

Ananda Varta

*The Eternal, the Ātman—
Itself pilgrim and path of Immortality.
Self-contained—THAT is all in One.*

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You Are That

In property and prosperity surely no peace. So, in what can peace be found? I am the very embodiment of Peace, embodiment of Wisdom—I am Consciousness. Until merged in this innermost sense of life, where is Peace? In order to find your own Self, you must focus light on yourself. How lovely!

* * *

This body (Sri MA) always advises: Become an explorer of Eternity, not a drifter into mortality. Strike out along the path of Deathlessness; Bring to light—You are imperishable, immortal.

* * *

Inside a flower are seeds that come to view only when it blossoms. Or just as inside a seed always exists the tree, so also within you dwells Divinity. Through sādhanā occurs the blossoming forth—that is, on being able to destroy the obscuring veil, right then and there glowing beaming the Self-Effulgent. As the whole and complete tree is contained in the seed, just so the Divine in its Fullness is enthroned within you as You.

* * *

The human being is characterized by wants. Contemplate only want—hence obtain only want. So what's to be done? Contemplate Self-Fullness; otherwise emptiness, wrong action, frustration, misfortune, death. Within Itself solely That as Itself. Whether in guise of coming-going or of Being-as-Self, One alone Is. I, yes, I verily Ātmā-Rāma. Now! to be ensphered in all-Knowingness. Naught but You, You, You alone. You everywhere, in everything. Further—You indeed the Absolute in Itself. In the endless many solely One, He, She, am solely I Myself.

—Sri Anandamayi Ma



MĀTRI VĀNI

(Dictated by Sri Ma as letters in response to devotees' requests
for personal advice and guidance.)

THE body's tendencies and the distressed condition of the mind will have to be changed radically. By one's own strength everything pertaining to one's spiritual practice will have to be attended to fully and perfectly, so that the action of one's true nature, of one's self may be awakened. God's mercy and grace stream down incessantly. Try hard to keep your vessel not upside down, but the right way up—in other words facing upwards towards THAT. Whether experiencing want and emptiness or satisfaction and fulness, at all times it is He, you yourself ; endeavour to remain fully aware of this. This is also in the line of *tapasyā*. Don't think you are without support. He who has given you shelter is constantly with you in the shape of religious exercises and actions. Just following the rules mechanically like a puppet will not do. Of course, to become a marionette in the Lord's hand is good, but He Himself as Reality-directed action, having become evident in every vein and artery, in the very marrow of your bones, will take you in His direction at the auspicious moment. Never allow any opening for depression or dejection. Keeping the flag of hope flying, full of joy remain wedded to your present practice. Become filled with divine ecstasy steeped in its delight. The universe is in fact an embodiment of *ānanda*. The pilgrimage that has for its goal *paramānanda* (supreme joy)—this is real bliss.

Body, mind and speech must firmly adhere to truth—for the revelation of God who is truth, for the revelation of one's own true Being. To perform action is one thing and "to be" quite another. Action has to be performed for the revelation of the essential nature of action—a revelation that puts an end to non-revelation. For this reason one must until then be engrossed in practice aiming at what IS—in meditation, japa and the like—in the attempt to contemplate, to ponder over THAT. Even absorbed in this, speak only as much as absolutely necessary. Remain consecrated to Truth. You, who are vowed to this path, should as far as possible express in refined language when speaking. Endeavour to divert the current of the body's outward turned activity inwards; by what expedient? By trying to keep the body fully engaged in God-centred activity. In order to become free from the mind's distress and anguish, from the scourge of want, a human being has to aspire to become established in his true nature.

The atmosphere there is congenial to keeping the mind at the feet of the Lord—all action must be done well! Your health is good—what joy! The activity of mind and senses must be guided towards practice aiming at God, so that the ultimate, sublime Goal of the pilgrims—of ascetics, sādhakas—may be attained. Yogic practice must enter the yogic current and develop into Mahāyoga.

Constant remembrance of God! In the ashram of the householder service must be done with the awareness that all are manifestations of God.

Whatever Bhagavān ordains has to be obeyed. Wherever He may keep you try to let your mind be engrossed in japa and dhyāna. Therein lies the way to success and real peace.

* * *

For the practice of japa and the remembrance of God no special guidance of a Guru is needed. Remembrance and contemplation of God, study of spiritual books and similar practices are indeed what a human being has to engage in. Keep your mind on the Eternal.

* * *

What Ma says has to be carried out. Man should pray for God-realization since this is the prayer prompted by his true nature.

* * *

Do not be unhappy. Ma is always close to you, inside as well as outside. There is only one Ātmā. Try to remain absorbed in the Name and in meditation with this one thought. The path that leads to peace and joy is the one to be adopted.

* * *

Ma is always with you. Keep your body fit. Try to focus on the Divine in all circumstances of life. Whatever you do — walking, eating, lying down — endeavour to remember God. If you practise sādhanā inwardly — in your heart of hearts — you will in due course automatically become a sādhanaka also outwardly. We all have ātmik relationship.

* * *

For a sādhanaka all places are God's place; it is not necessary to stay in India. One is born in a particular country as the result of one's own desires in former births.

To discover Vrindāvana, the eternal heaven of Love Divine in one's heart, this is indeed a state of real achievement. In order to have such an experience people go to Vrindāvana.

* * *

Whether anyone in your environment thinks of God or not, you yourself must make a sustained effort to the limit of your power to remember Him at all times in your heart and mind.

Be eager to progress on the path. The more intense your desire to obtain God's grace and to achieve your goal, the more will your feeling that you are going backwards recede. A human being must never allow his gaze to be directed downwards. Always gaze upwards in the direction of God.

