

*"The Self, self-contained,  
calling to Itself for its own Revelation—  
this is happiness."*

## MATRI VANI

One of God's names is Love. He Himself resides within all, at every moment, everywhere. When man—true to his calling—aspires after the One with uninterrupted intensity, then only His Presence manifests.

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God, the Self, is all-pervading. Where is He not? In all forms and the formless, in all names and the nameless, in all places and conditions, at all times is He. When the desire for Realization awakens, this is an actual manifestation of Him, the indivisible One. Since all names are His indeed, He will let Himself be grasped by any one of them. The keen desire to attain to the Goal must be conceived. The very fact that Self-realization is one's goal means to seek and to find.

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The search after Truth is the one thing by which the shape of human life should be determined. Genuine desire itself opens the road to fulfilment.

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All without exception are actually embodiments of Bliss. Having found one's Self it is natural to experience the Bliss of the Self.

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Who am I? With this attitude endeavour to let the mind stand back as a witness. Search after your Self. As long as may be, sit immersed in meditation, becoming quite still, steady and fully concentrated.

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

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# Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma

PROFESSOR B. GANGULI

( Translated by Atmananda )

( 13 )

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At 9 p. m., when the silence was over, Mataji said of Her own accord : "By invoking God He may certainly be found; and by clinging to the Great Mother (*Mātā*) the Self (*Ātmā*) will be realized."

*Question* : How can I be one with God (*Īswara*)? I am a perishable human being. After liberation I shall be indestructible, immortal. Both are contained within God (*Paramātmā*), are they not ?

*Mataji* : When realizing oneness, duality will also be known in its totality. Having become immortal, the perishable human being will be fully understood as well. So long as there is a lack of real vision, discussion\* is unavoidable. Seen from one point of view, the *Paramātmā* has become divided and, as the world, has been, is now, and will continue to be in constant flux. Again, viewed from a different angle, He is ever indestructible and there never has been nor will be any world. In Reality the question of being or non-being cannot arise.

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\* A play upon words: *Lochana* eyes, *a-lochana* without eyes, *alochana* discussion.

*Question* : For so many days learned professors have discussed philosophy with you. This time, we villagers should like to receive some counsel from Mataji.

*Mataji* : A very clever child indeed are you ! You appeal to the Mother and after having called yourself her child, give her good advice. If you become a true child of the Mother, you will place your complete trust in her. Of course, one thing has to be said : the child has now acquired capacity and it is necessary for him to make good use of it. Therefore do something—namely, repeat with fervour God's Name. Since you have got into the habit of desiring things, direct your desire towards the Mother and call out to Her alone. God is Himself the Mother and hence will provide you with everything you need. Relying entirely upon Him, keep still and watch what happens. Not until the faith that whatever the Mother does is for the best of her child awakens in you, can you find Her. In order to arrive at that state of self-surrender, you may also have recourse to the yoga of practice. When the boy grows up, he earns his own living and spends his own money. Likewise will he have to do *sādhana* by his own effort. *Pitāji*, by your own words you have laid a trap for yourself.

*The Questioner* : Yes, of course, the Mother will no doubt be cleverer than the child.

*Mataji* : The relationship to one's mother is not one of give and take. The mother gives to the child according to his needs. One must depend on one's mother like a kitten (which passively lets itself be carried by its mother), not like the baby of a monkey (which actively holds on to its mother and therefore at times falls off). The Mother knows

the right measure with which to give. 'Ma' means 'mayi' (all-pervading). The Mother alone bestows both, worldly experience and liberation—nobody else.

*Question* : Is it correct to say that the place of the heart (*hridaya*) is in the various centres (*granthi*) of the human body ?

*Mataji* : Yes, the *Brahmagranthi*, the *Viṣṇugranthi* and the *Rudragranthi*, in other words, the *mūlādhāra* (at the base of the spine), the *anāhata* (in the region of the physical heart) and the *ajñācakra*† (between the eyebrows) these three are the centres of the *sādhaka's* yogic experience and thus may be called the places in which the inner heart is situated. Apart from those, some yogis experience their heart also at the *sahasrāra* (thousand petalled lotus at the crown of the head).

*Question* : How many kinds of faith are there ?

*Mataji* : Very many. However, one may distinguish mainly between four kinds, namely :

(1) the faith of the *Jñāni*‡—firm, stable, based on direct experience.

(2) blind faith—that may be shaken if hit hard.

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† *Cakras* Psychic zones in the human system, which represent the fields of different psychic forces and which have to be conquered, purified and sublimated by the Yogi in his upward journey to the sphere of Divine Consciousness and Power.

