts of a number of Mataji's devotees.

\* \* \*



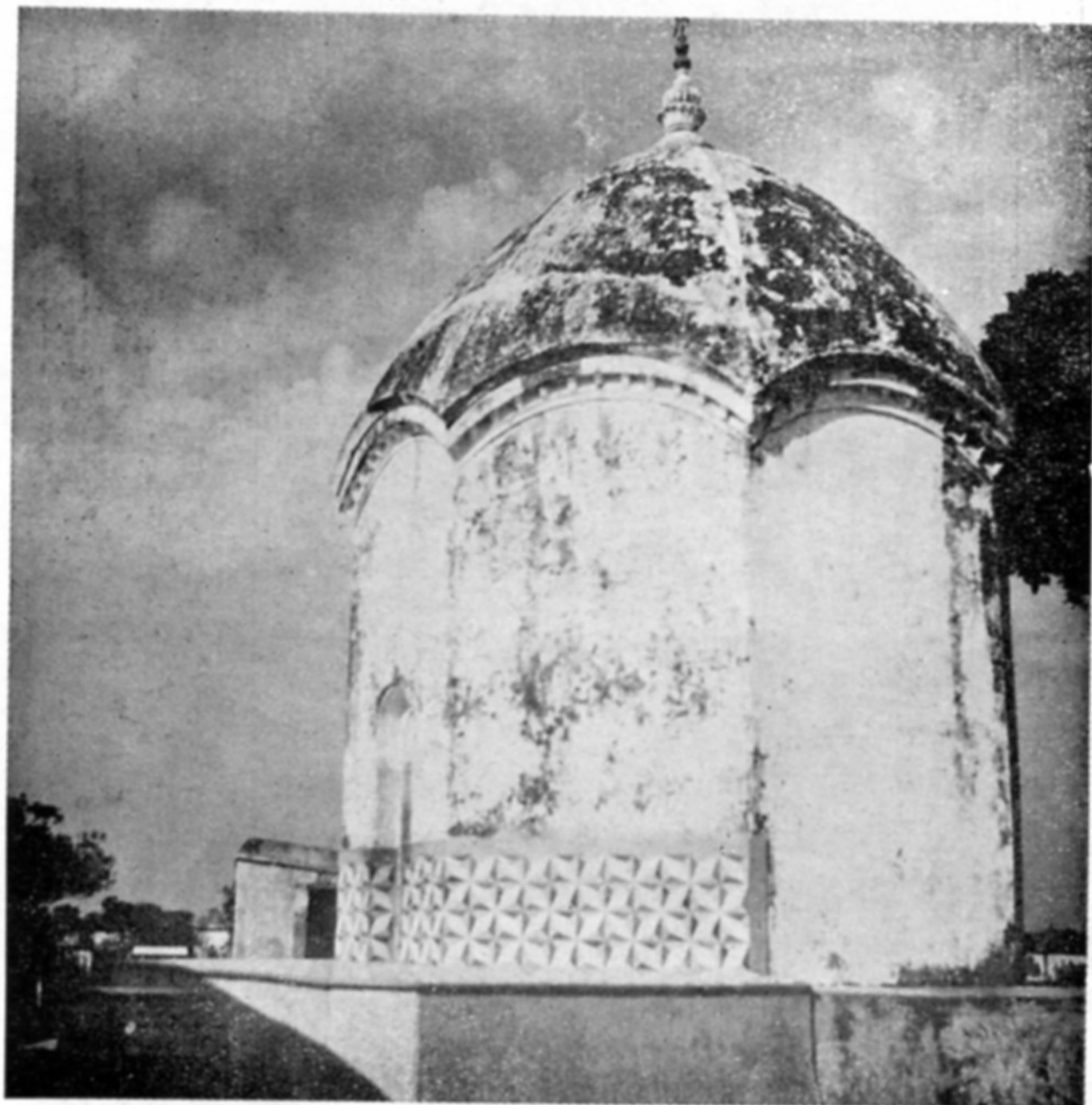
*Footsteps leading to the famous temple of Shri Tara Ma*



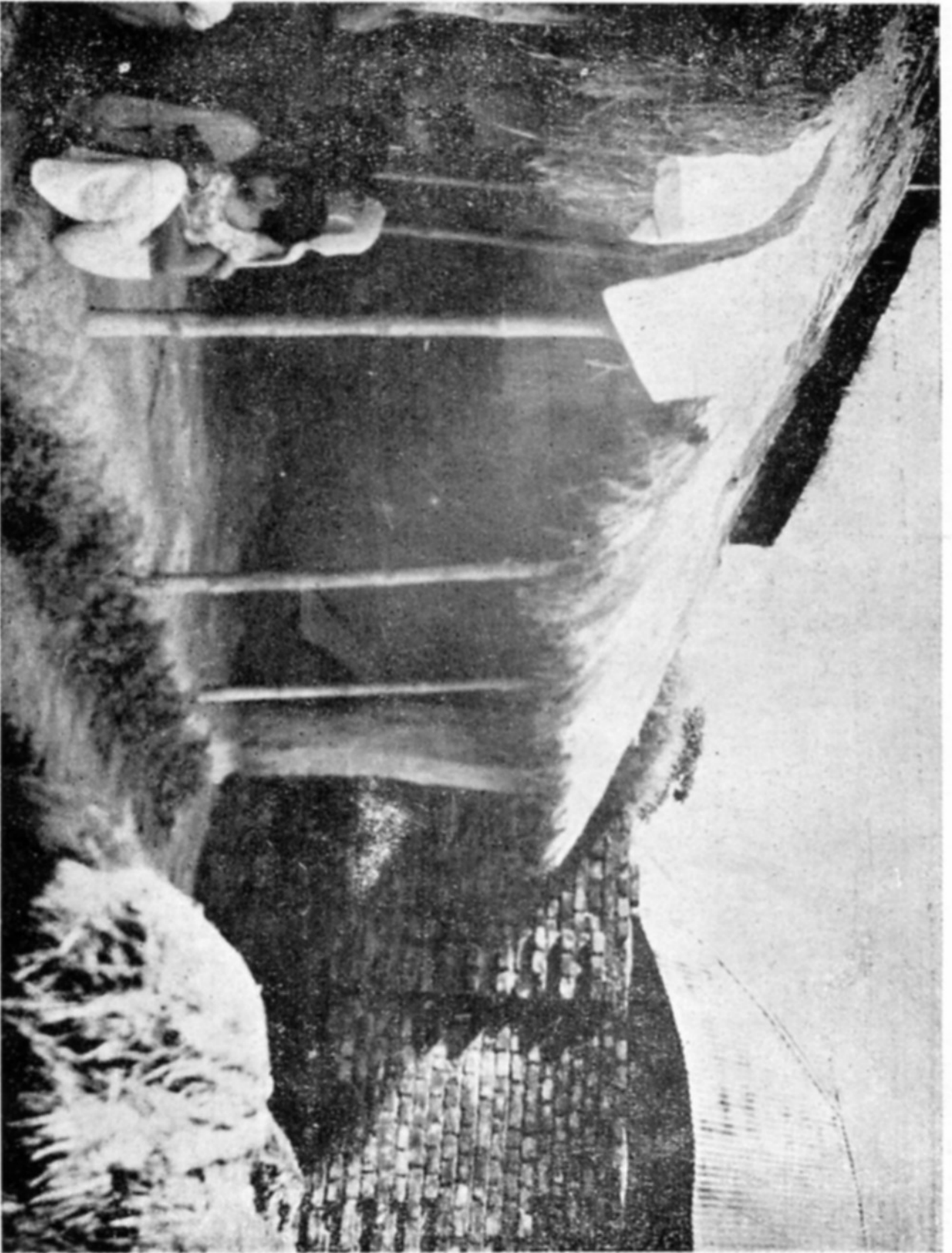
*Samadhi Mandir of the famous saint Sri Bamadeva*



