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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

Birth as a human being is hard to obtain. Having received this rare boon, if you do not give time to the contemplation of the Beloved, you will have to reproach yourself: "What have I been doing? Should my whole life continue in this manner?" To reflect thus is beneficial. Failing to do so means moving towards death.

* * *

Who is called a friend? He who makes you turn towards the One Beloved, he, verily, is a real and true friend. But he who lures you away from this direction and induces you to take the road to death is an enemy, not a friend. Try to reform yourself. Not to make an attempt to correct oneself is as good as committing suicide.

* * *

Sense enjoyment acts like slow poison. And by this slow poison you are driven towards death. Therefore it is man's duty as a human being to get into the current that leads to immortality.

* * *

The world (*sang-sāra*) is the abode of conflict. He who mistakes the comedy for reality, is just decorating for the various disguises. This is why it is called *sangsāra*,* the place where play-acting is the main thing.

* * *

* A play upon words that cannot be translated. *Sangsāra* means world, also the round of births and deaths. *Sang* clown, *sāra* essence.

Lord, Thou Thyself art in this form—regard that particular *kriyā* in this light. See in all *kriyās* an expression of THAT. Realization of Reality will come through all *kriyās* combined. Do not look upon them as separate one from the other. Who is the *kriyā śakti*? Thou Thyself. And who is the *Sakti*? He, the One.

* * *

What does *Ātmā darsana*, the direct perception of the Self signify? The seer, the seen and the act of seeing—where these three are one, there the Brahman is realized. When the question of action or inaction does not arise, this is called Self-realization (*Ātmā sthiti*).

* * *

To know the Mother means to find the Mother, to become the Mother. *Mā* means *Ātmā*, *Mā* means *mayi* (all-pervading). Self-pervading, reposing in the Atma, Knowledge, the Self, Siva. "To become" actually means: it ever is so.

* * *

There is nothing in this world, yet every single person is madly pursuing this nothing—some more and some less. What a comedy God's play is! What a lunatic asylum He has created! He Himself sporting with Himself.

'MA'

D. S. NAKRA

It is more than a privilege and an honour to be called upon to say a few words about Ma—it is a blessing. Blessed are those that utter Her Hallowed Name, and twice blessed are those that hear the Holy Word in silence and contemplate Her Living Presence in their hearts. May She be with us now and for ever.

In his "Hymn to Bhagwan Ramakrishna", Swami Vivekananda says : "He that has passed by Thee has found peace; he that has taken Thy name has received Bliss and he that has surrendered himself at Thy Lotus Feet has got Freedom".

The same is true of Ma. Fortunate are we who are gathered here. Let us think of her. Let us utter her Name and let us surrender ourselves at her Lotus Feet in thought and in deed.

I do not know why I have been chosen for the talk today. I heard of Ma many times but I was not called into Her Holy Presence till about a year or so ago.

I had the good fortune of being in her presence for just a couple of minutes when I asked for and received her blessings. She said to me : "Cling lovingly to the Lotus Feet of the Lord and your mind shall loosen its grip on worldly desires. Have faith in His Name and persevere and you shall make progress."

These are common words of advice but they assumed a special meaning and significance. Coming from her, they were a promise and a blessing.

* The following is a talk delivered at the Ranchi Ashram on the occasion of Mataji's 72nd birthday, May 1968.

This is all that I can say about Ma from personal knowledge—that she is a Living Blessing. I am waiting till her Grace vouchsafes to me another glimpse of her. I take it as a sign from her that I have been asked to speak today. This has given me an opportunity to read about her. One has first to hear the Name, think over It and absorb It before the meaning dawns and Its living presence is felt. It is in this spirit of dedication that I join you all in offering these few words at her Lotus Feet.

It is usual to start with a very brief historical life-sketch. Ma was born in May 1896 in a small village in the Tippera (Tripura) District of East Bengal; the population of this village was predominantly Muslim, mostly illiterate. Her own formal education consisted of two years' attendance at a primary Pathshala. She was married at the age of 13 to Ramani Mohan Chakravarti, later known as Bhola Nath, who was employed as a keeper of Shah Bagh, a garden of the Nawab family of Dacca. Her spiritual life began to manifest itself even before she was old enough to enter worldly life as we know it. In fact she never entered worldly life.

The story of her life is a series of events of spiritual significance with which her devotees are familiar. I will mention only a few : her performance of nimaz (recitation of Qurana ayaat)" near the grave of a Muslim saint in Shah Bagh, her spells of absent-mindedness and the recitation of hymns and mantras, her spontaneous experiencing of yogic and other spiritual states; the coming of Jyotish Chandra Roy and Dr. Sasanka Mukherjee and his daughter (later renamed by Ma, 'Guru Priya' and lovingly called 'Didi' by everybody) her ministry and long tours including pilgrimages to Kailash and Mansarovar and of course the many miracles of which some only have been told by her devotees.

The narration of the experiences of her devotees would be an elevating *Katha* and *Kirtan* by itself, but unfortunately we do not have the time for it this evening. It is

enough to understand that her life story, as such, has significance only as something concrete to which our mind can cling; it serves as a vehicle of our thought, as a focus of our embodied love. What she really is her own grace will reveal to us according to our capacity. She herself has said: "I am for you what you think me to be."

"For the great majority of us", says Dr. Weintrob (Vijayananda), "she is a Mother, full of love and tenderness; to others, a friend, an elder sister or even a child. For others yet, who are spiritually more advanced, she is the Guru or an aspect of God, Durga, Krishna etc. And it is not only in the imagination of the bhakta that she represents these aspects. Her physical appearance, her behaviour and her voice are actually transformed and adapted to the part she wishes to play. I have often seen her features assuming entirely different aspects within a single hour."

I cannot, therefore, do better than relate what she is to some of her devotees. In this way, I will be able to present to you a few aspects of her many-sided personality. There is no better way of knowing Her than reading or hearing an account of the experiences of her devotees and her impact on them. Her totality is beyond understanding.

First came Hara Kumar who called her 'Ma' for the first time. Next Jotish Chandra Roy who saw Mother as 'Anandamayi' and gave her the name which seems the most fitting, more than even the name she got from her parents—'Nirmala' (the Taintless). If words can encompass her Self, it is these two words 'Anandamayi Ma.'

Mahamahopadyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj has spoken of "the wonderful poise and bliss of her sweet personality which, strong as it is, blends into the impersonal and is utterly undifferentiated from it."

Another devotee declares that: "She is harder than thunder and softer than a flower". Still another says: "She is like the Ganges—her very touch purifies. In her

presence, one feels oneself getting better all the time. She does not seem to notice or want to notice the dark side of an individual ; she only sees our luminous aspects enhanced considerably by her divine mercy”.

Another devotee declares :

“Seeing the radiant face of Ma Anandamayi and hearing her laughter, you guess that she is an incarnation of joy. Touched by the caress of her glance, you know that her heart is overflowing with love for all beings. Listening to her teaching, so simple and clear, you understand that she is in possession of all Wisdom. But one cannot say whether it is Joy, Love or Wisdom that is the source of all this : for with her, all three are inextricably and indissolubly mingled-one cannot exist without the other.”

Parmahansa Yoganandaji says : “I had found many men of God-realization in India ; but never before had I met with such an exalted woman saint. Her gentle face was burnished with the ineffable joy that had given her the name of Blissful Mother.” He adds : “She made one feel the closest of friends, yet an aura of remoteness was ever around her-the paradoxical isolation of Omnipresence.”

So much about her personality. Let us now see what the devotees have to say about her teaching. Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj says : “Mother has no line of her own : No particular teaching or doctrine ; she declares that the genuine teachings of all true teachers sincerely followed can lead us to the one Truth.” “What is wanted is unflinching patience, grim resolution, persistent endeavour, unflinching faith and unconditional surrender.” As the first commandment enjoins : “Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength.”

“There are many mansions in my father’s house”, says Jesus. Yes, there are infinite mansions and infinite ways but we have to remember that the house is One.

All these statements are but a measure of our own more or less limited understanding. What Mother is, only Mother knows. Let us now see what occasionally she has said about herself. Let us hear her own words: "I am Purna Brahman Narayana" she said to a questioner. To another: "If there were '*aham jñāna*' (I-consciousness) in me I could express who I am. As it is not there, I am what you choose to say about me."

To still another she declared: "This entire Universe is my home. I am in my own home. Even when seeming to be roaming from place to place."

Going still further, she declares: "I am conditioned as well as unconditioned. I am neither infinite nor confined within limits. I am both at the same time. I exist before there is creation, duration or dissolution of the world. I was the same, I am the same, and I shall be the same."

For many of us, these declarations are beyond comprehension. Let us, therefore, say in the words of the Gopis to Uddhava: "We do not know, O Uddhava, what *jñāna* and *yoga* is, we know only love." Let us surrender ourselves to Ma with all our love and let her make of us what she wills.

MATAJI'S DARSANA

New Delhi, September 1968.

EILEEN WOOD JASNOWSKI

I am before her, the holy one, Anandamayi Ma.
I am sitting here, wearing the costume of the hill people,
the Punjab. I am not saying anything but thinking it :
Look at me, sitting here before you, in lotus posture.
What do you think of that,—for a westerner ?

She thought highly of it. The Universal Mother was amused.
Her eyes consumed me, ate up all my passions, fused
my dreams of fame and gain into nothingness.
Her radar, love, flashed out of wisdom's third eye
halfway across the world
and brought me home to her.

She centered all her thought into my fate line,
sponged out what she wanted
from my starred and criss-crossed palm.
Ah, yes, another one; she thought,
another one who wants to have the Grace
handed to her, like an almond or an emerald
RIGHT NOW.

Come closer. Look into my eyes.
Look deeply. Tell me what you see.

The first moment I see a quiet woman, old as love
and steadfast; I see dark hair, the kindest eyes, Buddha's
smile.

The second moment all expression's blotted out ; her
eyes blend
into mine and I'm caught in the Madonna blue light-
stream.

The third moment her upper lip twitched a gadfly of my past
had brushed it; she let it go,—an inconsequential
incarnation.

The fourth moment her face vanished but those eyes still
held me,—
set now in a cobra's narrow head. She danced on the
hood of my ego.

The fifth moment her love cracked my heart *Chakra*,
seaped into
every part of my body, flowing, pounding, rocking me high.

