

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

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MATRI-VANI

Try your utmost never to succumb to anyone's influence. In order to become firm, calm, deeply serious, full of courage, with one's personality wholly intact, pure and holy out of one's own strength, one has to be centered in God.

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Worldly life is no doubt a battle-field. By becoming conscious of one's spiritual wealth one must strive to emerge triumphant from the battle.

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God's Holy Name is itself the rite for exorcising undesirable influences. In the presence of God's Name ghosts and evil spirits cannot remain.

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On the journey through life in this world no body remains happy. The pilgrimage to the Goal of human existence is the only path to Supreme happiness. Try to tread that path which is your very own, where there is no question of pleasure and pain, the path that leads to freedom from egotism and the highest Bliss.

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Yes, if you can observe silence and be in harmony with every one all round, it will be excellent. Try to remain without the help of signs and gestures for as long as possible.

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The self, self-contained, calling to itself for its own revelation—this is happiness.

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Truth itself will assist in every way him who has gone forth in search of Truth.

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Divine Happiness - that which you call *parama sukhadam* is pure, unalloyed bliss, happiness in its own right.

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Having entered the kingdom of forgetting, everything is forgotten; this world is the abode of non-remembrance.

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No evil can ever overcome him who clings to God's name. What one suffers is in exact keeping with the nature of one's actions. If the flow of God's name is sustained, all work will beget the good.

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Where God may place you at any time and under whatever circumstances, recollect that it is all for the best. Endeavour to go through life leaving your burdens in His hands. He is the preserver, He is the guide. He is all in all.



ON THE TEACHING OF SRI ANANDAMAYEE MA

—Vijayananda (Dr. Adolphe Weintrob)

(Translated from the French)

What is Sri Anandamayi Ma's teaching ? This a question one can often hear, for it is put by most newcomers. All who are close to Mataji must of course have been present at some of the meetings in public or in small groups when Mataji with profound wisdom replies to questions on religious and spiritual subjects, often displaying a keen sense of humour. Many of these discussions have been recorded, noted down and published by men far better fitted for the task than myself. It is not this teaching that I want to talk about in the following few lines, but rather another aspect of Mataji's teaching, much simpler and more direct, which, has nothing or very little to do with big philosophical problems. In fact this side of Her teaching might well appear to be commonplace and as such often pass unnoticed : although in my opinion it appeals to a much deeper layer of our being and can therefore be extremely helpful in our spiritual search, if only we will listen to it and open ourselves to the Divine Blessing that pours down on us constantly in Mataji's presence.

To be in Mataji's company almost invariably brings us in touch with people of every psychological type. In western countries the saying that the face is the mirror of the soul is quite proverbial. Actually all our thoughts are reflected in our countenance, the slightest mental vibration produces a contraction of one or several facial muscles. I have watched a great many faces and never, not even for a fraction of a second, have I seen reflected in them the state "beyond desire and fear." Swiftly the thought waves follow one another, just like the billows on an expanse of water agitated by the wind. But in Mataji's face the mouth expresses a state of completeness, of wholeness, in which everything is included. Never can even the slightest trace of fear or irritation be detected in Her eyes. They ever radiate the same love, the same sweetness, regardless of the most trying circumstances. This is real beauty. What a great joy it is to contemplate such a countenance. To watch and lovingly remember it will unconsciously make us try to imitate its expressions and these will in due course lead us to the attitude of mind to which they correspond.

A reader who has never had Mataji's darshan might perhaps imagine that Her features are always set in a static expression of peace and serenity. But this is not

so. An endless variety of emotions pass over. Her face is like ripples which a light breeze produces on the surface of a quiet lake, while the immutable calm of its depths remains ever undisturbed. Mataji plays with feelings, but never Herself becomes their plaything as most of us do. An intelligent observer will soon notice how She mirrors the emotional states of Her surroundings without ever really being affected by them— like a crystal that assumes the colours of the objects entering its field of refraction.