*The attractive image of goddess Ma Tara*

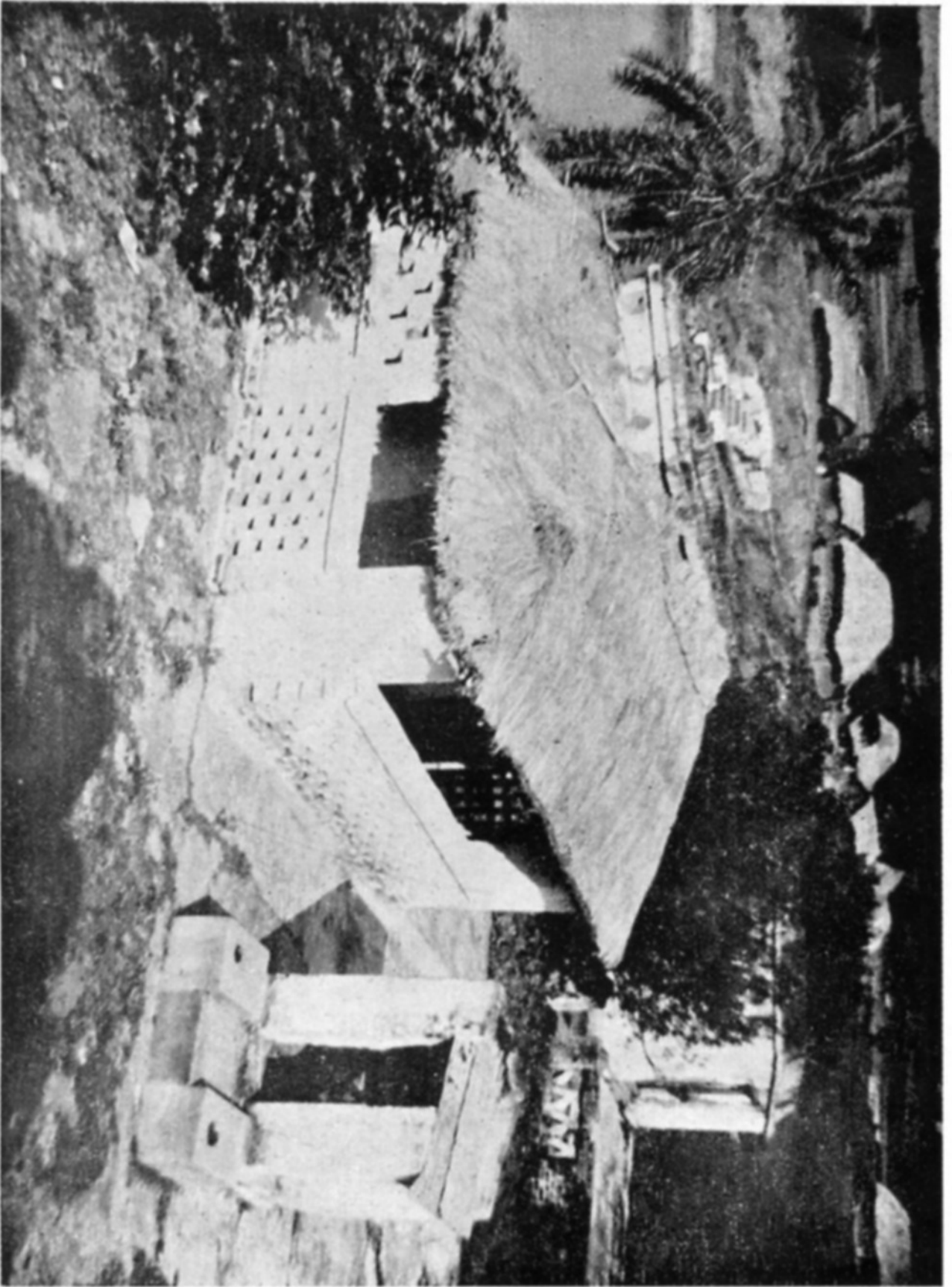


*The old Shiva temple inside Tara Ma's compound  
where Mataji and Bholanath used to stay.*



*The verandah of late Jatin Panda's house where Mataji used to come and sit frequently*