The sixth moment—my last unblinking glimpse of
eternity—
she tipped and nearly toppled me off my rim of life.
She burned me out in six minutes without a flick of fire.
The circle of her love widened and took me in
— where I'd always been
in the palm of her hand. Lord Krishna held me high,—
higher.

Six moments? No, hundred lives it took
for initiation by Mataji's look.

From the Diary of a European

MELITA MASCHMANN

(*Translated from German*)

Allahabad, December 28th, 1966.

Mataji has come on a visit to the Gopal Thakur Ashram at Allahabad. The house has a good atmosphere. One can feel that it is the centre of a community of persons who are occupied with something essential. In the morning Kalyaniji performs puja for nearly two hours in the temple, in front of which the congregation assembles. I am impressed by the intensity of the atmosphere and the style of the ritual. Kalyaniji's almost air-rending invocation of the Devi : "Ma, Ma !" touches my heart. In her ecstatic appeal our yearning for God, the Eternal Mother, finds expression. "Ma, Ma !" the call comes from a depth where no falsification through sentimentality and sounding pathos is possible anymore.

Mataji is sitting at the entrance of the temple, only about a yard away from the priestess. Her whole being radiates Divinity—for our adoration. But how to describe what is taking place ? It does not happen very often nowadays perhaps, and only in response to invocations such as this one : "Ma Ma !" Also in response to silent invocations.

The Devi takes Her abode in the body of this Being whose whole existence is in complete submission to God.

Sometimes I think that these precious moments of union alone make Mataji's life bearable in our midst, with our oppressive ignorance (ignorance in all forms in which we allow it to get the better of us, such as indolence, greed, covetousness, pride and so forth.) Perhaps these react on Mataji more than we think. If our longing for God which attracts us to Mataji were quite sincere, pure and passionate,

He would certainly have to reveal Himself to us through her. I am told that Ma once said : "My sustenance derives from those who, having come to me, lose themselves and find God." I feel sure that we often "starve" Mataji. Perhaps even when we imagine to be specially devout : in the midst of a solemn ritual.

Or is Mataji always Devi, not only in those special moments when it becomes so obvious ? The replies to such questions must always be conditioned by the particular school of thought to which one belongs. I do not feel bound to any of them and therefore no answer can be binding for me. In the first few years this uncertainty tormented me. We do not like to live with questions that have to remain unsolved. But if we give up insisting on a reply, the questions themselves one day disappear. Now I am content to love Mataji and to know that she is not threatened by the danger of succumbing to all the evils that result from our egos; and at times to see the Divine mysteriously shine through her.

It is after all only a metaphor for something indescribable when I say that Devi manifested through her body while Mataji sat on the threshold of the temple yesterday. When she was being decorated with garlands and covered with flowers like the murtis in temples, her whole body expressed depersonalization in which the self is annihilated for the sake of the Self. In such moments I have the feeling that an atom of Mataji's human self resists the destruction by the Self. It remains with us and joins into the veneration of the Self that has incarnated in her body. For this reason the tie of intimacy between her and us is never completely broken. To express it in my non-doctrinal language, she never ceases to be a human being, even while she is totally immersed in divinity.

Yesterday, when the puja was over, something very strange took place—(we should note and remember this.)

Somebody had a tape recorder ready and placed it near Mataji. She was perhaps just returning from a realm into which we cannot follow her. With a smile that was still half "over there" she pointed to the microphone, saying very softly : "This body has no *kheyāla* to say anything just now."

Probably many had hoped to get Mataji's voice on the tape, for they could not be discouraged so easily. A lady said : "Ma, I have an urgent question to ask : Are Brahmins Brahmins by their birth or by their merits ?" "Both", replied Mataji almost inaudibly into the humming of the machine. She afterwards gave another answer with an equally soundless voice and then became silent. She remained mum in spite of all questions, although there were a number of very intelligent people present who introduced various topics in the hope of persuading Mataji to talk. "Ma, please, answer ! Say something ! Or if you do not feel like talking, sing a little ! Please, Ma....."

Mataji sat calmly at the entrance of the temple and smiled patiently and cheerfully at the eagerness of the people who wanted to outwither at any cost. Her gaze wandered with serene attention from face to face. In the corners of her eyes there was a faint twinkle of mockery : "Do you really believe my dear-ones, that you can make me act against my *kheyāla* ?" But her mouth remained tightly shut. It seemed to me that I had never before seen Mataji's motherliness radiate quite so warmly as during those moments in which she resisted with such adamant determination the entreaties of her children. What looked like relentlessness was nothing but love. After a while the ardour of the congregation calmed down, the questions ceased and then a great stillness began to spread which had its source in Mataji. Her face now became very serious and composed. The expression of an impersonal love shone in her eyes, and everyone on whom this gaze fell must have been filled with the certainty that something of the nature of an initiation had taken place

for him. Slowly her gaze wandered over the faces, and here and there sank into a pair of eyes. Then her look rose and with great tranquillity reposed on the horizon. There it dwelt for several minutes. Suddenly Mátaji got up with a start and slipped into her room.

Mataji had thus refused to co-operate with the machine. I do not think it was by mere coincidence that her *kheyāla* established such a distinct borderline : Beyond it is the zone in which the truly human is threatened by encroachments of the lifeless machine. I have often witnessed Mataji speaking or singing into a tape but never in moments in which it would have meant a violation of the religious atmosphere, as here. Considering the fact that technical science has an almost demonical attraction for many, I would see in Mataji's refusal the symbolic victory of the Holy Ghost over a dangerous power of corruption.

**At the Opening Ceremony of the Charitable Hospital
of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha.**

Varanasi, December 26th, 1968.

About twenty minutes before the motorboat of the Prime Minister cast anchor near the Ashram, Mataji appeared on the dais, accompanied by two women professors of the Benares Hindu University. While walking, Mataji had that slightly forward bent attitude which is typical for her in moments of special concentration. What it expresses is not fatigue, but rather some kind of a kingly humility. Every time I observe it, it seems to me to reflect God's loving-kindness : He who could display devastating power, clothes Himself into a figure of affectionate tenderness.

Before sitting down, Mataji gravely greeted into the pandal below. She did not wear her spectacles and the total 'otherness' in her eyes put me into a holy terror. This can only be endured, never interpreted. Before the Prime Minister arrived, Mataji gave us a *darśana* of a rare intensity. In the

midst of the general nervousness that usually precedes a function of this kind, she had the tranquillity of a rock. Most of the time she sat with her eyes shut and the few movements of her shoulders and arms were slowed down. I presumed that she was in *dhyāna*. Two or three times, one of her companions put a question to her. Easily and swiftly she emerged from her absorption and, smiling almost imperceptibly, looked round the pandal. According to my estimate, five hundred pairs of eyes, almost exclusively eyes of the so-called worldly prominence to which most of the guests belonged, were gazing at her, but not a trace of shyness was noticeable in Mataji. I was reminded of the peasant girl of the fairy tale who became a queen: In her charisma, her certainty, but also in her isolation Ma was more royal than any queen by birth. Her contacts are of a different order from ours. While we see her sit before us so silent and so calm—with whom may she be holding intercourse?

As soon as the Prime Minister arrived, the atmosphere changed radically. From the background of the pandal one could feel intense movement—like a blast of wind: The slender figure clad in a dark green sari approached the dais with almost youthful agility and lightness. At the bottom of the steps occurred one of those tiny interludes that often throw more light on the character of a person than his utterances according to programme. Indira Gandhi hesitated for an instant, then with lightning speed moved towards the edge of the steps slipped off her shoes, left them there, and from the side set foot on the first step. Quite likely this was but an automatic reaction which she may not remember anymore. The reaction of a person who—although she could well “afford” it—does not wish to leave her shoes where they might be in the way of those who follow.

When the Prime Minister stood before Mataji and bowed down in greeting, the youthfully dynamic in her was again surprisingly strong. Her face lit up with a quick glow of joyful warmth that was equally quickly concealed behind a

restrained smile. At that moment I felt deeply for the woman who has to shoulder such an enormous burden of political responsibility : Before the critical eyes of her friends and adversaries she must control her personal impulses even when meeting Mataji. But who has not experienced something similar on a less prominent level : In official surroundings one meets a specially revered or loved person and is obliged speedily to withdraw into secrecy the natural expression of one's feelings. They are too precious and too personal to be exposed to the eyes of the public.

If I observed correctly, something of this kind occurred in Indira Gandhi. Mataji's position was very different from that of the Prime Minister. She could allow more of herself to be perceived while greeting and blessing. When she clasped Indira's hands into her own there was genial warmth and yet also restraint in the expression of her face. It has nothing to do with the arrangements of protocol when I say that at that instant there was a very sublime 'in-tune-ness' in the *lila* of the two great women.

I had never before seen Indira Gandhi, and from the mostly inadequate newspaper photos I was not prepared to find her so fascinating. When she had taken her place next to the Maharaja of Benares—who by the way reminded me of a royal figure in a Mogul painting—I had leisure to watch her. I know nothing about her and still less about her politics; but for this very reason I feel free from prejudices. The woman on the dais in front of me had a certain boldness in the expression of her attitude and countenance. This observation was also in tune with the dynamic in her bearing, her walk and her movements. It was pleasing because, above all, it did not counteract anywhere the pronounced womanliness of her personality. She had a generous, surprisingly beautiful face, in which that which I called boldness was in accord with sensibility. At any rate just then this accord could be keenly felt. At other times it might have to be struggled for. Her face was intelligent,

wide awake, and now and then a little nervous. That it looked serious was in keeping with the situation; however, at the background of this seriousness I seemed to perceive a sort of permanent sadness, (or should I call it melancholy?) which made it specially attractive. The politician acts in the 'now' and the 'here', and has to believe in the necessity and the sense of what he is doing. Yet it is good and saves him from arrogance and vainglory if he has some notion of the ultimate vanity of all worldly activity. Even though this notion should infuse a secret melancholy into all his decisions.

I was unable to follow completely the speeches that were remarkably short, but I had the impression that none of the speakers impaired the dignity of the function by empty phrases. Anywhere in the world where politicians move, this is extremely rare. Throughout the function Mataji sat in her place with the same stillness that had already enveloped her like an almost tangible aura before the proceedings began. Although she never uttered a single word, she was nevertheless the real centre of everything that took place here. While all the others on the dais sat in a row, one next to the other, Mataji had her place at right angles to them all. This demonstrated in an artless manner that Mataji does not belong to the rank and to the world of the active-ones of our day-to-day life. She is "of a different world", in spite of the fact that she does not disdain—(and the construction of the hospital amply proves this)—to effectively influence the world of our daily cares.

