

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

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MATRI-VANI

As to self-surrender : by constantly endeavouring to live a life of self-dedication, it will come about one day. What does self-surrender mean, if not to surrender to one's very own self.

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Jagat (world) means ceaseless movement, and obviously there can be no rest in movement. How could there be peace in perpetual coming and going ? Peace reigns where no coming exists and no going, no melting and no burning. Reverse your course, advance towards Him, then there will be hope of peace.

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The natural impulse to have faith in something, which is deep-rooted in man, develops into faith in God. This is why human birth is such a great boon. It cannot be said that no one has faith. Everyone surely believes in something or other.

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A man's belief is greatly influenced by his environment ; therefore he should choose the company of the Holy & Wise. Belief means to believe in one's self, disbelief is to mistake the non-self for one's self.

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Man thinks he is the doer of his actions, while actually everything is managed from 'There', the power-house. Yet, people say : 'I do', How wonderful it is !

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The light of the world comes and goes— it is unstable. The Light that is eternal can never be extinguished. By this Light you behold the outer light and everything in the universe; it is only because it shines ever within you, that you can perceive the outer light.

All paths are good. It depends on a man's *sanskaras*, his conditioning, the tendencies he has brought even from previous births. Just as one can travel to the same place by plane, by train or by car, so also there are lines of approach for different types of people.

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What is *dharma* ? Those actions which are conducive for attaining to Him, who is desirable for everyone. This is also the natural way of life. Sorrows are due to unnatural ways. So that is *adharma* .

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Regular prayer purifies the mind and the heart. Set apart at least ten minutes for your daily prayer at a fixed hour. You may even go on doing your usual work during this period, but observe silence and meditate on Him in any way you like. See that throughout your life there should be no slackness in regularity and punctuality.

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Exert yourself to the limits of your power, however feeble. He is there to fulfil what has been left undone.

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Don't sit idle. Always be engaged in doing something useful. Either chant God's name in silence, or read a good book, or discuss a good topic. But don't waste your valuable time in idle gossip.

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Discipline of the tongue and other sense organs will help the mind to withdraw from other things and will turn it inwards.



TWO INCIDENTS

— Sri Vijaiananda (Dr. Weintrob)

We have frequently heard Mother say that She does not go anywhere; yet we see Her travel from place to place. Being all-pervading and therefore everywhere at all times, Her body and its movements have significance only for us. Mother has assured us that She will never leave us, no matter where we may go or what we may do. I feel convinced that She is the all-pervading Divine Consciousness, for whom there is no limitation of space and time, for whom the word 'impossible' has no meaning. However, for most of us; this knowledge is only on the level of the spoken word. Many just repeat it from hearsay. But those who have for a longer period of time lived under Mother's guidance, have experienced in a variety of ways the benediction of Her presence, and are able to understand that Her blessings and Her divine love are the same, whether we are far or near Her physically. But our mind is like a stupid child that has to be taught his lesson again and again, because he keeps on forgetting it, until it is hammered right into his brain. On occasions something happens that impresses deeply on our foolish minds the evident fact that Mother is ever with us, seated in our own hearts, guiding us constantly, removing obstacles, saving us from dangers. It is to this that I want to refer here.

(1)

In 1954 Mother's birthday celebrations took place in the Almora ashram. I was then staying at the Varanasi ashram and proceeded to Almora to attend the function. Already for three years I had enjoyed the good fortune of living under Mother's direct guidance. During the first half of this period I had constantly travelled with Mother, accompanying Her wherever She would go. To leave Her even for a single day was a source of almost unbearable mental suffering to me. This is how Mother at first attracts us towards Her physical presence, in order to wean our minds from all worldly attachment. Love for Mother—although it is still *moha*—purifies mind and heart, awakens, and greatly increases our yearning for the Divine. What may be achieved after long years of struggle by the practices of pranayama, japa, or selfenquiry, is accomplished within a short period of time, effortlessly as it were, by pure and intense love for Mother. In fact, intense, pure and selfless love for

Mother is in itself a most powerful *sādhana*. This love has then to be expanded progressively to 'the all-pervading presence. Thus Mother leads us stage by stage.

Some temperaments may actually feel Mother nearer, while far away from Her in space. This may sound a paradox, but can be explained as follows: When we are with Mother physically, Her sweetness and kindness, Her childlike simplicity may make us at times forget Her divinity. While far away, if the mind is capable of rising beyond the physical aspect, we have perhaps a greater chance of grasping that which abides in the heart.