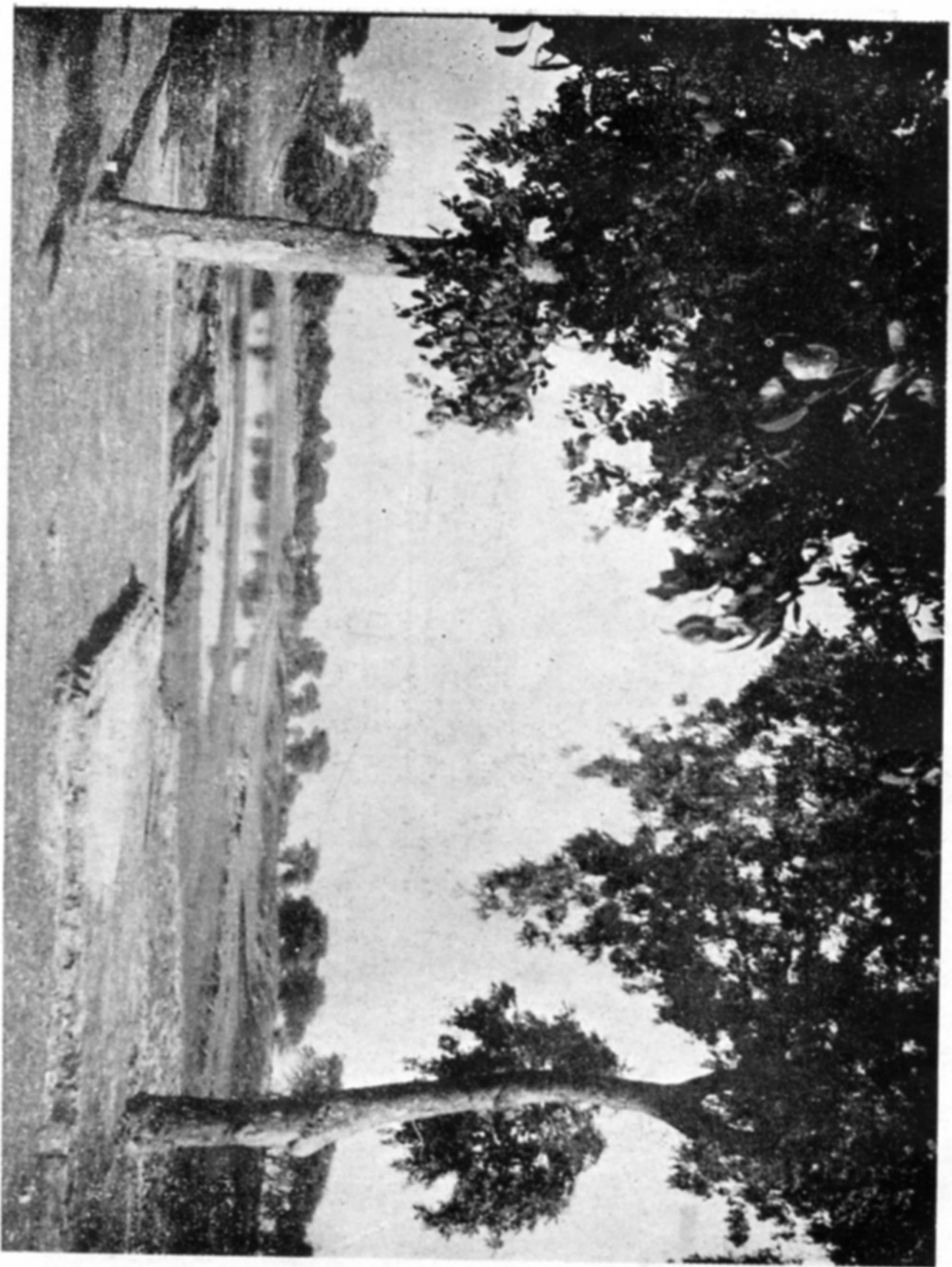




*The small hut in the temple compound where Mataji stayed on several occasions.  
The tiny Yajña-Shala is seen on the right*



*Small temple under the age-old banyan tree inside which is enshrined the footprints of Mataji*



*Mataji used to visit the banks of this pond almost daily. There was a temple and a HOMA-KUND which are now in ruins.*



*The 'Jeevit Kund' into which Malaji jumped with all the warm clothings on her body and swam in great ecstasy. There are many a supernatural story connected with this Kund.*



*The Shiva Temple on Ashram land*

feeding he continued. The Alvar was a forerunner of Robin Hood of Scotland. Ends justified the means. As a robber, he spared Vaishnavas. The Lord and his consort, the ever merciful Goddess Lakshmi, thought of bestowing their grace on the Alvar and to redeem him. God is the redeemer of His devotees, though they be sinful. He is "*patitoddhāra* and *patita pāvana*." Thomas A. Kempis says : "Lord, great is Thy anxiety for me."

One day the Alvar and his companions were waiting on the highway. None passed by. The Alvar climbed a tall tree to see if anyone could be seen at a distance. He saw none. He got impatient and became fidgety. At last he saw a marriage party approaching. Overjoyed, he thanked God and shouted to his companions, in the language of Ruysbroeck, the mystic, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him". Thirumangai Alvar was not only a robber of wealth, but also of the love and grace of the Lord and the Goddess.

The Alvar commanded the marriage party to halt and to surrender all their jewels and valuables at the peril of their lives. They pretended to be frightened and put all the jewels into a bundle. A ring on the finger of the bridegroom was tight and could not be removed. The Alvar extracted it with his teeth. Another version is that an ornament on the toe of the bride was tight and the Alvar removed it. The bride and the bridegroom were none but God Ranganatha and his holy Spouse, with the party of Devas accompanying them. They had come to bestow their grace on the Alvar and to retrieve him from evil ways. When the Alvar forcibly removed the ring, the bridegroom addressed the Alvar as 'Kaliyano', wicked and bold as Kali. The Alvar used that name Kali whenever he referred to himself thereafter.

When the Alvar tried to lift the bundle of jewels, he could not move it as it seemed to be fixed to the ground. The Alvar suspected trickery or magic. He demanded from

the bridegroom to disclose to him the secret mantra to remove the bundle. The bridegroom took him aside and whispered into his ear "*Om Namo Nārāyana*". The holy Touch, *Upadesa* and God's Grace transformed the Alvar and knowledge of Truth came to him. The Lord granted him His Vision and "*Sākshātkāra*". Words of wisdom, praise and prayer flowed from the Alvar's lips and he sang his gratitude to the Lord—

I pined, grieved, forgetting Thee, pursued  
Pleasures, wealth and women. Supreme Knowledge  
revealed the highest Bliss, recovered lost treasure,  
I found the sacred Name NARAYANA.

Sinner I am, fickle minded, wasted time in pleasures.  
Found nectar, His Name Narayana.  
He who abides in the heart of devotees.  
Received His Grace, Name Narayana, Life Divine.

Robber I was, committed crimes.  
Forsook all. Quick came His Grace.  
Emaciated, choky throat, shed tears of joy,  
Night and day let me sing, 'Narayana'.

My Saviour, Father, Relation, King.  
Let me worship Thee, I found the name 'Narayana'.  
Beseech Him ! Sing His name 'Narayana' !  
Lived a wicked life. Now He is my Guide.

I found His Name Narayana,  
If one repeats His Name, wealth, happiness,  
Prestige, His Grace come. Quickly call His Name.  
His Name is poison to all evils.

People of Thirumanga,  
Take His Name in distress and death.  
Chant His Name : Narayana,  
Narayana, Narayana',

Lord Narayana had come into the life of the Alvar.

He sang of Him in gratitude and devotion. The main theme of his poetry is that he found God's name Narayana. The Alvar's life reminds us of the robber life of Valmiki, who later became a great Rishi and devotee of Rama. God commissioned the Alvar to spend his life in pilgrimage and the restoration of temples. He visited Vaishnavite shrines from Badrinath to Ramanatha. He sang about 82 shrines, describing vividly the scenes and natural beauty surrounding each of them. He sang with a sense of repentance revealing the glory and grace of God. He disclosed how God's *ahaituki kripā* came to him. The Alvar was not only an inspired devotee, but a poet of a high order. He is called '*Chatur Kavi sikhmani*', skilled in the *asu*, *madhura*, *chitra* and *vistara* styles of poetry. He left a rich legacy of religious and devotional literature in Tamil, 1253 verses in a collection of 4000, *Divya Prabandham* called *Dravida Veda*.