Indira Gandhi off and on threw a quick glance at Mataji, and Mataji looked two or three times at the Prime Minister, without their eyes ever meeting. Mostly Mataji held her eyelids shut, even during the speeches. The more I watched her the more undeniable became my impression that under the cover of her almost massive outer calm she was affecting the proceedings with the highest intensity. To be sure, on a different plane than the other actors in the *lila* of the hour.



Sm. Indira Gandhi along with Mataji, Dr. Sushila Nayar & Dr. Eithika Mukerji at Varanasi Ashram.

Whenever I see Mataji in an extraordinary situation I feel something of her mysterious blending with cosmic occurrence. That morning it suddenly struck me that during the last few days we had had an unusual cold wave. The night before it had rained heavily and at the time when the function was scheduled to begin (it actually took place one and a half hours later) there was thunder and lightning over the Ganges. The cosmic tensions had been so strong that I felt them physically in the form of short breath and a deep restlessness. While I was now gazing at Mataji, I believed to perceive quite distinctly that the power of her massive silence had won a victory over an unknown threat which found expression in cosmic tension. It may sound extravagant, but that morning this had a clearly perceptible reality for me. At the present moment I am unable to make it more comprehensible. While Mataji was sitting on the dais, motionless and with closed eyes, I saw her in powerful action as the protector. None of us will surely be able to tell (and perhaps even the part of her which could reply to our questions is not aware of it either?) in what way she affected the lives of all of us during that hour. But the thought that this protective power would also (or rather first and foremost) benefit the woman who had taken on herself such a heavy responsibility for her people, made me very happy.

Can Everybody Practise Yoga ?

DR. I. K. TAIMNI

Although every human being is destined to tread the path of Yoga sooner or later and has the potential capacity for doing so, this does not mean that everyone can start the practice of Yoga immediately. He must have evolved mentally upto a certain stage and reached a certain level of spiritual maturity for doing so. What this stage of mental and spiritual evolution is, becomes clear to some extent by considering the five-fold classification of mental states or stages of mental evolution as defined in Yogic literature. These are called *Mudha*, *Kṣhipta*, *Vikṣhipta*, *Ekāgra* and *Niruddha*.

(1) *Mudha* : The first and lowest state is called *Mudha*. In this state the individual does not have the slightest idea of the nature of life and is carried along like a straw on its current, completely at the mercy of his circumstances and environment, with no discrimination and capacity to take initiative or direct his life in any manner. This is the state of mind of the mentally undeveloped man.

(2) *Kṣhipta* : The next stage is called *Kṣhipta*. In this stage desire begins to take an active part in the life of man but he still has no aim or purpose in life. Whatever comes before him and promises to give him some pleasure attracts him for the time being. He is like a butterfly flitting from flower to flower in search of pleasure or objects which can secure pleasures and comforts of different kinds. Although some capacity for taking initiative has been developed, still, there is no continuity of purpose in the pursuit of objects. He desires and runs after them in a haphazard manner according as they happen to come his way or attract his attention. This stage obviously represents a slight advance in the evolution of mind and the vast majority of people may be considered to belong to it.

(8) *Vikshipta* : The next stage of mental development is called *Vikshipta*. Here the individual pursues one object steadily, but though apparently he seems to have taken the initiative he is really a slave of the object and pursues it not from free choice made with discrimination but because he cannot help it. He cannot give up the pursuit of the object and has really no choice in the matter. Most people who have a bee in their bonnet belong to this class. They catch hold of an idea and it seems to possess them for the time being, if not for their whole life. Those people with a one-track mind lose all sense of proportion and perspective in pursuing the idea and are not even conscious of the fact that they are pursuing it, because they cannot help it. In fact, many of them are proud of their capacity to pursue an idea with determination and perseverance and generally become experts in their own line. The majority of people who have remarkable achievements to their credit and are doing work of high quality belong to this class. They serve as very convenient though unconscious agents of the Divine Life and work out the Divine Plan in their respective spheres very efficiently. In the process they also work out their *Sāṁskāras* and develop special mental faculties.

But man is essentially a Divine being living in exile on the lower planes of illusion to unfold his Divine nature. He cannot by the very nature of things find real and permanent happiness in the illusory pursuits of the lower worlds. Those who get passionately involved in these pursuits, however glamorous they might appear for the time being, find at the end of their life—when it is generally too late—that they have been pursuing a mirage. They find to their dismay that their life is empty and frustrated and they are now face to face with a dark and uncertain future, because they have done nothing to develop their inner spiritual resources. Theoretical knowledge dealing with problems of philosophy or even observance of external forms of religious life are of no avail under these circum-

stances. This is the inevitable result of ignoring the realities of our spiritual life and allowing ourselves to be entangled in illusory pursuits.

The man of discrimination does the work which is in his *prārabdha* or which he is required to do as an agent of the Divine life within him, but he does not allow himself to be caught in these worldly pursuits which bring temporary pleasure born of a sense of achievement. The first mantra of the *Ishāvāsyopanīṣhad* given below warns us against such mental and emotional entanglements.

इयं वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृथाः कस्य सिद्धिं घनम् ॥

(4) *Ekāgra* : The first three stages of mental and spiritual evolution referred to above represent the state of mind of the vast majority of people living in the world and one can easily see that an individual cannot practise Yoga as long as he has not outgrown them. The fourth stage is called *Ekāgra* which means 'one-pointed'. In this stage man is not only capable of taking initiative and pursuing a definite purpose with determination and perseverance but is also master of his own mind. It is he who selects the object of his pursuit after using his discriminative faculty freely in this selection. He is not at the mercy of an overpowering attraction or predilection for a particular kind of life or pursuit created by *saṃskāras* of activities in previous lives. He not only possesses the necessary qualifications for achieving any worthwhile object but also the discrimination and non-attachment for selecting and pursuing the highest object of human endeavour—knowledge of one's Divine nature.

(5) *Niruddha* : The last stage which is called *Niruddha* and may be translated as "controlled and capable of inhibition" represents the state of mind of the Yogi who is not only capable of practising Yoga but who is actually treading the path of higher Yoga. *Nirodha* is the essential

technique of transcending the mind whereby Reality can be realized and only the individual who is in this last stage of mental and spiritual evolution can learn and practise this technique. It should be noted that the *Niruddha* stage does not necessarily mean the mental stage in which the higher states of consciousness and powers of Yoga have already been acquired, but it does mean that the Yogi has the potentiality and the capacity to tread the path of higher Yoga and attain its successive stages.

Anyone who is used to the study of human beings and their outlooks and modes of behaviour will see that the above broad classification of mental states corresponding to the five stages of mental evolution is essentially correct. He will also see that only those who have reached a minimum state of mental and spiritual maturity are capable of treading the path of Yoga which is concerned with the last stages of human evolution and ultimately leads an individual out of the human kingdom. In the first three stages man is meant to go through experiences of all kinds and through these experiences to develop the various mental and spiritual faculties which are present in a potential form in every human being. Till these faculties have been adequately unfolded and a certain degree of mental and spiritual maturity has been attained, the question of treading the path of Yoga in the true sense does not arise. It does not arise not only because the capacity is not there but also because the desire is completely absent.

The complete absence of desire to develop a faculty or exercise a function shows generally an absence of capacity to develop the faculty or exercise the function. Under these conditions there will not be the slightest attraction towards the required pursuits and activities and they will appear futile or meaningless. But the underlying fact is that the individual is not yet ready for them.

When an individual is getting ready for entering the path of Yoga, he begins to feel attraction for it in an increas-

ing degree. In the early stages the attraction is weak and is generally confined to the acquisition of theoretical knowledge concerning the philosophy and technique of Yoga. But a stage comes, sooner or later, when this attraction becomes sufficiently strong to at least partly overcome the attractions of the worldly life and start the self-discipline of preliminary Yoga. This is a critical stage because it is the practice of this preliminary Yoga which is called technically Kriya Yoga that makes the individual properly qualified to tread the path of real Yoga as distinguished from the various haphazard practices which these days pass under the name of Yoga. As the fitness of the individual for treading this path increases, his desire to reach the goal also increases *pari passu*. He is now in the stage of *Ekāgratā* and adequately qualified to tread the path of Yoga.

Although the serious aspirant who is determined to tread the path of Yoga is expected to have already developed *Ekāgratā*, still, Patanjali has recommended a number of practices to develop this capacity to pursue an aim wholeheartedly and with full concentration until it is accomplished. Practices hinted at in aphorisms I-33-39 of the *Yoga-Sūtras* for achieving *mansah-sthiti-nibandhani* or 'steadiness of mind' are meant for this purpose. The aspirant can adopt any of these methods which suits his temperament or circumstances or can devise one of his own.

The reasons why these exercises have been recommended are two. One is that they bring out from latency into active functioning the capacity to make the mind steady and one-pointed. The capacity may be there owing to the efforts made in this direction in previous lives but may be lying in a latent form in this life. A definite effort of this nature either brings it out in the active form or shows the aspirant that he is still lacking in this basic qualification for practising Yoga and must acquire it before trying to enter this path.

The second reason for adopting practices of this nature lies in making the mind not only one-pointed but also turned inwards. Many people in the world can pursue an object with one-pointness and perseverance provided it is outside in the familiar world of tangible objects. But this is quite different from the one-pointedness and steadiness required by the Yogi whose object of endeavour is inside, within the deeper realms of his mind and consciousness. This requires a higher kind of endurance and perseverance and involves a more severe test of faith and capacity to pursue an object in the face of difficulties and lack of any visible signs of progress. It is comparatively easy to pursue an object even against tremendous odds provided one can measure the progress made by objective methods, can share one's knowledge and experience with others, when success brings appreciation and applause from others and even failure evokes admiration or sympathy. None of these aids or compensations are available to the lonely traveller in his flight from the alone to the Alone; at least not in the early stages. It is only his faith, his intention, his indomitable will—all expressions of the *Jivātmā's* will to liberate himself from the illusions and limitations of the lower life—which can sustain him in this work within the inner realms of the mind.

The exercises recommended by Patānjali not only develop the capacity to keep the mind steady and one-pointed but also test his ability in this direction. Either he acquires this qualification in an adequate degree and enters the path of Yoga with confidence, or he realizes his weakness and decides to set about the task of developing it. If he is not yet ready for this divine adventure he merely gives up.

