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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

There are two kinds of restlessness : one due, to worldly activity and the other, the restlessness to advance on the spiritual path. The latter is the very means to real peace. He who is peace, *Atmā*, God—He becomes known. Only when there is intense hankering after it, Supreme peace will be found. Eternal bliss is also one and the same thing.

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By one's own doing want is created and by one's own doing this want will again be removed. You yourself have to actively aspire after Self-realization. Having chosen to feed upon the objects of the senses, you by your own volition thereby gradually move towards the realm of death. Become a taster of ambrosia, father, feed on the immortal ! Tread the path of immortality where no death, no disease exist.

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Only if there is a spirit of service can God be served. When the intelligence is clouded by delusion, death is the outcome. His Law is very wise. Therefore I say let everyone undertake the pilgrimage to the Highest—the pilgrimage by which all travelling comes to an end. Time must not be wasted in idle pursuits. At every moment remain engaged in the meditation on your true Self. Do not allow your mind to dwell on the fleeting. Because it is said that where *Rāma* is not, there is *Be-aram* (disease). *Rāma* means *Atmārāma*, delight in the Self, repose in the

Self, the essence of Peace, the essence of Knowledge, the Self in its own nature.

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The action that aims at God is alone real action, all the rest is activity belonging to the path of death. The contemplation of the Self takes one in the right direction. Worldly pursuits lead to His manifestation as absence. Everything, with the sole exception of the thought of God is useless—wrong action. Man's duty is to become steady in the practice that helps toward the revelation of his own true Self.

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Man appears to be all want—it is by contemplating want that want is earned. Therefore it is incumbent on man to contemplate his real nature. Otherwise there will be want, wrong action, wrong aiming, misfortune, death. HE is the Self reposing in Itself. In coming and going as well as in true Being is He alone. The blissful Self am I. I have to become established in Knowledge. There is none but you and you and you alone. You are present in everything whatsoever. You are He Himself. In the infinite many there is He alone—am I alone.

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To invoke Him does not go in vain. So long as you do not receive any response, continue to call out to him. Is it not your own Self to whom you are appealing? And it is your own Self whom you have to realize. By ceaseless prayer He, who is whole, who is undivided is reached. It is your own Self (*Ātmā*), the heart of your heart, your dearly Beloved to whom you are praying. The prayer to Him, by which the conflict between renunciation

and enjoyment is dissolved, that prayer must become dear to you.

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There are many kinds of action that lead to death and misfortune—that do not take one in the right direction. From darkness one proceeds to even deeper darkness. Why this should be so cannot be explained. It is His play. As one sows, so one reaps.

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For long enough have you given your thought to worldly matters, now turn your mind towards the Eternal. Look, gradually the path will become clear to you and the thought of worldly things leave you as well. It is fated to disappear. The veil of ignorance will also wear out slowly. The One Who IS, is eternal : what is fleeting must needs be destroyed.

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By God's name sin is vanquished. There is a saying that it is impossible for man to commit as many sins as can be annulled by God's name. Just as a single spark of fire can consume more things than you are ever able to accumulate. By the contemplation of God, by the endeavour to approach Him, all your sins will be obliterated. The destructible will be destroyed and Reality stand revealed.

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When you turn to God in order to be liberated from your desires for sense objects, your inner strength will grow. You must take to some spiritual practice. Keep yourself bound to meditation on God — whether you are able to concentrate or not. There is hope that some time or other you will get interested and also remain absorbed in it.

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# Conversations with Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma\*

## GANGACHARAN DAS GUPTA

*Question* : Mataji, is a vision of God possible in these days ?

*Mataji* : Why in these days ? It has always been possible.

*Question* : I mean direct vision with our eyes.

*Mataji* : A vision as clear as daylight. There is no doubt about it. It is His nature; if you call Him He is ever ready to appear. He manifests Himself visibly, it is on this account that there goes a saying that *Bhagavan* (God) is ever at the disposal of his *bhakta*. It is the nature of a living being to create life. The human soul is called *jīvātmā* and not *Paramātmā*. The *jīva* moves in a closed circle of birth and death. In a stagnant pool germs of life thrive and develop into living beings. Strain that water through a filter and it will be pure. There was pure water originally and it becomes pure again. So *jīvātmā* is in reality *Paramātmā*. It is *Atmā* all along, before and after.

The belief that God does not exist in you is the chain by which the *jīva* is bound; it is the smoke screen called *māyā* that covers your real Self. Remove it and God will stand revealed in all His glory.

*Pitāṅgī*, there is no peace in the world. You get just a drop of happiness in your family life and your face beams with joy. When it is gone there come sorrows and doubts and despair. A child is born and there are shouts of joy. When it passes away, darkness clouds your mind. All your happiness has turned into mourning. Pain and pleasure

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go together like your body and its shadow. Such is human life.

How to avoid this dilemma, this swinging of the pendulum between happiness and misery? You lose yourself in the little happiness you obtain in your worldly life but care not at all to discover the source from which all happiness springs—which is called *Paramānanda* (Supreme Bliss). How long will you move in a vicious circle in this way? Choose one line of spiritual practice. Can you hope to indulge in all the enjoyments of the world and capture at the same time the supreme source of joy by living a worldly life?

There must surely be a way to find the source of supreme happiness. You all desire it. *Ananda* is the very essence of your life; you are by nature pure and immortal; *Jñāna chit* is the sole basis of your being.