The Alvar desired to renovate the Srirangam Temple, the biggest one in the whole of India. The task may stagger even a wealthy prince. But the Alvar was daring, brigandry was his strength. Dexterously he stole the gold image of the Lord Buddha from the shrine at Nagapatam and utilized the proceeds for the renovation of Srirangam Temple. When he ran short of funds, the masons rebelled. He contrived to drown them in the Kaveri waters. So that branch of Kaveri is called Kolladam or Konnedam. We cannot say how much truth lies in these legends that gathered round the life of the Alvar. But altruism and devotion propelled his actions and the end justified the means he adopted.

The Alvar met Thirujana Sāmbandar, the great Saiva Saint, Nayanmar and Samayacharya. Both of them had triumphed over Buddhism and admired each other. The Alvar had great respect for Nammalvar and revived the annual *Adhyana Utsavam* with Thiruvoimoli recitals in the Srirangam Temple.



The Alvar lived a long life of devotion and pilgrimage. His contribution to the South Indian language, religion and culture is momentous. He left the torch of devotion to be handled by Sri Natha Muni, the First Sri Vaishnava Acharya, grandfather of Yamuna Acharya. The Alvar departed from this earth at Thirukkurangudi in his 105th year, chanting 'Narayana, Narayana Narayana'.

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*"If you cling to the one in whom fear is not, how can there be even a question of fear?"*

*—Ma Anandamayi.*

# Psychosynthesis and the Ishopanishad\*

PROF. BIRESHWAR GANGULY

V

This section deals with the psycho-synthetic integral *sādhana* (spiritual technique) of the Ishopanishad, as hinted at in mantras ninth to fourteenth. Here the necessity of both *vidyā* and *avidyā*, Knowledge and action, spirituality and material knowledge, *Jñāna-Kānda* and *Karma-Kānda*, is emphasized, in order that Self-realization may take place in this very life.

अन्धन्तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।

ततो भूय इव ते ततो य इ विद्यायाँ रताः ॥६

“Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance ; they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone”.

—Sri Aurobindo.

“Into blind darkness they enter who practise *avidyā*. Into even greater darkness they who are attached to *Vidyā*.”

—Satyananda.

अन्यदेवाहुर्विद्ययान्यदाहुरविद्यया

इति श्रुत्वा धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचक्षिरे ॥ १०

“Other, verily, it is said, is that which comes by the Knowledge, other that which comes by the Ignorance ; this is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed. That to our understanding.”

—Sri Aurobindo.

“Different is said to be by *vidyā* and different by *avidyā*. This we have heard of peaceful men who have explained it to us.”

—Satyananda.

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\*Continued from Section IV : Vide *Ananda Vārtā*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, February, 1967.

विद्यां चाविद्यां च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।

अविद्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विद्ययामृतमश्नुते ॥११

“He who knows That as both in one, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, by the Ignorance crosses beyond death and by the knowledge enjoys Immortality”.

—Sri Aurobindo

“*Vidyā* and *avidyā*, he who knows these both together, by *avidyā* he surpasses death and by *vidyā* tastes immortality”.

—Satyananda.

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽसम्भूतिमुपासते ।

ततो भूय इव ते तमो य ए सम्भूत्या रताः ॥१२

“Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Non-Birth, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Birth alone”.

—Sri Aurobindo.

“Into blinding darkness they enter who worship *asambhuti*. Into even greater darkness they who are attached to *Sambhuti*”.

—Satyananda.

अन्यदेवाहुः सम्भवादन्वयाद्गुरसम्भवात् ।

इति शुभ्रम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे ॥ १३

“Other, verily, it is said, is that which comes by the Birth, other that which comes by the Non-Birth, this is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed. That to our understanding”.

—Sri Aurobindo.

“Different is said to be from *sambhava* and different from *asambhava*. This we have heard of peaceful men who have explained it to us”.

—Satyananda.

सम्भूतिं च विनाशं च यस्तद्वेदोभयं सह ।

विनाशेन मृत्युं तीर्त्वा सम्भूत्यामृतमश्नुते ॥१४

“He who knows That as both in one, the Birth (creation) and the dissolution of Birth, by the dissolution crosses beyond death and by the Birth enjoys Immortality”.

—Sri Aurobindo.

“*Sambhuti* and *vināsha*, he who knows these both together, by *vināsha*, he surpasses death and by *sambhuti* tastes of immortality”.

—Satyananda.

*Comment* :—The ninth, tenth, twelfth and thirteenth aphorisms declare that ignorant men following only a path of action enter no doubt into a blind darkness, but those who give up action before being entitled to do so and follow only a path of Knowledge enter into a greater darkness. The eleventh and fourteenth aphorisms categorically state that he who knows That as both in one, the Knowledge and the Ignorance (*Vidyā* and *Avidyā*), the Becoming and the Being (*Sambhuti* and *Vināsha* or *Asambhuti*), crosses beyond death by the Ignorance and enjoys Immortality by the Knowledge or crosses beyond death by meditating on the Absolute Being but after Self-realization enjoys life divine in the world of Becoming. If it can be said that the first aphorism gives the essence of the whole monistic philosophy of Vedanta, the eleventh and fourteenth aphorisms can be said to contain the secret doctrine of Hindu *sādhana*. The eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gitā and Sri Aurobindo’s magnum opus, ‘The Life Divine’ are excellent commentaries on this difficult doctrine, made easy.

The integration of human personality, the psychosynthesis of Dr. Assagioli<sup>1</sup>, correctly viewed, is the synthesis of the different levels of consciousness and unconsciousness. Assagioli’s Higher Self in the Brahman in the transcendental aspect (Being, Knowledge) and all the other levels of consciousness are the immanent aspect (Becoming, Ignorance) of Brahman. The ‘life divine’ of man can be attained only by a harmonious synthesis of both. In the stage of synthetic *sādhana* it is not by rejecting life and ignorance (knowledge of the material world) that divine Knowledge can be attained.

1 Cf. Assagioli, Roberto : *Psychosynthesis : A Manual of Principles and Techniques*, Hobbs, Dorman & Co., New York, 1965.

The life of ignorance has to be experienced and mastered in order that the life of divine Knowledge (Enlightenment) may be a permanent and blissful existence. Those who deny the transcendental aspect, accept only half of the truth. Similarly those who deny the immanent aspect accept only half of the truth. Complete existence and hence complete Knowledge consist of both *Saguṇa Brahman* and *Nirguṇa Brahman* (*Kshara Puruṣha* and *Akshara Puruṣha* of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, as explained in the fifteenth chapter), which are inherent in the one Absolute Reality, *Purushottama* or *Paramātmān* or *Para Brahman*, which is without any duality. In the *Tantra Śāstras* of India, these two aspects of Reality are called *Śakti* and *Śiva*, which are one and the same in *Parama Śiva* (of Kashmir Saivism).<sup>2</sup>

## VI

This section deals with the last four aphorisms, viz. fifteenth to the eighteenth of the *Ishopanishad*, which show, in the guise of the prayer of a dying *Rishi* (seer, spiritual researcher), the importance of the Sun-God (*Sūrya*, *Pushan*, *Ekarshi*, *Yama*, *Prājāpatya*, *Savitā*) both in the life-time of the yogi as well as at the time of giving up his mortal frame. At the of time *sādhana*, according to the famous *Gāyatri mantra* of Rig Veda and Sāma Veda, the Sun and His *Gāyatri* energy work as the external unifying centre and hence all brahmins of India, not to speak of other Sun-worshippers, from time immemorial, have worshipped the Sun-God, as a stepping stone to the worship of the Supreme Reality.

हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।

तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥१५

“The face of Truth is covered with a brilliant golden lid ; that do thou remove, O Fosterer, for the law of the Truth, for sight. ”

—Sri Aurobindo.

2 Cf: Chatterji, Jagadish Chandra : *Kashmir Saivism*, 1914.

“By a golden vessel is the face of Truth covered. Do thou, O Pūshā, uncover it for him who is devoted to Truth, for sight.”

—Satyananda.

पूषन्नेकषे यम सूर्यं प्राजापत्य व्यूह रश्मीन्समूह ।

तेजो यत्ते रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्ते पश्यामि ।

योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि ॥१६

O Fosterer, O Sole Seer, O Ordainer, O illuminating Sun, O power of the Father of creatures, marshal thy rays, draw together thy light ; the Lustre which is thy most blessed form of all, that in Thee I behold. The Purusha there and there, He am I.”

—Sri Aurobindo.

“O Pūshā, Ekarshi, Yama, Surya, Prājāpatya, remove the rays, withhold the tejas. Let me see that aspect of Thine which is the most beneficial. He who is that Purusha, He I am.”

—Satyananda.

*Comment :-* In the sixteenth aphorism we find the final realization of the yogi, who has accepted the Sun-God as the external unifying centre<sup>1</sup> in *sādhanā*. This monistic identification of the lower self with the Higher Self, of *jivātmā* (soul) with *Brahman* is the supreme Vedantic realization of the enlightened soul. This may come at the end of one's spiritual life or it may come much earlier. An enlightened soul may remain in the mortal body for many long years for the guidance and benefit of other seekers after Truth. However, this has to be accepted as the crest jewel of all spiritual experiences, born of a vivid psychosynthesis in *sādhanā*, for which the Ishopanishad and Bhagavad Gitā stand as authentic testimonies.

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्तं शरीरम् ।

ऋ क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर कृतो स्मर कृतं स्मर ॥ १७

1. Vide : *Ananda Varta*, Vol XIV, No. 2, August 1966, Diagram II, p.72 and Assagioli, R: *Psychosynthesis* p. 26.

“The Breath of things is an immortal Life, but of the body ashes are the end. OM ! O Will, remember, that which was done, remember.

—Sri Aurobindo.

“Now may the air become immortal air,  
and this body reduced to ashes. Om,  
O *Kratu*, remember, remember deeds ;  
O *Kratu*, remember, remember deeds.”

—Satyananda.

अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्निश्वानि देव वयुनानि विद्वान् ।

युयोध्यस्मज्जुहुराणमेनो भूयिष्ठां ते नम उक्ति विवेस ॥ १८

“O God *Agni*, knowing all things that are manifested, lead us by the good path to the felicity ; remove from us the devious attraction of sin. To thee completest speech of submission we would dispose.”

—Sri Aurobindo.

“O *Agni*, lead me to wealth by the good path, knowing, O *Deva*, all my deeds. Remove from me deceitful sin. I offer thee an abundance of words of obeisance.”

—Satyananda.

### Comment :

In the above-mentioned aphorisms *Surya* and *Agni* may also be taken in a symbolic sense as the Divine Light and the Fire of Aspiration respectively. The golden vessel or lid hiding the divine light may symbolize the apparently delightful desires hiding absolute bliss. Many commentators have explained these terms in this sense, but in the integral philosophy of the *Ishopanishad* and the *Tantras*, even the gross manifestations of the Divine are taken as divine. They are physical representatives of the unmanifest Divine for the benefit of the embodied Soul in his *līlā* (blissful life). In the *Bhagavad Gita* there are synoptic references to twelve suns, seven *lokas* ( *Bhuh*, *Bhuvah*, *Swaha*, *Maha*, *Jana*, *Tapah*, *Satyam* or *Brahmaloka* ) and the transmigration of the soul through *Pitriyan* and *Devayan mārgas* (spiritual

subtle paths of the voyage of the soul ). The pilgrim's progress through different stages and different *lokas* ( planes of existence or consciousness ) is profusely illustrated in the *Tantra Śāstras* and *Purānas*. Hence there is no need to doubt even the literal meaning of the terms used in the last four aphorisms of this Upanishad. In actual fact, this concise Upanishad cannot be fully understood with the available commentaries of the Acharyas, e. g. Shankaracharya and Ramanujacharya. Even Sri Aurobindo is rather silent on the full implications of the last four aphorisms. Perhaps they are left to the inner spiritual experience of the yogis.

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*"Just as there is a veil of ignorance, there is also a door to knowledge."*

—Ma Anandamayee



## Charity.

K. G. AMBEGAOKAR. I.C.S. (Rtd)

The story is told of a beggar who, hearing that the king was passing that way, awaited his arrival with great expectations. When however he did approach the king's palanquin he found to his consternation that the king himself had put out his hand for the beggar to give him something. With great reluctance the beggar took out three grains of rice from his bowl and placed them in the king's hand. On returning to his hut the beggar was surprised to discover three grains of gold in his bowl and then grieved that he himself had been so parsimonious in giving to the king.

The moral of the story is obvious : if you are generous and large-hearted in giving in charity you receive a hundred-fold return. Many devotees of Sri Sri Mata Anandamayi have this experience that whatever they give as donation to the Ashram they get back several times over. This of course does not mean that you should make a business deal in the name of charity. An act of charity, like all good deeds, would lose all its merit if done in the expectation of getting a return. The distinguishing feature of any virtuous deed is that it is performed for its own sake without any selfish motive.

Hinduism lays great stress on charity. This is probably because *Sannyāsa* or renunciation is one of the recognized ways of attaining the Supreme and those who take to this path must necessarily live on charity. While society must despise all able-bodied persons taking up the profession of begging out of sheer laziness, it cannot shut its eyes to those who are physically handicapped and helpless on the one hand or those, on the other, who voluntarily embrace a

life of poverty in the pursuit of Ultimate Reality. While civilized nations have enacted poor laws to take care of the former category making at the same time begging by healthy persons a crime, Hinduism has to cater also for the second class of people who genuinely lead a life of renunciation. Hence charity assumes a much larger connotation with us. In fact the Hindu joint family system itself was a method by which the aged and incapacitated members of the family were looked after and as a natural extension of this idea the guest was to be given an honourable place and to be treated with great consideration. ( अतिथि देवो भव । ) The holy mendicant was looked upon as a particularly welcome guest and given all respect. The custom has undoubtedly been exploited by the unscrupulous with the result that India is full of persons going about in the garb of *sādhus* as well as professional beggars. Even when physically handicapped persons come round begging you cannot be sure whether they are not being employed by others who live on the alms secured by them. It is said that sometimes children are abducted and mutilated in order to be utilized for begging. One feels so revolted by these malpractices that one is inclined never to give alms and to turn even holy men away from one's door. It would be most unfortunate if, because of these bogus masqueraders for charity, we should allow our hearts to be so hardened as not to leave any place for pitying and helping the really deserving.