Some Recent Significant Trends in Contemporary Western Psychology

DR. B.L. ATREYA, M.A., D. LITT.

(Continued from the last issue).

II

PARAPSYCHOLOGY

Parapsychology, of all the recent great movements in western psychology the most important one, which brings it closer to Indian psychology and which unveils and reveals a good deal of the human personality, its nature and powers, is what was formerly known as *Psychical Research*, and is now known as *Parapsychology*. It started as a scientific research in some strange and supernormal powers and faculties of man, which were believed to be exercised by him, but which were inexplicable in terms of the known laws of physics, chemistry, biology and psychology, and so not believed by scientists to be exercised by man. In the middle of the last century there were numerous reports of many strange happenings which required scientific investigation, and some individual scientists of repute devoted their time to investigating their occurrence and causes of occurrence. The movement grew strong and in 1882 it was felt necessary to establish a society of eminent scientists of England and other European countries to found a *Society of Psychical Research* to make a scientific study in those odd and strange supernormal occurrences of human life which were inexplicable in terms of the then known laws of science. In other countries of Europe and America also such *Research Societies* were formed and a vigorous research into supernormal powers and faculties of man was carried on, revealing man to be capable of and exercising the following powers :—

1. *Telepathy*. Minds are capable of affecting other minds without any physical means directly and at great distance and almost at the same time. This power of direct contact of mind with mind has been established by hundreds and thousands of experiments and tests.

2. *Extrasensory Perception*. In the Duke Laboratory of Parapsychology of U.S.A. thousands of experiments have established that most men and women are capable of perceiving without the use of the sense organs of perception and describing in details the objects, and established that minds have powers of cognizing sensible objects without the use of sense-organs of persons at great distances and when obstructed by other things such as a wall and other obstructive things.

3. *Clairvoyance*. One kind of extrasensory perception is known as clairvoyance that is, visual perception of occurrences at a distance both in space and time by some without any direct contact with the occurrences.

4. *Clairaudience*. Perception of sounds at great distance in time and space without the actual use of ears.

5. *Psychometry*. It is a strange capacity of the mind possessed by certain individuals by which they are capable of divining the past history of or past events connected with a material object or person with whom they come into close contact.

6. *Precognition or Foreknowledge*. Power of having a peep into what is going to happen in the near or distant future.

7. *Retrocognition*. Power of knowing what happened in the past without any present clue to it, directly by mental concentration.

8. *Crystal gazing*. Seeing a vision of happenings distant in time and place on a bright surface of a crystal or glass ball, and describing them before others with whom they might be concerned, such as a theft or murder, etc.

9. *Dowsing* or power of divining the presence of fresh running water underneath the deep surface of the earth, where a well is proposed to be dug.

Many great scientists who have devoted themselves to this field of research have borne witness to the reality of these powers in men they have examined and tested:—a few of them may be quoted here:—Prof. William Mc Dougall, the well-known psychologist writes, “In my view the evidence for telepathy is very strong...I hold that a case has been made out for clairvoyance of such strength that further investigation is imperatively needed...” (McDougall : *Religion and Science of Life* p. 80). Hans Driesch, a famous German biologist writes : “The study of *Psychical Research* is on the right path and is pursued in the most critical manner... We have spontaneous telepathy as a quite certain fundamental phenomenon. Quite certainly established further is thought reading. To unprejudiced observers clairvoyance certainly appears at first sight to be present. Psychometry is *prima face* a fact. Prophecy is...I will describe as probable *Psychical Research*.” Dr. Rhine of Duke University, on the basis of his thousands of experiments, writes, “Extrasensory perception is an actual demonstrable occurrence”. “ESP is not a sensory phenomenon. It is “fundamentally different from sensation.”. J. B. Rhine : *Extrasensory Perception*, p. 222, 223). He further writes : “Extrasensory perception is fundamentally different from sensation, and it suggests the freedom of mind from the common material relations of extension and distance.”

All these powers of supernormal cognition exercised by the human mind indicate that the human mind is not dependent on physical bodily conditions for its knowledge of other minds and external objects and happenings. It is something non-material and should be regarded as such by psychologists and philosophers as they do regard it in India.

Besides the above-mentioned powers of supernormal cognition, parapsychology has also discovered many other

kinds of supernormal powers of mind which may be called supernormal powers of action. Some of them are mentioned below:—

1. *Supernormal Control Over the Body, and Miraculous Cures of Physical and Mental Diseases*—Suggestion, Hypnosis, Prayer, which are purely mental activities but have been found very effective in producing actual changes, good or bad, in the body. Suggestion, particularly autosuggestion has been found to be a great agent in causing as well as curing diseases of the body and its organs. Hypnotism which employs suggestion “can relieve pain, in pleurisy, sciatica, lumbago, neuralgia, encephalgia, cancer, tabes dorsalis, and even in gastric ulcers, duodenal ulcers, and appendicitis, etc.” Writes Alexander Cannon in his book *Hypnotism* on page 23. “Hypnotic treatment is also itself found extremely useful in the treatment of tetanus and other spasmodic diseases. The dysuria of Bright’s disease or diabetes, stricture and even prostrate enlargement in some cases, can be relieved by hypnotism. Childbirth can be made painless. The menses can not only be regulated, but if absent, frequently brought on” (Cannon : *Hypnotism* p. 28,29). Cures effected by prayer, made either by the patient or by somebody else for him or on his behalf are even quicker, more marvellous and verging on the miraculous than those effected by hetero or autosuggestion. Alexis Carrel refers to such cures in his remarkable book, *Man The Unknown*, in these words : “The most important cases of miraculous healing have been recorded by the Medical Bureau at Lourdes.” A detailed account of many cures effected at Lourdes is given in a nice clinical study, *Medical Proofs of the Miraculous*, written by Dr. Le Bec, translated by Drs. Ernest Ware and Elizabeth. The learned author refers to eleven serious types of cases, most of which had been previously treated in vain for a long time by several medical men and had consultations with hospital surgeons before proceeding to Lourdes. All these cases have taken almost negligible a time and were not

at all followed by any period of convalescence. 'The patient', as Dr. Johnson puts it, "is instantaneously cured without having to undergo a period of recuperation, as invariably occurs in normal cases." (Johnson : *The Great Problem*, p. 211).

Apart from such control of the physical body in which some subconscious factor of human personality controls the autonomic functions of the body and brings about desirable or undesirable changes in the body, cases have been observed and studied where by some yogic or other training a man could consciously will and control some unconscious functions of the body, such as the pulse-rate or heart-beat. There are cases on record where animation could be suspended not only for hours but for days and months. (See pages 42, 43 of B. L. Atreya : *An Introduction to Parapsychology*).

Psychical Research or Parapsychology has not only discovered actual facts of supernormal kinds of knowledge in the mind that knows objects directly without the use of sense-organs and within the limits of time and space as ordinary psychology thinks, but also as unaided by the senses and the nervous system and knows the thoughts and feelings of other minds telepathically. Parapsychology has come across other very extraordinary powers and functions of the mind. We shall refer to some of them here.

Older Psychical Research and Contemporary Parapsychology pursued in Duke University under the guidance of Dr. Rhine, has come across what is called *Telekinesis* (Rhine calls it *psychokinesis*). It means direct action of mind on material objects in distant space, in the form of some kind of movement in them. Telekinesis (or parakinesis, as it was also called) denotes the supernormal movements of objects at a distance, under the influence of some mind, in the absence of any known force or energy moving them. Both the spontaneous and experimental kinds of evidence go in favour of telekinesis being a fact. William

Crookes observed many telekinetic phenomena happening in the presence of the famous medium D. D. Home, studied carefully by him. He writes, "The instances in which heavy bodies, such as tables, chairs, and sofas etc., have been moved, when the medium has not been touching them, were very numerous. (Sir William Crookes : *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 88). A large number of other experiments in telekinesis are found recorded in Richet's *Thirty Years of Psychical Research* and Garland's : *Forty Years of Psychical Research*. Telekinesis is involved in what is called levitation of objects at a distance without any physical contact of the person lifting the object. The usual assumption made by psychical researchers to explain such movements is that some "physio-biological energy is employed, generated within the medium's organism, and exteriorised from it, into space. This must somehow become, so to say, solidified, in order to effect matter." (Carrington : *The Story of Psychic Science*, p. 137).

There are several other supernormal or ordinarily inexplicable phenomena studied by parapsychology (Old Psychical Research) which involve other mysterious powers of human personality. We shall refer to some of them here. They are *Raps*, *Poltergeists*, *Apparitions*, *Astral Body* and *Astral Projection*, *Trance-mediumship or Possession*, *Alleged Memories of Previous Lives*. We shall make passing references to them, lest this paper should become too long.

Raps are percussive sounds heard as produced from walls, floors, and articles of furniture, without anything seen as striking them. They were first heard by Fox Sisters in Hydesville near New York in 1847. They were mechanically recorded by Sir William Crookes in the presence of the famous medium D. D. Home, studied by him. Very often these raps indicate some sort of "intelligence" or "personality" other than that of the medium which seems to use them as symbols of expression of some ideas or messages to be conveyed to

someone. Dr. Maxwell has made a special study of this aspect of the Raps in his *Metaphysical Phenomena*.

Poltergeists is the name of a peculiar kind phenomenon, common in India and the West, in which various kinds of disturbances created by some unknown agency, such as throwing about the furniture of the room, breaking of crockery, besmearing the walls with blood, placing flesh, blood or bones among the articles of food, throwing filth into the kitchen, throwing stones or brickbats into the courtyard of the house, making disturbing raps and confused noise, ringing bells, and doing such other things as annoy the family and also the person concerned. Dr. Harry Price, the founder of the British National Laboratory for Psychical Research studied in 1926 a very interesting and genuine case of a poltergeistic phenomenon. He was quite convinced of its genuineness. Poltergeistic phenomena are difficult to explain on the hypothesis of normal human behaviour and of fraud. The writer himself has come across some genuine cases of poltergeistic phenomena.