You don't want ignorance and affliction nor decay and death, because you are by nature enlightened, blissful, immortal. But the course of events in the world gives a different turn to your life and this causes you grief and despair. You are not asked to retire to the forest or to become inert, unresponsive like a stone to what goes on about you.

You have to start your search from the position God has placed you in. If you repair to the forest let your mind feel that it is your own home for the time being. From there the way will open out to a higher life. Look upon your son as *Bāla Gopāla* (the child Krishna), your little daughter as *Kumāri*, your wife as *Griha Lakshmi*. Don't do any harm to anybody. Let the attachment you have developed for people around you diminish to its minimum limit. When the call comes for your final exit, all the ties of your life will have to be snapped up and you won't have a moment's delay. Why do you weep? Don't you see that this world is only a *dharmasāla* (traveller's inn)? We meet people there who are on the way. The goal of your

final re-union is the Self (*Ātmā*). Forgetting this you identify yourself with your own body and that is the root of all bondage, of all the miseries of life. World means perpetual motion, and the ego is that which is bound. You want to know your birth-right. You desire to be free, to throw off your chains. Try to inquire from where you have come! When the body is seriously ill, the thought of your son, wife, brother or friend vanishes. You are engrossed with the sole idea of saving yourself. From this you can see that your self is the highest object of your love. The Self is none other than *Rama* who dwells in everyone of us. Animals spend their lives enjoying only food and sleep and procreation. But how should a human being pass his life?

Just as there is a veil of ignorance over you all, there is also a way to escape. Gird up your loins and say: "I must try my best to find a way out!" This will-to-be-free is your sheet anchor. "God is and I must find him" should be the motto of your life. See that not a single breath is wasted on worldly pursuits.

*Haribhajan* or worship of God is one way that should lead you to His presence. It does not mean that there are no other ways. You can go to the station from every house in the locality. What is important is to stick fast to one way and march. Let truth be your refuge. For God is Truth. Abide by truth in all matters of life and God will stand revealed. He is Truth, Knowledge, Beauty. You have such a fine body; God forbid that such an asset be wasted with the poison of the feeling of worldly enjoyment!

Mother continued: "This little girl of yours, *Pitājī*, implores you all to choose one path, here and now. You must not nibble away your time in idle pursuits. You cannot be sure of the next breath. It may stop at any moment. At all times think of the One. This will give you peace. When we desire things of the world we obtain them easily. In your quest of Him do not pray for anything except His

grace. He is indivisible, perfect, complete—the one goal of all men.

*Question*: In what part of the body is the heart-centre located?

*Mataji*: Is there any place in the body where it is not? Think of a tree: from the roots right up to the leaves—all was contained in one seed. Is there any spot in the tree from where a branch cannot shoot up and put forth flowers and fruits? The seed that you sow in the soil lies potentially everywhere in the grown-up tree.

*Question*: There are centres of sight and hearing in the body. Is there not any spiritual centre where God reveals Himself?

*Mataji*: Just as in the tree there are centres of circulation, of rest, of expression, such centres are everywhere in the body.

*Question*: Does the word 'centre' not mean the heart of something?

*Mataji*: (laughing) Let it be the heart then. Wherever God reveals Himself that is the heart. It is one and many at the same time. One person says: "My heart is here!" Another says: "It is there!" But what is called 'heart' is one in reality.

*Question*: The *Sāstras* tell us where the heart lies.

*Mataji*: *Pitāji*, you have not taught your daughter the *Sāstras*. The location of the heart is at one place. According to popular belief it lies in one's breast.\*

*Question*: When the heart fails, is it not all over with the man?

*Mataji*: The heart that fails and the heart centre are different things. The point from where the physical organ originates is its centre. But everywhere in the tree

\* Note the difference between the physical organ called heart (हृदयम्) and the heart centre (हृत्सम्).

you find the potential seed. From this point of view the heart is everywhere : One expanding into Infinity—Infinity condensing into One. The point from where 'life unfolds' is your heart.

*Question :* How does the seed come into being ?

*Mataji :* It is He expressing Himself as seed. There is no seed without Him.

*Question :* In the *Srimad Bhāgavata* what is the secret of His *Lilā* ? Why does He enter into *Lilā* ?

*Mataji :* In all walks of life these questions crop up : Whence ? How ? What ? Why ? To solve the riddle what have you to do ? When you observe a thing directly with your eyes, your query ceases to disturb you. Direct Vision of the Divine is what is wanted. One who is ignorant has no questions to ask ; one who has reached the Goal has no questions to disturb his mental poise. But one who studies, one who is on the way has queries and problems. What is the *Bhāgavata* ? *Bhāgavan* (God) and *Bhāgavata* (His expression) are one and the same. All the expressions of his *Lilā* in forms and modes of being are in the *Bhāgavata*.

*Question :* Why did He express Himself as He did in His *Rāsa Lila* ? Does it not minimize His dignity ?

*Mataji :* This body has no personal opinion to offer. *Bhagavān* staged a play with Himself in these *Lilās*. Some call it His *māyā* or power of illusion. He splits Himself into two. One cannot play with oneself. There must be two or more. So He divides Himself into these forms to intensify His Divine enjoyment by the game of union, separation and re-union. His counterpart in the game is His own *Swarupa*, *Śakti* or *Māyā Śakti*, which is ever present in Him and under His control. It is said that during the *Lila* of *Rāma* the *Rishis* desired to enjoy union with Him. But He promised such union when He would incarnate as *Krishna*. All are the creative activities of God ;