The Bhagavad Gita, which attaches great importance to moral behaviour, gives a graphic description of different types of charity. According to the Gita, everything in Nature has three qualities or modes (*guṇas*) viz. *sattwa* which stands for purity, knowledge and light, *rajas* which betokens activity and attachment and *tamas* which means inertia and delusion. Giving or charity can be of an ignorant *tamasic*, an ostentatious *rajasic* or a disinterested and enlightened *satwic* character. The following verses which

give this classification are worth quoting as a guide to the right type of charity :—

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।  
 देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम्  
 यत्तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं कलमुद्दिश्य वा पुनः  
 दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम्  
 अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते  
 असत्कृतमवज्ञातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

Sri Aurobindo comments on these verses as follows :—

“The *tamasic* gift is offered ignorantly with no consideration of the right conditions of time, place and object ; it is a foolish, inconsiderate and in reality a self-regarding movement, an ungenerous and ignoble generosity, the gift offered without sympathy or true liberality, without regard for the feelings of the recipient and despised by him even in the acceptance. The *rajasic* kind of giving is that which is done with regret, unwillingness or violence to oneself or with a personal and egoistic object or in the hope of a return of some kind from whatever quarter or a correspond. g or greater benefit to oneself from the receiver. The *sattwic* way of giving is to bestow with right reason and good will and sympathy in the right conditions of time and place and on the right recipient who is worthy or to whom the gift can be really helpful. Its act is performed for the sake of the giving and the beneficence, without any view to a benefit already done or yet to be done to oneself by the receiver of the benefit and without any personal object in the action.”

In the *Dhyāneshwari*, which is a commentary on the Gita by the Maharashtrian Saint Dhyāneshwar Maharaj, as translated into English by Sri Manu Subedar, the following lucid explanation is given :—

“The best kind of charity is that in which what has been acquired by one’s own exertion and along the right path is affectionately employed for the benefit of others,

When there is a good seed there is often no good soil to sow it in. Similarly when one wants to give in charity, it is difficult to find proper parties. It is like getting a precious jewel and not having gold to set it in, or, having prepared the ornament, not having the limb to put it on. The greatest joy arises when there is a holiday and a dear friend drops in and there are ample means for his entertainment. The best charity is therefore possible when the motives are pure and when proper opportunity, time and place, a worthy recipient and a plentitude of resources exist. The sacred places are the best for doling out charity. Holidays of one kind or the other are to be preferred and what is given should go to good men. The purity of the recipient is an important element. What is given should be given without reservation, just as a woman delivers herself into the hands of her lover. A man giving in charity must feel as if he is returning something that was entrusted to him for safe custody. He must feel like the royal servant who hands bettle-nuts to the king. There should be no motive in charity and there should be no aim, direct or indirect. Let those, to whom you give, be such, that they cannot make any return to you. Just as, when shouting towards the sky, there is no reply, or nothing can be seen at the back of a mirror, or a ball when thrown on water does not rebound in one's hand, or just as a wild bull is fed on grass, or an ungrateful person returns no obligation, charity should be without any idea of return. This is the supreme notion of charity.

“The inferior kind is that in which there is some other intention. It is like feeding a cow with the intention of getting milk, or sowing a seed with the intention of selling corn, or inviting relatives with the intention of getting presents, or sending sweets to friends expecting them to return them, or like working for others after they have paid the fees, or giving medical aid after charges have been paid. So charity, which wants to put under obligation those

to whom anything is given and aims at the increase of one's fame, is intentional charity and is of the inferior kind. Another variety of this is where the smallest coin is given to a worthy man with the intention that all the sins of the family should be instantaneously wiped out. To give with desires in one's mind, or to give in such a way that the receiver cannot secure even a meal from what is given, or to grieve for what has been given as if it had been robbed by thieves, is the characteristic of inferior charity (*rājās*).

“This charity takes place in forests, city squares, military camps or palaces. It is given out of what has been extracted by evil deeds, by theft, or by hurting others and it is given to bards, strolling singers, prostitutes or gamblers who put a momentary spell of magic on the donor. That is not charity which is given in exchange for physical enjoyment or satisfaction, or physical beauty, dancing, singing or personal laudation. Charity which embodies all these imperfections is therefore the most inferior (*tamas*). No merit can accrue out of it except by the purest accident, such as insects carving readable letters on a piece of wood, or a crow getting caught when one is clapping one's hands. The approach of a deserving person coming for favour upsets a man with such a tendency. There is always doubt in his mind. There is no respect in his bearing and he gets nothing. Either he does not give or if he gives anything, it is after a lot of discussion and with the retort that he has given too much. The expenditure of wealth on the pretext of charity in this manner does good neither to him that gives nor to him that receives. It is to be condemned. It is *tamsā*.”

In two other places in the Gita the subject of *dāna* is referred to. In Canto XVII, 28, charity without faith, अश्रद्धया दत्तं, is labelled अशुद्ध “not right or good”, which is of no avail either in this world or the next. In Canto XVIII verses 5 & 6, it is stated that charity (along with sacrifice and work) should never be given up but even its performance should be without attachment or expectation of fruit.

In the Brihadaranyakopanishad there is the story of gods, men and demons having gone for instruction to Prajapati, the common ancestor of them all, each received the syllable द from him. It had a different meaning in each case ; for gods it meant दमयत्, "control yourself", because conscious of their powers they tend to become unruly and for demons who are by nature cruel the exhortation was दयध्वम्, "be compassionate". But for men it was दत्त, "give away" because, they are inclined to be avaricious and do not like to part with things.

In the Taittiriyaopanishad, the teacher in his farewell address to his students exhorts them about their duties in life. It is here that they are told to treat the guest as God and also how to give in charity श्रद्धया देयम् । अश्रद्धयाऽदेयम् । श्रिया देयम् । हिया देयम् । भिया देयम् । संविदा देयम् । "Whatever thou givest, give it with faith, not without faith. Give generously, give with modesty, with fear, with sympathy."