Apparitions: Ghosts, apparitions and phantasms are known to humanity from time immemorial. Every age has been believing in their existence and in every age they have been believed to exist and have been perceived by people. The Society for Psychical Research collected authentic evidence of enormous strength in favour of apparitions being something more than illusions or hallucinations, as ordinary scientific psychology regards them. This enquiry further revealed a strange and mysterious fact that apparitions do not pertain only to persons who are dead, but who are also actually alive. So it has been discovered that there are apparitions of the *dead*, as it is generally believed, but also of *dying* as well as of living persons. The only explanation of all these apparitions that Psychical Research has found is that every human being, in addition to his having a physical body, has a finer and subtle body called the *astral body*, made of subtler elements, which does not perish at

death or when the man is in an unconscious or trance-state. At death it leaves the dead physical body and it can leave the living physical body at will also and appear elsewhere to other persons. Many studies have been done in connection with the subtle body or the astral body. The astral body is found to be of the same size and form as the physical body, although very fine and light in structure. During the waking state it coincides with the physical body. At night however, when one is asleep, a certain detachment occurs between the two. The same happens when one faints or becomes unconscious on account of an anaesthetic or some other cause. It can also be detached from the physical body experimentally by putting it to a deep magnetic sleep, and voluntarily after one has acquired conscious power to do so, by having performed some exercises. *The Projection of the Astral Body* by Sylvan J. Muldoon with a Foreword by Hereward Carrington, a great psychical researcher, is a very interesting and authentic book on Astral Projection. Crookall's recent books : *Astral Projection* and *The Supreme Adventure* are also very informative on astral body and astral projection. He has collected and studied hundreds of cases of astral projection under various conditions and circumstances.

Automatic Writing, Automatic Speech and Trance-personality :

These phenomena occurring in human lives open another chapter in the study of the nature and interrelationship of human personality. In Automatic Writing the writer tries to withhold his consciousness from the act and simply allows his hand and the instrument held in it to move quite automatically and freely. Such writing is done with the help of a planchette, an ouija board, or simply a pencil. Sometimes very strange and unexpected answers and messages purporting to be coming from departed spirits are written. Automatic writings include pictures, sketches and paintings etc. As Carrington says : "It is not the movement

of the writing instrument which is the mystery, but the information which it imparts, and there is no reasonable doubt that much extraordinary information of this kind, unknown to the sitters, has been imparted". (*Psychical Phenomena and the War*, p. 121). In Automatic Speech, the same kind of information is received through the utterance of a person, who speaks in an unconscious or semi-conscious state. Its extreme form is trance-mediumship. The main characteristic of trance-mediumship is a temporary loss or withdrawal of personal consciousness and in its place appearance of a different or higher consciousness with greater power of knowledge and action through the same physical organism which has been temporarily released from the control of the limited personal consciousness. Less desirable and more common in India is the phenomenon of "possession" in which the personal consciousness of an individual makes room for some "other" personal consciousness which communicates with persons through the body owned by the consciousness which has temporarily withdrawn from the scene of manifestation. The credit of starting a scientific investigation into the phenomenon of trance-mediumship in the west goes to the great psychologist William James some years before his passing away. In the year 1885, he discovered a very strange woman, Mrs. Piper, who became an object of interest for quite a large number of scientific investigators of both America and Europe and whose study led to the discovery of many new facts about human personality. Mrs. Piper who was capable of passing into a trance in which her own consciousness appeared to have withdrawn and her physical body with its mechanism of speech and writing was in the meantime used, as it were, as a means of communication by certain seemingly other persons who professed to be denizens of other worlds, where the surviving spirits of dead were said to be living, to bring news and messages to their earthly friends and relatives. William James, did not dismiss Mrs. Piper as a case of

mere hysteric dissociation, as psychologists would have done. On the other hand, he became very much interested in her as a great find of great scientific interest, and introduced her to Dr. Hodgson, the then Secretary of the American Society for Psychical Research, who was very critically minded and had a passion for truth. Both William James and Dr. Hodgson made a close and thorough study of Mrs. Piper for a period of seven years. Then she was handed over to other psychical researchers. From 1886 to 1911, for a period of more than 25 years, Mrs. Piper was under the full watch and observation of a large number of scientific investigators of Europe and America who made a very thorough and critical study of her trances, of the personalities manifesting and communicating through the trances, and of the information and messages given by these personalities. Amidst all the differences of opinion with regard to the facts of the case, which nobody can deny, there is a general agreement that in the trances of Mrs. Piper there is much supernormal material which needs new categories for description and explanation unknown to psychology. In the words of Tyrrell, a great scientific student of psychic phenomena: "All the investigators who made a study of the case agree that the evidence for supernormality is incontestable." (Tyrrell: *Science and Psychic Phenomena*, p. 168). William James wrote in a letter to Sir Oliver Lodge: "Taking anything I know of Mrs. Piper into account, the result is to make me feel as absolutely certain as I am of any personal fact that she knows things in her trance which she cannot possibly have heard in her waking state and that the definite philosophy of her trances is yet to be found."

In course of time many more trance-mediums have been discovered by Psychical Researchers and have been very thoroughly and critically examined and studied. Several hypotheses and counter-hypotheses have been formulated to understand them. One of the hypotheses discussed theadbare is that of the survival of the dead in the form of spirits who

make use of the trance-personalities to come in contact with the living by giving information and messages. In the field of Psychical Research "Practically every psychical researcher agrees in thinking that the evidence in favour of the spiritistic hypothesis is now so strong that it may be justifiably employed as *working theory*", writes Hereward Carrington in his *The Story of Psychic Science*, p. 323.

The attention of the parapsychologists of the world (particularly of Dr. Stevenson of the Medical Department of the Virginia University) has recently been directed to the alleged memories of previous lives retained by some young children all over the world, particularly in India. He has come thrice to India and travelled much in other countries to collect such cases and to study them very thoroughly. Such memories when verified in detail are so supernormal, and when studied along with the powers of mind mentioned and discussed above, throw a great flood of light on the nature of mind and human personality and bring western science of mind very close to the philosophy of mind and man that was a living philosophy in ancient India, which formed the basis of Indian Yoga practice. Stevenson "*Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*".

Sacred Places of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladhak

“A DEVOTEE”

HEMIS SHUKPA

Hemis Shukpa is a grove of shukpa trees (pencil-cedar) which lies between the Timisgam and Khalsi villages at a distance of about fourteen kilometers west of Tiripti and about seventy kilometers west of Leh, the capital of Ladhak.

The grove is regarded as very sacred and is said to be protected by the gods. It consists of a few hundred pencil-cedar trees.

JAMMU

Jammu is the winter capital of the Kashmir State. It is situated at a distance of about one hundred and eight kilometers north west of the Pathankot railway station. The sacred river Tawai, also named Surya putri, (daughter of the sun god) flows near it.

There is an ancient temple of Shri Raghunāth at Jammu. It is large, and rich in architecture with beautiful sculptures inside. The marble image of Shri Raghunath, is about three feet high. Adjacent to the main shrine of Raghunāth there is a shrine of Shiva. This temple contains innumerable Sālagrama.

There are many other temples and Gurudwāras* in Jammu. The temple of Shiva called Ranabireshwara was constructed by Maharaja Ranabir Singh in the nineteenth century.

* Temples of the Sikhs.

रामाय रामभद्राय रामचन्द्राय वेधसे ।
रघुनाथाय नाथाय सीतायाः पतये नमः ॥*

[Obeisance to Rāma, Ramabhadra, Ramachandra, the creator the Lord of Raghus, the Lord of all and the husband of Sitā.]

JWALA

The village Jwala lies at a distance of about twenty-five kilometers south-east of Srinagar by road.

There is an ancient rock at Jwala which is regarded as very sacred. It is said to be an emblem of the goddess Jwala Devi and is worshipped by the pilgrims. About forty years ago a temple was built over this sacred rock, Its origin is lost in antiquity.

नमो देव्यै महादेव्यै शिवायै सततं नमः ।
नमः प्रकृत्यै भद्रायै नियताः प्रणताः स्म ताम् ॥
रौद्रायै नमो नित्यायै गौर्यै धात्रै नमो नमः ।
ज्योत्स्नायै चेन्दुरूपिण्यै सुखायै सततं नमः ॥†

[Reverence to the Goddess of the Great, To Her who is auspicious, for ever reverence.

Reverence to Prakriti who maintains setting our minds wholly upon Her, we make obeisance to Her.

Reverence to Her, who is eternal, Rudra,
To Gauri and Dhatri, reverence and again reverence.
To Her who is moonlight and in the form of the moon,
To Her who is supreme bliss, reverence for ever.]

KAPLAS

हिरण्यशृङ्गं वरुणं प्रपद्ये तीर्थं मे देहि याचितः ।
यन्मया भुक्तमसाधुनां पापेभ्यश्च प्रतिग्रहः ॥
यन्मे मनसा वाचा कर्मणा वा दुष्कृतं कृतम् ।
तन्नो इन्द्रो वरुणो बृहस्पतिः सविता च पुनन्तु पुनः पुनः ॥*

† From Sri Sri Chandi Translation by Arthur & Ellen Avalon.

* Krishna Yajurveda, Taittiriya Aranyaka XI.

[I take refuge in the gold crested Varuna, the Lord of the waters, I pray to thee, O Varuna. May Indra, Varuna, Vrihaspati and Savitā purify me again and again from whatever sins that I have committed in my thought, speech and action and from whatever I have eaten from dishonest people and whatever I have accepted from sinners.]

Kaplas is a mountain situated between Bhadarwāh and Basohli. It is about twenty-four kilometers south of Bhadarwāh town lying on the western flank of the Chalardha pass at a height of about 14,240 feet above sea level. It is also known by the names of Kailās Kamlās and Kablas.

There are a number of sacred mountain lakes on the northern side of the Kaplas mountain. They are called Kund Kaplas, Sera Jalikā, Kālikā, Kāli kund etc. The land is regarded as sacred to goddess Kāli and Vāsuki Nāg.

Kund Kaplas is also known as Kailash Kund or Vāsuki Kund. It is egg shaped and is situated at a height of 13065 feet above sea level. There are no shrines or temples on the bank of the lake, but images of Vāsuki Nāg, Jimut-Bāhana and an emblem of Shiva are worshipped on the northern bank of the kund. It is said that when Vāsuki Nāg was chased by Garuda, Vāsuki Nag ran for life and entered into Kailash kund with the permission of Lord Shiva to whom the kund originally belonged. Garuda tried to empty the kund by drinking up its water but failed because the goddess Saraswati poured a huge quantity of water into it by breaking the bank of the kund named after her. Vāsuki Nag was therefore saved in this way. The waters of the Saraswati kund, though filled with ice and boulders, still flow into the Kailās Kund which from that time came to be known as Vāsuki kund also.