‡ *Jñāni* one who has attained to true knowledge of the Self or Reality in other words, to Enlightenment.

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(3) blind faith—a living faith that cannot be destroyed even when hit hard. Faith in a person may waver, but faith in the Reality for which that person stands, cannot decline.

(4) blind faith—although it is faith in an unworthy object, it is so blind that the faith itself becomes one's saviour. "Even if my Guru takes to drink, yet He is the giver of eternal Bliss." A disciple with a spirit of this kind advances by the force of his faith beyond the achievement of his Guru and even rescues the Guru.

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# Mother as Seen by a Westerner

ARNAUD DESJARDINS ( PARIS )

## II

( Continued from the last issue )\*

The more I observe Ma Anandamayi, the more I am struck by the extreme changeability of her expressions. This is in fact the first thing one notices when comparing all the photos that have been taken of her : one can hardly believe that they are of the same person. All those who come to her have observed this diversity.

At an interval of a few seconds I have seen her appear thirty and seventy years old, be the image of gentleness and the embodiment of severity ; I have seen in her the laughing little girl and the terrifying man, the radiant saint and the inspirer of a heavy congregation.

This unlimited possibility of diverse appearances, giving at the same time the paradoxical impression of ever remaining unutterably the same, reveals that—quite contrary to us who are entirely conditioned and answer to certain types which modern characterology has found—Ma Anandamayi is absolutely free inwardly, devoid of all limi-

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\* The following are short extracts translated into English from the French book by *Arnaud Desjardins* : "*Ashrams, Les Yogis et les Sages*," published by *La Palatine*, Paris-Geneva. ( See also pages 168—18 ) of *Ananda Varta*, Vol. X, No. 4. ).

tations, always perfectly unencumbered and spontaneous, ready to respond to what every moment demands of her.

Does she not say of herself: "This body is like a musical instrument; what you hear depends on how you play."

Mataji has very aptly been compared to a perfectly pure and transparent crystal, which reflects everything that happens around it. I have even asked myself whether ten different people do not at the very same moment perceive her in ten different ways, depending on their respective inner states. I have just mentioned her terrifying aspect. Some Hindus will probably not agree to this. But during one moment I have seen in her the witness to my lie, my impurity, to my contradictions—truths about ourselves of which we usually are not aware. Is it surprising therefore that I was actually terrified, in spite of all the kindness and love by which I felt myself enveloped all the same?

For weeks and weeks I did not understand anything of what she said. What of it? With hundreds of thousands of Indians and a few dozen Westerners I believe that Ma Anandamayī represents a really miraculous event.

And when I say miraculous, I do not only think of the fact that the consciousness of Oneness in which she lives enables her readily to know of happenings of which she has not been told, of future events, and of what is taking place in the present at a distance. Neither, as I have often experienced, of her reading the thoughts of those who approach her, and replying very clearly to questions that have been put to her only mentally, and that in a language which she does not understand. Neither do I merely refer to

the large number of cures that she has effected (leprosy, snake-bite, etc.) Even less to the fact that she has often produced phenomena of radiating dazzling light, such as other saints have before her.

For, all these miracles—if one may be allowed to use this word—are still within the world of multiplicity, within the world conditioned by time: everything that has a beginning has also an end and a cause and is limited by birth and death.

What I really find miraculous in Ma Anandamayi is what I should like to call the echo of her Consciousness in the depth of our own.

We can have absolutely no idea of the level of a Master who lives on a different plane to our own. At the most we may be struck by his extraordinary look. But we can, through that look of the Master, become conscious, by our own experience, of what is happening within us, and of the world which he allows us to glimpse.

The majority of men and women who have contacted Ma Anandamayi and who have not been completely closed to her influence, have felt—and it is here that I find something miraculous—the phenomenon Ma Anandamayi within themselves and known what Life is in its boundlessness, compared to which our life is not Life; have understood “how the blind can discover light and how the deaf can hear.”

This is certainly the most important experience one can be led to have: I live and until today I was dead.

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Near Ma, no matter where we may follow her, we live in beauty. Every moment lies in another dimension, larger,

wider, of another scale in which there is no room for ordinary petty details. This beauty comes from within, from the propriety of every expression, every attitude, and each of them opens out into the Infinite.

Propriety and conformity to what? To the Law of the Universe, to *Dharma*, to the harmony in which everyone must discover his exact place in order to find also his freedom and his spontaneity, just as the Indian musicians improvise for hours within the strict frame of the various *ragas*.

The music of the morning is different from that of midday, evening or night. There is a time for everything and a place for everything. And the way to the Absolute goes through the respect for that order.