Here, unlike in the Gita, the stress is not one selecting the right kind of recipient but on giving with faith, largeheartedly, without pride, without wounding the other man's susceptibilities and out of real fellow-feeling and sympathy. Sri Anandamayi Ma also says that we should look upon the person to whom we are giving as the form of God (भगवत् स्वरूप) and then there is no question of deserving or non-deserving. It is a matter of attitude and it solves the problem of having to decide the fitness of the receiver. Though the exercise of discrimination is a good quality, it tends to become an outlook of always suspecting the *bona-fides* of people and may even lead to an endeavour to find excuses for never giving anything in charity. Why not, therefore, be liberal in a large way and give whenever and whatever you can ? It will certainly make a better man of you. It is not intended that you should neglect your duties to your family or impoverish yourself like *Chārudatta*, the hero of *Mricchakatikam*. Actually in these materialistic days there is little danger of anyone following in his footsteps. But

charity must be made a part of our obligations in life so that we spare for those in want a little of what God is pleased to bestow on us. This is the spirit of renunciation taught in the Ishavasyopanishad :—

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।  
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

“Look upon everything that is in this changing world as pervaded by God, clothe it in Godhood and enjoy what you get only after renouncing it to Him. Do not be greedy ; whose indeed is wealth ?” It is only if we link up charity in this way with our faith in the Supreme that we shall become really generous-hearted and gradually lose the sense of possessiveness of ‘me’ and ‘mine’.

But charity does not consist only in giving something out of one’s material possessions. There is a still higher way of giving which Sri Aurobindo points out as follows : “The culmination of the *sattwic* way of *dāna* will bring into action an increasing element of that wide self-giving to others and to the world and to God, *ātma-dāna*, *ātma-samarpaṇa*, which is the high consecration of the sacrifice of works enjoined by the Gita. And the transcendence in the divine nature will be a greatest completeness of self-offering founded on the largest meaning of existence. All this manifold universe comes into birth and is constantly maintained by God’s giving of Himself and His powers and the lavish outflow of His self and spirit into all these existences ; universal being, says the Veda, is the sacrifice of the *Puruṣa*. All the action of the perfected soul will be even such a constant divine giving of itself and its powers, an outflowing of the knowledge, light, strength, love, joy, helpful *Śakti* which it possesses in the Divine and by his influence and effluence on all around it according to their capacity of reception or on all this world and its creatures. That will be the complete result of the complete self-giving of the soul to the Master of our existence.”

## MĀTRI LILĀ

( July — October )

Mataji reached Vrindaban on July 20th by car from New Delhi, where she had spent one night. Gurupurnima was celebrated on the 21st. In the morning Didima's *Gurupuja* was performed by a Brahmachari of the Ashram in front of the Chbeliya Mandir. Sri Krishnananda Avadhutaji and Sri Chakrapaniji attended the function. As usual people came in large numbers to offer fruits and flowers and to perform Didima's and Ma's *pūja*.

In the evening Mataji was present at the *satsang* in the hall and gave *darśana* for quite a while. A devotee had arranged for *Satyanārāyana Pūjā* in the Nitai-Gouranga temple. Mataji was in a gay mood and started singing the *Dwadash Akshara Mantra* out of her own *kheyāla*. Every one was thrilled to hear her sing it twelve times. Mataji also related the incident that made her sing it for the first time when Haribabaji was ill. We are not allowed to sing this mantra in our Ashram except in Mataji's or Sri Haribabaji's presence. As soon as the *Satyanārāyana Pūjā* was completed, Mataji took the plate with *bātāshā* ( sugar-puffs ) into her hand and showered us with 'Hari loot', chanting '*Hari bol*'. It was wonderful and inspiring.

A fairly quiet period followed after *Gurupurnima*. Most of the visitors from outside had left. Mataji's health was not very satisfactory and hours of *darśana* were short and limited. Visitors such as Sri Haribabaji, Sri Chakrapaniji, Sri Avadhutaji and Sri Vraj Jivan Goswamiji often dropped in to see Ma. Occasionally Mataji would attend Sri Haribabaji's *satsang* at the Oriya Baba Ashram, where Haribabaji stays.

From August 8th onwards *Rāsālilā* was performed daily in the Ashram hall. Mataji was present every evening.



Crowds poured in to see the Rāsa and the hall was usually packed tightly.

The *Jhulan* ( swing festival ) celebrations started on the 16th. An extremely beautiful swing had been erected in front of the Chheliya temple. *Pujā* was performed daily by one of the Brahmacharis, while the Brahmacharinis were chanting *Stotras* ( Sanskrit hymns ). After the *Pujā* Mataji would swing the *vigrahas* of Krishna and Radha that were placed on the *jhū'ā*. One evening eleven swings were erected all round the hall and on each one the members of the *Rāsa* party dressed up as Rādhās and Krishnas would swing simultaneously.

The 19th of August, *Jhulan Pūrṇima* marked the end and culmination of the festival. That day the Swami of the Gouriya Math paid a visit to our Ashram. This is also the festival of *Rakshābandhan*. After the puja was over, devotees were allowed to tie *rākhis* ( bracelets ) round Mataji's wrist and Mataji blessed everyone by tying *rākhis* round their wrists as well. Since this is the anniversary of the memorable night when Mataji gave herself *dikṣā* in 1922, it is always celebrated by midnight meditation from 11<sup>15</sup>-12<sup>15</sup>, in Ma's presence, preceded and followed by kirtan or chanting of hymns until 12<sup>30</sup> or 1. a.m.

On the 20th *Mahārāsa* was performed in the open space in front of the hall. Ever since August 16th it had been raining heavily, but fortunately it cleared up on the 20th and bright sunshine broke through the clouds, so that the performance could take place in the open. Vast multitudes attended. The compound was entirely packed.

Then again a fairly quiet period followed, but as *Janmāstami* ( Sri Krishna's birthday ) came nearer, devotees from Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Delhi and other places started pouring in. This *Janmāstami* was the first anniversary of the consecration of the beautiful Chheliya Mandir. Its special feature was that *Pujā* was performed on two

nights, on the 27th and 28th August respectively. Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindhia of Gwalior and Raja Durga Singh of Solan who had been instrumental in having the Chhelia Temple built, were to be present for both functions, but due to heavy floods on the road to Mathura Raja Durga Singh reached only in the afternoon of the 28th.

In the evening of the 27th, at about 8 p.m., a *Nāma Yajña* was started by our Delhi Kirtan party who had arrived the same morning. After the *adhivāsa* the Kirtan continued for about an hour. It was stopped when the *Janmastami Pujā* started which had to be performed round midnight. *Abhisheka* (bathing) was done to the *vigrahas* in the temple. During the ceremony the girls sang for some time and then the portion of the Srimad Bhagavata which describes Sri Krishna's birth was read out by two *Dandi Swamis* of our Ashram. In the early hours of the morning the *pūja* was followed by the distribution of *prasāda*.

The *Nāma Yajña* was resumed at sunrise and continued throughout the day until after 5 p.m. Mataji took part in the kirtana on both days and even sang towards the end. Mataji was very pleased with the beautiful and inspired Kirtana of the Delhi party, remarking that they created *bhāva* (an atmosphere of divine love and devotion). She suggested that other devotees also should gather friends and neighbours and conduct similar *Nāma Kirtanas*.