When talking of Mother's divinity, it may not be out of place here to draw attention to some misunderstanding, not uncommon with Westerners. For people in the West, grown-up in the belief of one of the Semitic religions, to worship God in the form of a human being is considered a great sin, a blasphemy. In the Occident, it is the dualistic doctrine that prevails—God being worshipped as the Lord or Creator of the universe, while the individual soul is conceived as remaining ever separate from Him. In India, on the other hand, the doctrine of Advaita is accepted commonly by the educated. According to the advaitic teaching, the ONE, who is beyond all thought and description, is the 'Being par excellence', the substratum of everything; without Him nothing can exist, in fact, He alone really exists, the phenomenal world being but a surface play, like the waves of the ocean. In a perfect Being, this Divine Consciousness, this Eternal One is present in His full effulgence, without any covering veil. Therefore it is quite natural to look upon such a Being as the Divine Incarnate.

But let me again take up the thread of my story. During the second half of the three years that I had spent travelling with Mother, I could bear to remain without Her for short intervals; but never (as far as I remember) had I been without Mother's *darshan* for more than a month. When I came to Almora for the birthday celebrations, the yearning for Mother's physical presence had come again, even stronger than before. The infinite Love of the Guru is quite different from what is usually called 'love'. Real Love knows no weakness. It may even appear hard and merciless on occasions. The grown-up child was clinging to the toys of the baby, and Mother most probably knew that the time had come for him to shake off the habits of the infant.

Mother's skill in seizing the psychological moment is wellknown. At such a moment I was made to promise to remain in the Almora Ashram for one whole year, without travelling anywhere. One whole year without seeing Mother ! It seemed like eternity to me. Previously, even after fifteen days of separation, I would count the days and wait for Mother's return, like the well-known *chatak* bird for the rain.

Mother stayed for more than two months at Almora that summer. Whilst She was there, a number of improvements were made in the Ashram, which thereby became a place provided with modern comforts, such as electric light, tap water, etc. Only too soon the inevitable day of Mother's departure came. I was standing by the road-side, looking at Mother's car that was ready to start. It was beyond my imagination that Mother, knowing my state of mind, could leave me behind for such a long period of time. Before starting She called me, gave me Her blessing, and uttered a few kind and soothing words. The car began to speed down the road to Kathgodam. I followed it with my eyes until it vanished out of sight. All kinds of childish ideas flashed through my mind. I thought that Mother was just testing me and soon would send back someone with a message for me to join Her. But the time passed and nobody came. My mind was overcast by sadness, as the sky by dark clouds. I felt helplessly despondent and depressed. Of course, I was not compelled to stay on. (I have never witnessed Mother exercising compulsion for anyone). I could have easily followed Mother to the plains— She would probably have laughed the matter over, as had in fact already happened on a former occasion, and waited for a better opportunity to make me stay in solitude. But then I had given my word and moreover, my mind having matured in the meanwhile, I understood that it was necessary for me to practise *sādhana* and lead a secluded life. I thus tried to divert my thoughts from their painful one-pointedness, keeping myself engaged in some work or other. During Mother's sojourn at Almora, I had temporarily occupied a room near the tank of the Patal Devi temple, since the Ashram had been overcrowded. Now I had to shift to the Ashram. So I began to pack and arrange my belongings. But my sorrow would not leave me. I was slowly ascending the narrow path leading from Patal Devi to the Ashram. The sky was spotlessly blue, the air fresh and light. In the plains, I mused, there must be broiling heat, heavy with dampness. Here, at Almora, was the calm stillness of the Himalayan mountains with their majestic beauty. In the plains I would have been in the midst of the buzzle and noise of the towns. Travelling with Mother means to endure all kinds of hardships and inconveniences. Here I had every facility, almost as in my own home. But of what value were the beautiful sceneries, the bracing climate, physical comforts and all the rest, when the main thing was lacking, namely the happiness I found in Mother's presence. It was a happiness that did not depend on any outer circumstances.

With eyes veiled by tears, I was gazing at the gorgeous range of mountain peaks in the direction of Kasar Devi. All of a sudden something extraordinary happened. My whole being was flooded with joy. Mother was there ! Here, present