Early this morning, the temple became lively by and by. It was hardly dawn when the first person arrived, an old man of extreme nobility with a long white beard. He sat down slowly and began to meditate with his eyes closed. Then a *swami* came, some other men, a few women. The temple seemed to become illumined from within as the light rose. The sky took on a glaring blue, against which the orange robes stood out clearly.

The *swami* slowly rang the austere gong, which answered to a distant bell from another temple. Two women stood motionless and the first rays of the sun spread a rosy hue over their white *saris*. The old man was meditating all the while without the slightest movement. The attitude, the place of everything appeared fixed since eternity and for an eternity to come. The scene was of a poignant beauty that entered my heart like a dart.

Yesterday, in the *pandal*, ( the large tent where gatherings are held ), Mataji was sitting on the dais, surrounded

by a number of *swamis* in their flaming robes. Her expression was so luminous, the faces of the *swamis* so dignified, the whole scene so tranquil, so pure that the same beauty which is beyond time emerged from it. It was so perfect that my heart was aching at the thought of those who will never experience this.

Since that first day at Benares, I have met Ma under many different conditions: in the midst of teeming crowds, surrounded by a few disciples only, and even—very rarely—alone with her.

But most of all I cherish the memory of the blessed days at Vindhychal.

After the excitement of the *Durga Puja* celebrations at Benares, Mataji retired far away from the multitude to a very small ashram, perched on a hill, lost in the midst of the beautiful Indian country-side. On no other occasion did I have so strongly the feeling of our being children gathered round their Mother, as her disciples like to express it.

No more formality, no more rules for approaching Mataji. We went freely to her room and for walks with her in the woods. No distance between her and us, only close companionship, familiarity. Mother behaved alike to each one, full of tenderness and affection, so naturally and simply. The whole atmosphere was one of friendship and joy.

One particular evening we are sitting around her on a small terrace that looks out on the vast landscape of plains and hills. Far away, the Ganges draws its glittering ribbon in the light of the setting sun. All is love and contemplation. In that silence one of the disciples reads softly. Mataji says nothing. We say nothing. She looks at us. We look

rampart that separates us from our Self has borrowed its power but from "sleep" and from an ego that cannot subsist except in "sleep." And it seems that portions of that wall are crumbling one after another and that with growing impersonality ever more peace and joy supervene. I believe that today I should be much better prepared if I were granted to receive a new exceptional experience. For, I know it well now, it is there, at the depths of me, that resplendent Truth. And I also know that it is everywhere, concealed behind everything. I have seen for myself—and above all understood to what degree we are incapable, in our present condition, to bear the Vision of Reality.

This Reality exists, whatever be my state of mind, no matter what may absorb my interest. And yet, all along, I am cut off from It, I deny, betray, desecrate and revile It. I am the prisoner of myself. I do not care to have close contact with my truth. I prefer to cling to all that prevents me from being.

But Mother's presence ever proclaims the same good news. The sleep by which I am held is not real: it is *māyā*. From sleep one can be roused. To recognize, to accept what I am at this moment makes an awakening possible. Mother makes more stable, more enduring my desire to be different, to behave differently. We all feel that she 'dehypnotizes' us.

Every attempt made in her presence teaches me that I have to demand from all myself if I want to know who I am. The answer will not be given unless the whole of me is there to receive it. An intellect, even a hundred times more active than it is in Mother's presence, cannot know. Emotion, even a hundred times more intense than it is within the radius of Mother's influence, will not know. A body, even a hundred

times lighter, than it is under the conditions of life in the Ashram, cannot know.

The answer will be given only to the whole of me. And the whole of me is never present. To know who I am and to find God is one and the same, says India. "If I knew myself, I should know Thee." How? Let the ego die. How to make it disappear? For it is the hydra with thousand heads. The more I imagine I am killing it, the more it reappears. Who will liberate me from it? You yourself. Who am I? God alone Is.

Mother, can you help us?

And since thirty years she is helping us.

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She has often declared that she is not a Guru. But to us, who live on the plane of duality and relativity, she appears to be a Master and she teaches.

This teaching has two aspects; it depends on her, on her presence. And, collected in her replies, it will live after her. Yet, should I call it "her" 'teaching'? All her glory lies in her Impersonality, and her teaching has been born with the world.

The most remarkable characteristic of Ma Anandamayi—and this is probably her most important mission—is to awaken or intensify the keen desire for the spiritual life in all who approach her. In this sense, how many retractions, how many conversions has she not effected!

What we lack most is that desire more powerful than all the others. Thus, Ma Anandamayi simply makes you long for Reality. The more we see her live before us, the