The Maharani of Gwalior took Mataji and Haribabaji to visit the temple built by her family. On her return Mataji sat near the *tulsi* grove. She then rolled near the *tulsi* plant and explained that Didima had rolled her in a similar way soon after she was born. Didima repeated this daily, invoking the blessing of the sacred *tulsi* on Mataji. When Mataji was big enough she used to go occasionally herself and roll in front of the *tulsi*. Today she did it because it was Sri Krishna's birthday.

Another feature of the day was the distribution of

*prasāda* to all the workmen who had taken part in the construction of the large new water tank in the compound behind that of the main Ashram. It is to hold Jamuna water. It so happened that the first Jamuna water poured into the tank on August 27th, just before the first *Janmastami Pūjā* commenced. Its water was used for the *Abhisheka*. After the ceremony it was collected in buckets and distributed among the devotees.

In the morning of the 28th, there was again *Abhisheka* in the temple. This time it was a long and elaborate ceremony, which was witnessed only by a few. The main temple door was occasionally opened to give *darśana* to the multitude.

The midnight *Pūjā* was very much like the one of the previous night except that it was carried out on a more elaborate scale. After the Sanskrit hymns and the recitation from the Srimad Bhagavata. Sri Narayan Swami read out an account of the history that led to the construction of Chheliya Mandir and also of the consecration ceremonies last year. After the completion of the *pūjā* in the early hours of the morning, Mataji distributed garlands and *prasāda* to all present. Some devotees had to leave immediately after.

On the 29th *Nandotsava* (the celebration that expresses the riotous joy of the cowherds over Sri Krishna's birth) was observed. The morning *satsang* was held in the open, on the platform under the neemtrees in Mataji's presence. As every year on that day a few devotees dressed up as cowherd and milk-maids and performed a short comic play and dance amidst much laughter. Mataji joined in the fun and sang kirtan with great abandon for a while. Large earthen vessel full of curds were placed before her and Mataji threw curds into every body's mouth. It was an amusing sight to see everyone spattered with *dahi* (curds).

In the evening Mataji visited Govinda Mandir. After returning she again sat down under the neemtrees<sup>3</sup> and later went to the new water tank. Part of the *abhisheka* water was poured back into the tank with the recitation of mantras in a short ceremony. Just at the close of it, a pandit arrived with a tray full of Behariji's *prasāda* and Mataji herself distributed it to everyone. Mataji has named the tank "*Krishna Chheliya Ānanda Sarovar.*"

A large number of visitors left after Janmastami but it cannot be said that a quiet time followed. On September 2nd Sri Haribabaji's devotees performed 'Ramarcha' in the Ashram hall. On the 4th there was another exciting function. The Goswamiji of Radha vallabh Mandir had recently dreamt of Chheliya sitting in bower made up entirely of flowers and banana leaves. He expressed the desire to arrange for such a bower to be constructed in the Chheliya temple itself. The flower bungalow was made in the shape of a boat. The whole day long workmen were busy putting it together. The Jamuna was in spate at the time and some people felt that the floods would subside after Chheliya had his "*nauka vihāra*" (trip on a boat). The flower boat was extremely beautiful, a real piece of art. The *vigrahas* of Chheliya and Krishna were clad in the attire of boatmen and adorned with ornaments made of flowers. A number of Mahatmas came to have *darśana*, amongst them Sri Haribabaji and Swami Sharananandaji.

On September 7th a *Bhāgavad Saptāha* started. Mataji occasionally attended the Sanskrit readings in the mornings and the Hindi lectures in the evening. On one day of the *Saptaha* which happened to be the *Bhāgavata Jayanti* (birthday anniversary of the Bhagavata, we were fortunate to have Sri Akhandanandaji speak to us.

After the Saptaha there was a short spell of comparative quiet. But as Durga Puja was approaching guests began to arrive from great distances and Mataji would occasionally

favour us with some words of advice or tell stories from the past.

On October 1st Mataji, at the request of devotees began to sing the '*Dwādasa Akshara Mantra* on condition that the singing of it would be continued for twenty-four hours. The Kirtan ended on the 2nd afternoon when Mataji again sang for the last 10 minutes. It was followed by kirtan of '*Krishna Chheliya Ananda Lāl Braja Ramana Prāṇa Gopal*' for a short time. On October 3rd Kirtan was again kept up for 12 hours, 6 hours of "*Jai Śiva Śankara*" and 6 hours of "*Ma Durga.....*".

The *Navarātri* was performed from 4th to 13th October. The Puja was specially held this year in Vrindaban Ashram at the cordial invitation of Sri Suresh Mahindra of Bombay and his wife Raj Kumari Indira, daughter of H. H. Raja Saheb Jogendra Sen of Mandi State. We hope to write in details about the function in our next issue.

Mataji paid a short visit to Varanasi very soon after the Pujas and returned to Vrindaban again on the morning of 27th to be present in time for the *Diwali*, which was held on 1st November.

Mataji is going to remain in Vrindaban also for the next *Samyam Saptaha* that will be held from 9th to 15th November.

It is our painful duty to record with profound sorrow the sad demise during the current year of two distinguished children of Mataji, who always used to take active interest in the welfare of our Ashram.

Dr. Panna Lall, Bar-at-law, C. S. I., C.I.E., I.C.S., who retired as Adviser to the Governor, U.P., was a great scholar too and was immensely respected by all concerned in different parts of the country for the nobility and integrity of his character and various other qualities of his head and heart. He came in contact with Mataji nearly thirty years back and was a regular visitor to our Ashrams ever since then. Dr.

Panna Lall was a devout *Vaishnava* also and he installed the exceedingly beautiful statues of Nitai-Gouranga in the Vrindaban Ashram temple. He always urged his numerous friends and relations to come in close contact with Mataji and have her blessings. After protracted illness he passed away in New Delhi on 27th May at a ripe old age after having lived the fulness of his illustrious life.

The cruel hands of death have snatched away from us another sincere and staunch devotee of Mataji, Sri Jotindro Nath Banerjee, a renowned Advocate from Varanasi. He was known to Mataji from the thirties and rendered invaluable service to the Ashram in various capacities. For several years he was also a Vice-President of our organisation, Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha. After a very short illness he suddenly left this world on 4th October.

We pray to Mataji for bestowing eternal peace to the departed souls.

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## *A REQUEST*

We propose to bring out a new souvenir volume on **Mother in English**. It is our ardent desire that all those who have come in contact with Mother should write a few lines, preferably not exceeding three foolscap pages, about how they happened to come in contact with Mother and about their experiences too.

The articles may kindly be sent at an early date to :

**MA FERROZA TALEYARKHAN**

**Rutton Villa**

**Cumballa Hill**

**Bombay—26**