Mataji's conversation about trivial everyday matters is never trivial. For those who know how to listen, it almost always contains some profound teaching. On several occasions, both in public meetings and in small gatherings, I have observed how Mataji suddenly utters a sentence that appears incomprehensible to us and sometimes perhaps even beside the point. I have repeatedly been able to discover afterwards that this sentence was meant for someone in the audience in reply to a query that had been tormenting him, or that it represented the solution of a problem that until then had seemed insoluble to him.

Last summer at Solan after the celebrations of Mataji's birthday, She was one day as usual taking Her evening stroll just outside of the Ashram veranda. At that hour a dog used to come and beg for prasad from Mataji. The entrance of the Ashram veranda is guarded by two wooden tigers, realistically painted, with their jaws wide open, ready to bite. Jokingly Mataji placed the sweets that were meant for the dog into the tiger's mouth. Everyone was highly amused to see the poor dog standing in front of the tiger, torn between the desire to snatch the sweets and the fear of being bitten by the wooden beast. Mataji then made a remark of which I do not recall the exact words. Its meaning was that the fear which keeps man fettered to the world was just as illusory as the dog's fear of the wooden tiger. Apart from the general teaching this statement conveyed, it was meant for a particular person present. Like an infallible arrow it hit the centre of the target and did its work.

It happens frequently that people coming to Mataji with distressing questions, problems or difficulties find a clear and simple solution merely by sitting in Her presence—the solution presenting itself quite naturally, convincingly and with obviousness. For, what a great Sage, a real Guru brings about spontaneously is not only to clarify the mind and to transmit power, but above all to disperse the mists that hide our true Self, our Eternal Being, and to put us in communion with THAT. Once this contact has been established, it is THAT which advises and guides us with unflinching certainty.

Many of those who live near Mataji have probably like myself experienced that when we approach Her with questions concerning our sadhana, She most assuredly

replies with wisdom and kindness, yet often only briefly, in a detached manner, as if it were a matter of secondary importance. When on the other hand we become actors in some little incident of everyday life and display anger or quarrelsomeness etc., She seems to take great interest. She summons those involved in it, inquires carefully into the details and sometimes spends hours over the solution of some apparently petty difficulty.

Spiritual practices such as meditation, japa and so forth are undoubtedly of great importance. Nevertheless, as I have heard Mataji point out on various occasions, their sole purpose is to assist us in removing the veil that conceals Reality from us. That veil is made up of desires, anger, fear etc. and it is in one's daily life that one has the chance to study these obstructions as they arise to bring them into the field of one's consciousness so as to get rid of them.

One day for some insignificant reason, I lost my temper in Mataji's presence. Impetuously I blurted out a few irreverent words, of which I repented immediately afterwards. She replied, as She always does with great gentleness, although it appeared to me tinged with a shade of irony. I felt ashamed. The same evening I asked for a private interview in order to apologize. I was naturally anxious that the whole matter should be forgotten as quickly as possible and that nobody should mention it anymore. But Mataji on the contrary dwelt on it at length, minutely examining the details and questioning the persons involved, which made me the more deeply ashamed.

A competent surgeon does not feel satisfied by merely making an incision when treating an abscess, but cuts a wide opening so as to be able to drain the sore completely, straightening out the folds in the skin and carefully removing any hidden trace of pus. Similarly Mataji does not merely settle a particular difficulty, but penetrates to the root of the evil and deals with it, so that it may be destroyed with all its ramifications and never sprout up again.

Later I came to understand the psychology of what had happened that day. The rage that had been smouldering within me was bound to explode against someone or other. Mataji Herself had deflected it towards Her own person, so as to direct its *karmic* results. This is how, again and again, She arranges things for our good. Many of Her devotees must have had similar experiences. I am told that She says : "If you must be angry, be angry with me, for you will not be able to keep it up for long." And also : "By *moha* (strong attachment) for this body (meaning Herself), all *moha* will be destroyed."

Wrath or affection felt for an ordinary person must inevitably produce a reaction in that person and set in motion a whole series of *karmic* consequences. Whereas if