In order to save Vāsuki Nāg from being devoured by Garuda, Jimut Bāhana, a Vidyādhara* who dwelt at that

* A type of semi-celestial beings.

place, offered himself to be eaten up by Garuda as a substitute for Vāsuki. Hence Jimut Bāhana is also worshipped at this sacred spot. His image is on the right side of that of Vāsuki and his worship is done before that of Vāsuki.

The pilgrimage to Vāsuki kund starts from Vāsuki temple at Gatha on the thirteenth day of the month of Bhādra every third year and reaches the kund the same evening. On that day pilgrims also come from Billawar (Basohli). The pilgrims bathe in the waters of the kund that day and the next morning and then return. Some pilgrims reach Kāilas kund via Sevajdhar by a bridle path.

Sweet grass grows on the banks of the kund. It is said that Vāsuki Nāg, when chased by Garuda, ate the grass to appease her hunger. It is also said that even to-day Vāsuki Nāg sometimes appears in the middle of the lake so that the pilgrims may see her.

Kālika kund is situated about two kilometers east of Vāsuki kund. It is sacred to the goddess Kāli.

Kāli kund which is actually Kālika Nāg Kund is sacred to Kāli Nāg. It is about six kilometers south-west of Vāsuki Nāg. It is the source of the Tawi river, also called Surya putri (the daughter of the Sun-God), which flows near Jammu town. It is said that Bhairava Devata, a son of Vāsuki Nāg, removed boulders from the Kāli Kund and made the water flow.

सर्वे वरप्रदा नागाः सर्वे नीलं अनुव्रताः ।

सर्वेऽतिदयिता राजन् वासुकेः सुमदात्मनः ॥*

[O king ! All the Nagas are beneficial. All of them are very beloved of the high-souled Vāsuki.]

* The Nilamata, verse 949.

KISHTWĀR

Kistwār is a town on the left bank of the sacred river Chāndrabhāgā situated at a distance of about seventy-five kilometers north of Bhadarwāh and about one hundred and eighteen kilometers south-east of Ananta Nāg in Kashmir.

There is an ancient temple of the goddess Ashtabhujā in Kishtwar. The goddess was born as a daughter of Yashodā, wife of Nanda, in Gokul, district Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. In order to save the infant Krishna from being killed by Kamsa, Vasudeva, the father of Krishna, miraculously carried away Krishna at night from the prison of Kamsa to Nanda's house at Gokul and brought the daughter of Yashoda to Kamsa's prison in order to allay the suspicion of Kamsa and thinking that Kamsa might not kill a girl. But the cruel Kamsa did not show any mercy. As soon as he heard the cry of the baby he walked into the prison, snatched her away from the bosom of Devaki (mother of Krishna) and hurled her to the ground in order to kill her, but the child rose up into the sky and revealed herself as goddess in the form of Ashtabhujā (one having eight arms). There is a reference about this incident in Shrimad Bhāgavatam.

सा तद्वस्नात् समुत्पत्य सद्यो देव्यम्बरं गता ।
 अदृश्यतानुजा विष्णोः सायुधाष्टमद्भुजा ॥
 दिव्यस्रगाम्बरालेप-रत्नाभरणभूषिता ।
 धनुः शूलेषु चर्मांसि-शङ्ख चक्र गदाधरा ॥*

[The moment that girl, the younger sister of Vishnu (Krishna), was hurled to the ground by Kamsa, she, being freed from his clutches, rose up into the sky and revealed herself to all as Goddess. She had eight arms, holding a bow, an arrow, a trident, protecting armour, conch, discus and mace. She was dressed in beautiful garments and her body was decorated with rich garlands, ornaments jewels and cosmetics.]

* Shrimad Bhagavatam, Tenth Skanda, Chapter 4; verse 9-10.

KONSAR NAG

क्रमसरेति विख्यातं सर्वकल्मषनाशनम् ।*

सतिदेहस्य सरसस्तीर्थं विष्णुपद सरः ॥†

(The sacred lake, whose water is the body of the goddess Sati and which is formed by the stampede of Vishnu, is known as Kramasara. It destroys all sins.)

Konsar Nag is a mountain lake situated between the peaks of the Pir Panzal range at the south-eastern extremity of the Kashmir valley. As the crow flies it is about sixty kilometers south of Srinagar.

The mountain lake is sacred to Vishnu. He is said to have created this lake by stamping with his foot. It is therefore called Vishnupada. Its water is regarded as very holy. Another ancient name of it is Kramasara, of which Konsar is a corruption. It was called Kramasara because it marks a foot-step (*krama*) of Vishnu, the depression of which resulted in the formation of the lake (*Sara*). Its water is said to be formed of the body of the goddess Sati.

There is the following reference about the mighty foot-steps of Vishnu in the Shrimadbhāgavatam :

त्रिमिः क्रमैरिमांल्लोकान् विश्वकायः क्रमिष्याति ।

सर्वस्य विष्णवे दत्ता मूढ वृत्तिष्यसे कथम् ॥

क्रमतां गां पदैकेन द्वितीयेन दिवं विभोः ।

खं च कायेन महता तान्त्रियस्य कुतो गतिः ॥*

(Shukrāchārya said to Vali : "The god Vishnu, whose body is the entire universe, will cover the three worlds with three steps. O fool, where will you stay after donating all that you have to Vishnu? He will cover the earth by his first step and the heaven by the second. He will cover the

* Shrimadbhagavatam, tenth skanda, chapter 4, verse 9-10.

† The Nilamata, verse-123.

* Shrimadbhagavata, eighth skanda, chapter 19, verses 33-34.

region between the heaven and the earth by his body. Where will he then put his third step?").

Shukrāchārya was the preceptor of Vali, the mighty king of the demons who drove out the gods from heaven and ruled the three worlds. In order to subdue Vali and reinstate the gods in heaven Lord Vishna incarnated as a dwarf Brāhmana called Vāmana. When Vali was performing a sacrifice, Vāmana approached him in the guise of a Brāhmana boy and begged for a plot of land which could be measured by three of his foot-steps. Shukrāchārya, who knew the motive behind Vāmana's request, tried in vain to dissuade Vali from making the promise. Ignoring his preceptor's advice the righteous Vali agreed to donate the land. Thereupon the great Vishnu, in the form of the dwarf, began to expand his body and assuming the form of Trivikrama, which means the mightiest in the three worlds, he covered the earth and heaven with two steps and there was no space left for the third. Vali then requested the Lord to step on his head and thereby became a captive in the hands of the gods, who regained their kingdom in heaven.

V I S H O K A

From the mountain lake Kōnsar Nag rises the sacred stream called Veshan. Its ancient name is Vishoka, which means 'free from sorrow'. This stream is said to represent Lakshmi the goddess of wealth and wife of the God Nārāyana. The Nilamata Purāna tells about the sanctity of this river in the following verse.

दृष्ट्वा विशोकं काश्मीर्या केशवेनोपवृंहितम् ।
प्रतिष्ठितं केशवेन विष्णुलोके महीयते ॥*

[By seeing Vishoka in Kashmir which was brought and established by Keshava (Vishnu) one is glorified in the region of Vishnu.]

* The Nilamata, verse 1012.

The confluence of Vishoka with the sacred rivulet Godāvāri at Gudar, a village on the right bank of the Vishoka in Divsar Pargana, is also regarded as very sacred.

K O T H E R

प्राच्याय सर्वजगतामखिलेष्टदाय

नित्याय निर्जितसुरासुखैभवाय ।

कुन्देन्दुगौरवपुषै कुसुमास्त्रहन्त्रे

देवाय भक्तवरदाय नमः शिवाय ॥

[I bow down to God Shiva, the giver of boons to his devotees, who bestows all the best to the whole world, who is eternal, who is the origin of this universe, who subdued the glory of the gods and the demons, whose body is as white as the Kunda flower, and who killed the 'God of Love' (whose weapons are made of flowers.)]

Kother is about three kilometers from Achhibal, which is about eleven kilometers south of Ananta Nag. It is about sixteen kilometers north of Veri Nag. Its ancient name is Kapoteshwara. According to the Skanda Purana, Shiva and Pārvati once sported by taking the forms of pigeons. Hence Shiva and Parvati are also referred to as Kapoteshwara and Kapoteshwari. (Kapota is the Sanskrit word for pigeon). The God is also referred to as Pāpasudana, which means 'Destroyer of sins.'

There is a noted spring sacred to Kapoteshwara at Kother. Two shrines of Shiva are by the side of the holy spring. A king named Mutsukund is supposed to have founded the temples. This is supported by the following couplet quoted by the local people.

"Mutsukund Razas manshihandi kān

Tim kati salanas ? Kuther Van."

(King Mutsukund has buffalo's ears. Where will they be removed ? In the woods of Kuther.)

It is said that the king Mutsukund ears resembling those of a buffalo. He was very much ashamed of these and wanted to get rid of them. He consulted the *pandits* (learned people) and as a cure was advised to bathe in the holy waters of the spring at Kother. When he did so, the buffalo's ears disappeared. He then constructed the temples and a stone enclosure of the spring as a mark of gratitude.*

About this sacred place, Kalhana writes the following verse in the first book of the *Rājatarangini*.

भक्ति मुक्ति फलप्राप्तिः काण्ठरूपमुमापतिम् ।
पापसुदनतीर्थान्तिथ्यत्र संस्पृशतां भवेत् ॥

(There within the sanctuary of Pāpasudana, by touching the husband of Umā in the form of the wooden image people get the pleasures of life as well as final liberation.)

From the above verse it appears that in those days a wooden image of Shiva existed in Kother near the spring.

There is a reference about this sacred spring of Kapoteshwara in the *Nilamata Purāna* also. A verse is quoted below :

रुद्रलोकं अवाप्नोति स्नात्वा तु कपोतेश्वरे ।
विशलिङ्गहृदे पुण्ये रुद्रलोके महीयते ॥

[One goes to the region of Rudra (Shiva) by taking a bath in the sacred spring of Kapoteshwara. One glorifies in the region of Rudra by bathing in the holy lake of Vishalinga.]

* See 'Ancient monuments of Kashmir' by Pandit R. C. Kak.

Mātri Lila

(December 1968—March 1969.)

On December 7th Mataji arrived in Delhi from Naimisharanya via Lucknow, accompanied by Sri Haribabaji Maharaj and Sri Akhandanandaji with their disciples. She had come at the urgent request of Sri Haribabaji and his devotees who had arranged for a grand religious function called "*Brihat Hari Sammelan*" on the vast Subhas Maidan from 7th to 16th December. On arrival at Delhi Station, Mataji was profusely garlanded by the devotees. With an affectionate smile she accepted offerings of fruit and flowers. For those ten days Mataji stayed at her Ashram at Kalkaji, a beautiful, quiet and fairly solitary place, far away from the hub of the city. Every morning and evening she used to attend the *satsang* at Subhas Maidan. A large number of the population of Delhi could thus avail themselves of the opportunity of Mataji's *daršana* in the open pandal. One hour of the daily *satsang* was managed by our Delhi Kirtan Party who sang the *Mahāmantra*. Almost every evening Mataji would lead the kirtan for a short while, singing mostly *Rāma Nāma*. A few times she also replied to questions. Day by day the crowd grew larger and more enthusiastic. People patiently waited for hours in order to have the blessing of Mataji's *daršana* for half an hour and to hear her sing. The function proved a great success, mainly due to Mataji's gracious presence. This was the general feeling. On December 17th Mataji boarded the train to Varanasi, reaching there on the 18th midday.

Her health being indifferent and having been extremely busy both at Naimisharanya and Delhi, Mataji, for the first

few days remained mostly in her room behind closed doors, giving *darśana* only for one hour in the evenings. The outstanding event during Mataji's sojourn at Varanasi was on December 26th, the opening by the Prime Minister of the three main blocks of the newly constructed Mata Anandamayee Hospital.

The hospital has been run on a small scale since 1965. Several years before that, Dr. Gopal Das Gupta had started a charitable homoeopathic dispensary in our Ashram. It was attracting an ever increasing number of patients, both Hindus and Mohammedans. It was his great desire to build in Mataji's name a first class hospital equipped with all upto-date amenities that would cater to the destitute and needy of all communities without distinction of creed or caste. This project was taken up with great zeal and enthusiasm by the organizers of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha. Unfortunately Dr. Das Gupta passed away at the age of 70 even before the foundation stone of the hospital could be laid.

The opening of the new double-storied western block, housing a number of out-patients departments, took place in July 1965. Since then this part of the hospital has been functioning very efficiently, thanks largely to the selfless service rendered by several well-known physicians of the city, especially Dr. U. N. Mathur and Dr. S. N. Mathur and Dr. G. S. Bhargava. About two hundred fifty patients are being treated daily. The report shows that already during the year 1967, 38,567 patients received medical aid. Within the short span of three and a half years and although as yet incomplete, the hospital has already become quite famous and earned high praise from Indian as well as foreign visitors for its unusual standard of cleanliness and efficiency.

In November 1965 the Chief Minister of the U. P. Srimati Sucheta Kriplani and the Union Health Minister Dr. Sushila Nayar came to visit the hospital. They took great interest and

Dr. Nayar suggested that the in-patients department should have not less than 170 beds, more than double the number of the original plan. Sri J.D. Shastri, Senior Architect of the Ministry of Health, who is recognised as one of the foremost hospital designers of this country, was requested to make the design. The Central Govt. has since then sanctioned more than Rs. 5.50 lakhs for construction purposes & purchase of essential hospital equipments. Several lakhs of rupees have been collected from private donations and spent, while more than half of the construction has yet to be accomplished.

On December 26th, the ground floors and first floors of the three main blocks were formally opened by Sm. Indira Gandhi in the presence of Mataji.* The elite of Varanasi as well as many distinguished guests and devotees of Mataji from all over India and even from abroad attended. The function was excellently organized and proceeded with great dignity, in perfect order and pindrop silence. On the southern side of the hospital a large pandal had been erected and beautifully decorated with garlands and flower-rings. The dais was all in white with a flowery background. There had been a heavy rainstorm in the morning and the Prime Minister's plane could therefore not take off from Delhi at the scheduled time. The function thus started one and a half hours later than originally planned. Srimati Indiraji arrived by motor boat. She was accorded a hearty welcome. The Maharaja of Benares, who is the President of the hospital, led her up to the dais. After bowing to Mataji, she took her seat. The speech of welcome to the Prime Minister by the Maharaja was followed by the reading of the Hospital Report by the Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal. Then Indiraji delivered her inaugural address. She spoke for five minutes with great simplicity, dignity and charm. She remarked that the ground on which the hospital stands has some connection with Gandhiji, with her father and

* See also pp. 61-65 of this issue.

therefore also with her. She then stressed the point that the patients of this hospital would not only be cured from their bodily ailments but would return to their homes filled with the peace and inspiration that is derived from Mataji's influence.

When the function was over, the Prime Minister cut the garland and was shown round the hospital buildings. Then she came to the Ananda Jyoti Mandir. Didi presented her with a silk scarf and with garlands from Sri Gopalji's neck and *tulsi* leaves. After this she had a few minutes alone with Mataji upstairs. Indiraji seemed very pleased to be able to have a short while with Mataji even on this official occasion. Refreshments were served to her, while beautiful *bhajans*, sung in the Ashram hall by Chhabi Banerji and Pushpa, could be heard through the amplifier placed outside of the room. To the accompaniment of the sweet music, she took leave of Mataji and boarded the boat.

Mataji remained in Varanasi until January 9th. Every night Brahmachari Virajananda would read out of the book "*Amara Vani*"† and usually lively discussions ensued, Mataji often making lengthy comments. On January 3rd, full-moon day, a special *pūja* was performed in the course of which the *Narāyana Śīlā* of Annapurna Mandir was bathed in 50 litres of pure cows milk. Tumblers full of this *prasāda* were distributed to everyone who asked for it, fishermen and their families, labourers, beggars—all the poor of the locality had their share.

On January 9th, Mataji motored to Allahabad, where she remained for two nights in the Ashram of the late Sri Gopal Thakur at Allenganj. At Allahabad, Mataji is always in a special mood. Her visits are short but very intense. On the 10th morning there was *pūja*.* At night films were

† Discussions with Mataji with a commentary by Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, recently published in book form in Hindi and Bengali.

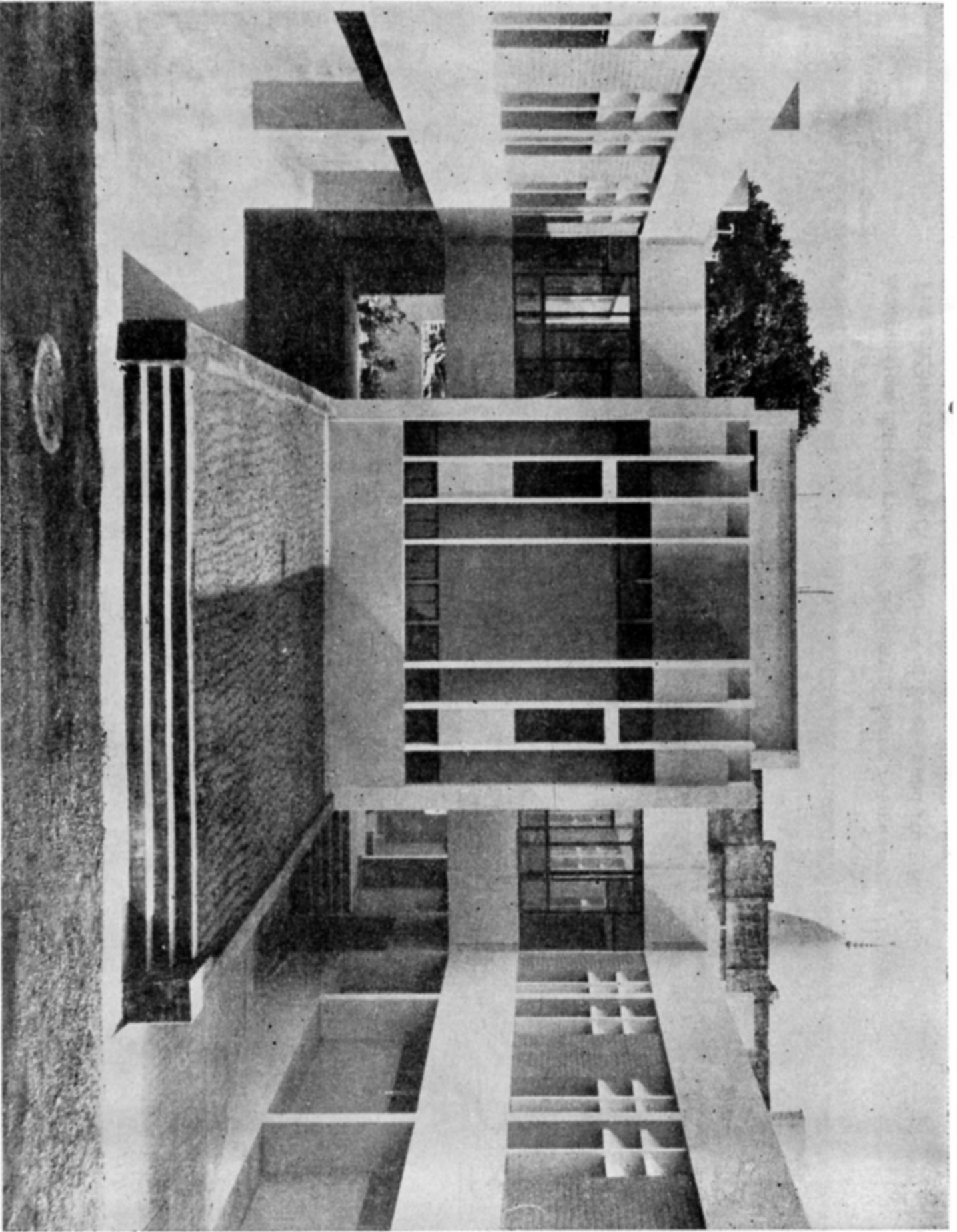
* Similar to the one described on p. 58 of this issue.

shown of the consecration of the Chheliya Mandir at our Vrindaban Ashram and of the last *Gita Jayanti* that Sri Gopal Thakur had performed in our Varanasi Ashram. Mataji also sang.

On January 11th, she left for Naimisharanya with a very few companions. In the atmosphere of this hallowed abode of ancient Rishis, Mataji relaxes and is in a jolly mood, laughing and joking, walking about or lying in the sunshine, occasionally cooking—"like a child on holiday" someone remarked. Here also the daily reading of *Amara Vani*, followed by discussions, was continued. Off and on devotees would come for short spells from Sitapur or Lucknow. Dr. Gouri Nath Shastri, Vice-Chancellor of the Sanskrit University, Varanasi, stayed for two days. In the mornings he would read out from the *Srimad Bhāgavata*, seated under a *tamāl* tree.† On January 22nd, *Vasant Panchami* day, *Saraswati Pujā* was performed in the hall in front of the *Purāna Mandir*, the most fitting place to propitiate the goddess of art, learning and the highest knowledge. A beautiful small *vighraha* was brought from Varanasi. A few professors of the Benares Hindu University had come for the occasion. Mataji herself supervised all preparations. It was a charming, very intimate function. In the evening Mataji related in great detail the story of the *Purāna Mandir*. Since Mataji had left Naimisharanya in December, the well and the new electric pump had been in good order and so Swami Paramananda had with the help of an efficient gardener laid on a lovely garden with a variety of beautiful multi-coloured flowers that were in full bloom to welcome Mataji. Vegetables of the best quality had also been grown and baskets-full could be sent to Varanasi and also to neighbouring Ashrams. One day the boys of Sri Naradananda ashram was entertained to a feast. On every new moon day there is always a special puja at Lalita Devi Mandir

† The *tamāl* tree is sacred to Sri Krishna.

Front view of the newly constructed Mata Anandamayee Hospital at Varanasi





A scene from the inauguration ceremony of Mata Anandamayee Hospital
Prime Minister along with Maharaja of Benares and Hospital Staff

at Nimsar town and huge crowds of pilgrims assemble at Nimsar on that occasion. About a lakh of people had come this time and large streams of them flowed in and out of the Ashram grounds for Mataji's *darśana*.

On January 25th, Mataji again alighted in New Delhi where she remained over Sivaratri which fell on February 15th. Her stay was interrupted by a short visit she paid to Dehradun and Hardwar. She reached Kishenpur on February 10th morning, leaving by car for Hardwar on the 11th at midday. She did an incredible amount of work in those 27 hours, visiting twice Kalyanvan where a *Yajñashāla* is being built. On her way to Hardwar, she also halted at our Sadhan Ashram, Jakhan. In between she had any number of private interviews, gave *darśana* several times and arranged for everything conceivable. Time does not exist for Mataji, she can compress any amount of work into the shortest span. At Hardwar she went to Baghat House, Kharkhari, where the Boys' School of the Ashram is stationed at the moment, and also to Santiniketan our Ashram at Kankhal, where a small shrine for a *Siva linga* is being constructed under the bel tree in the garden. On the 12th morning, Mataji was again in Delhi.

Sivaratri in New Delhi was an event of the first order. People who took part said they would never forget that night. While two years ago when Sivaratri had been celebrated at Bandh, the attendance was a record in smallness of numbers (although the function was equally unforgettable) this time the attendance was enormous, as can easily be imagined. The spacious circular hall of the Ashram is exceptionally well suited for this function, only it proved too small. Vratis were seated in 13 circles round *Siva linga* and there were other circles on some of the verandas as well. The *Panchavati*, that had recently been converted into a room with glass walls and a proper roof and had been opened in Mataji's presence, was also used for the Puja. From one of the verandas just opposite Mataji's

seat, about a dozen devotees hailing from foreign countries, mostly Americans, were watching the proceedings with unfaltering interest. Brahmachari Nirvanananda who conducted the *Pūjā*, not only dictated to the participants what to do and what to say, but also along with every *mudra*, *mantra*, offering, etc explained its significance, so that nothing was done mechanically or thoughtlessly. This was an innovation, heartily welcomed by all. The *kirtan* between the four *pūjās* was exquisite. In the interval between the first and second *pūjā* a Madras *kirtan* party gave a wonderful performance, Mataji playing the cymbals in rhythm with their music. Later Pushpa and others sang, surpassing themselves. In the small hours Mataji herself led the *kirtan* for a while. Mataji was not only present throughout the whole night, but she never even once reclined. She sat in her place or moved about among the circles of the *vratis*, encouraging, inspiring and seeing whether everyone had all the ingredients necessary for the ritual. Among those who took part in the *pūjā* were some very high Government officials such as Dr. Triguna Sen, Minister of the Central Govt. and Sri Subimal Dutt I.C.S. (Retd), Chief Vigilance Commissioner. Those who intended to perform only the first *Pūjā* and then break their fast and vigil could not tear themselves away and remained until the morning. To their surprise they felt neither strained nor fatigued. The sacred night and the fast without a drop of water or food for 36 hours ended with the distribution of fruit by Mataji to all present. The next day also Mataji was very generous in giving *darśana*.

On the 18th morning she left for Bundh. A car took her up to Anupsahar. From there the road is not suitable for cars, only bullock carts or jeeps can be used. Mataji was taken in a closed jeep along the very dusty path of about 12 miles. Sri Haribabaji as usual gave her a spectacular welcome with elephants, horses, gunshots and a band playing religious tunes. Mataji had taken only very few people with

her. Swami Sharananandaji was among those who welcomed her, but had to leave the next day. Sri Haribabaji had arranged for a very fine programme of *satsang* for the whole period of Mataji's stay. Swami Akhandanandaji had come from Vrindaban, Swami Naradanandaji from Naimisharanya, Sri Ramdas Baba from Gwalior and Pt. Kapindraji from Delhi. Every morning a *Rāsānlā* partly enacted scenes from the life of Sri Gouranga. Every evening after Sri Haribabaji's kirtan and talk the Mahatmas as well as the entertaining Ramabhakta Kapindraji gave lectures. The gatherings became longer every day and continued until 10-30 p.m. On March 3rd and 4th, Holi as well as the birthdays of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and of Sri Haribabaji were celebrated in great style. Sri Sitaram Sharandas of Ayodhya sang '*vadhāi*', the story of Sri Rama's birth, beautifully and with deep feeling: At the end he spread out his cloth in the gesture of begging and said to Mataji: "When Rama was born, Kaushalya Ma in her joy took off her jewellery and distributed it to those present. Mataji what will you give me?" Without a moment's hesitation, Mataji left her seat and went near Sitaramji. With a graceful gesture she folded her hands and bowed into the cloth, saying: "This little child is giving herself." The whole congregation was deeply thrilled and people gave lavishly to the inspired singer who kept nothing for himself. The next day Mataji procured 108 volumes of scriptures such as Upanishads, Bhagavata etc. and presented them to Sri Sitaram Sharandas for free distribution.

Sri Haridham Bundh is a unique place. We have written about it at length two years ago,* when Mataji spent Sivaratri as well as Holi there. Mataji is at her best in such unsophisticated rural surroundings, and even more so when the atmosphere is surcharged with heartfelt devotion and a rare spirit of service as in Bundh.

* See Ananda Varta, Vol. XV, 1, May 1967, pp. 48-50.

On March 5th, Mataji accompanied by Swami Akhandanandji and her small party, left for Gwalior at the urgent invitation of Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindhia to be present at the installation of a *Siva linga* on the 6th morning and the unveiling of a statue of the late Maharaja the same evening. Arrangements were excellent and Mataji's short visit was relished greatly by one and all. Swamis Akhandanandaji, Sharananandaji, and Govind Prakashji of Ramatirtha Ashram spoke in the evening. The young Maharaja gave a moving talk about his deceased father. He related how Mataji's influence had brought about a complete change in his father's attitude to life. Before meeting Mataji, he had never had faith in any religion or Mahatma.

On March 7th morning, Mataji and her people were taken by cars to Vrindaban, where Mataji attended the inauguration of a new Radha Krishna temple built by one of Sri Haribabaji's devotees. Mataji remained in Vrindaban only for four days. While Mataji had been in Bundh, Didima and Didi were waiting for her in Delhi, proceeding to Vrindaban on March 1st. While at Delhi, Didima's health deteriorated considerably, so that her attendants felt quite alarmed, as Didima is 92 years old. But Mataji, although no physical information had reached her, at once had the *kheyāla* that Didima should get well again and so Didima recovered. Didima accompanied Mataji to Naimisharanya on the 11th and we are happy to state that she kept well there. Only a handful of people were allowed to go with Mataji and so she could have a delightful rest in our youngest Ashram, which seems to be Mataji's favourite at the moment. One day during Mataji's stay there, Sri Prayag Narayan arranged for a reading of some part of the Ramayana under a banyan tree just outside of the Ashram boundary. Mataji asked him to see that a similar function should take place at least once a year under the same tree, which seems to be rather special.

On March 17th Mataji left for Varanasi. From Naimi-

sharanya she motored to Hardoi Ry. Station. The train was late and she had to wait at the station for 1½ hours. There were very few people with her. Mataji at first walked about on the platform all by herself and then sat down under a tree. She was in a playful mood. She called a vendor who was selling Sandila *laddus* (sweets) in earthen pots, bought all the seven pots he had with him and distributed them to everyone who came along: kulis, vendors, passengers, railway staff, etc. Then she got some savoury from another vendor, and at last fruit, distributing with full hands. Finally she started singing *kirtan* of her own *kheyāla*. Now only a large crowd collected, sat down around her and joined into the singing. Mataji continued for about half an hour, chanting Rama's names, then Krishna's, Siva's and so forth. She also talked to the people, asking them to repeat God's name and keep their minds on God. None of the people had any idea who Mataji was. It was a delightful interlude, witnessed by only three or four of her companions. At last the train arrived and carried her off to Varanasi where she alighted on the 18th morning, to be present at *Vāsantī Pūjā*, the *Durgā Pūjā* in spring. *Navarātri* started on March 19th, ending with *Ram Naomi*, Sri Rama's birthday on the 27th. The *Pūjā* was celebrated in great style and Mataji was in excellent form. She sang for quite a long time on *Ram Naomi* day and again the next day, when the *image* of the goddess was removed to be immersed in the Ganges.

Mataji is expected to leave Varanasi on April 10th for Ranchi where Didima's *Sannyāsa* Utsava is to be observed on April 13th. Mataji is due to return to Varanasi on the 17th morning. On April 19th the first anniversary of the consecration of *Ananda Jyoti Mandir* is to be celebrated in Mataji's presence. On April 25th Mataji may leave for Bombay where her birthday will be celebrated from May 2nd to May 5th. It is likely that Mataji will spend the rest of the summer in Poona.