* * *

Lilās

Srimoni

*Is it true that for many lives
I have looked for YOU,
Tell me that I shall find you soon
For courage is leaving me,
Or perhaps YOU will be the hunter,
Then it will be the end.*

MĀTRĪ SATSANG

Swami Bhagavananda Giri
(Translated from Bengali)

New Delhi, 24-11-57.

Question : I walked all round your cottage, yet could not find you

Mataji : You have said something very beautiful. You are indeed a humorous pandit. It is you who seem far away, you who are length and breadth, you who are also nearby. You appear as the one who walks all round. Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, Rāma, Mā—it all means I, my Self. HE alone exists, there is nothing apart from Him. You have manifested as the wanderer who walks all round ; you appear as distance, you and no other are also beyond the realm of mind and speech. Whatever you may say, so it is.

One should sit at the feet of mahātmās. In order to rise above conflict, above the pairs of opposites, one must proceed along the path indicated by the Guru, whether it be the path of dualism (*dvaita*) or of non-duality (*advaita*). There are all sorts of methods. Whatever they may be, they are but means for realizing one's own Self. See how beautifully Haribabaji tells of the lives of *bhaktas* (devotees). Different mahātmās speak in different ways. By listening to them all, something at last touches your heart and thereby the road to the ultimate Good opens out.

Question : How can we attend satsang when our children do not allow us to sit peacefully ?

Mataji : You must bear in mind that the child is the embodiment of Gopal. Adopt this attitude.

Question : Will the difference between "You" and "I" ever be dispelled ?

Mataji : Most certainly. Although there will be "I" and "You", yet the difference will be dispelled. Although existing, they do not exist and again though not existing, they are still there.

Question : Unless there are two there is no fun !

Mataji : In the realm of fun there must of course be two. The enjoyer of delight are also you. Delight is of the Ātmā and therefore your very own delight.

Question : I have heard that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu initiated some people by giving them a name of the Lord and others by touch. As a result they became lovers of God. We listen to the talks of mahātmās but our hearts have become as hard as stone, so that there is no impression made. Moreover we have become old now.

Mataji : Sharananandaji has spoken to you so beautifully. Even so, you still ask questions ?

Question : Questions do not cease, so what can I do ?

Mataji : I simply will not accede to your statement that questions do not cease. How can this be so far one who in spite of his age continues to come here to engage in *sādhana* ? Of course, those who proceed along the path of *bhakti* (devotion) are apt to remain in a state of never ending yearning : "Alas, alas, even now I have not become united with the Lord ! Alas, alas, even God's service has not been accomplished." Continuous dissatisfaction is the distinctive mark of the bhakta. If he finally reaches a state of complete satisfaction he will become established in the Ātmā. When proceeding along the line of Vedānta one has to keep on repeating, "I am the Ātmā" ; while along the line of bhakti one has to be ever agitated with eager-

ness : "Alas, alas, I am not getting anywhere !" This indeed is the mark of a true devotee.

Question : I observe that in the world scientists are making ever new discoveries ; for instance the telephone has been invented after considerable research, and as a result of this labour the whole world has benefitted. In a similar manner, cannot one who has realized God communicate this realization to everyone else ?

Mataji : If this were not possible, why then should people sit at the feet of mahātmās ? Scientists investigate the ways and means how the world's resources can be utilized. However, by their discoveries death is not conquered. Their investigations culminate in : "act and enjoy !" In this there is no research of "Who am I ? What am I in reality ?" The really important issue is : "Where have you come from ? How have you been created ?" From where exactly does electricity originate ? How many other diverse things are there, hidden in Nature ? But the devotee, by pondering deeply about God explores, "what exactly is a *jiva* (creature) ? Is there or is there not something beyond the *jiva* ?"

In these days, scientists have indeed discovered telephones, motors, aeroplanes, steamships, and so on. I have heard that in ancient days the *pushpak* chariot used to ply through the air, now the aeroplane flies. What existed before is now being rediscovered everywhere in some other form. Everything is contained within you and everything exists in everything else—that is to say, whether you call Him God or Ātmā—say what you will—it is but the One Himself. HE is infinite—in-finite, without end. God says : "Go to the root of things. You will receive exactly according to what you do."

A human being may possess so much wealth, yet he may not

know how to use it. He may own electricity, telephones and what not, but not be able to benefit by them. The sorrows of this world last for a few days only. The road to supreme bliss is the genuine path to be adopted.

Question : Please bestow on us what you have in your possession !

Mataji : By pursuing a life of *samyam* (self-restraint) the inner knots will be loosened. Treading along the common road of the world the cover of ignorance will grow. What qualities you will develop, depends on what you do.

Question : Please give us some spiritual medicine, just as a doctor's medicine helps to cure a patient.

Mataji : The life of self-discipline you are leading and the immortal words you are imbibing during satsang are the spiritual medicines.

Question : Ma, please share with us the ānanda that you radiate. We actually do not come here to listen, we come to see.

Mataji : God's grace is being showered incessantly. Hold your receiving vessel the correct way up and it will be filled. If you hold it upside down the grace will be spilled. What is it that will enter your vessel? *Brahmavidyā*, knowledge of the Eternal.

Question : You are truly worthy, Ma, but we, your children, are no good.

Mataji : Infants, boys and girls, pandits—all are God's own children. Once Tapan said, just as a good doctor finds a certain remedy and everybody benefits by its use, so Ma should distribute such a potent medicine among all of us so that we should be healed. That is why these mahātmās are sitting here to dispense their medicines. Mahātmā means Ma, Ma means Ātmā—my own

Self. Giving and receiving is Ma's work. The Mahātmās deliver talks and Ma is the power to act (*kriyāśakti*). But you, the children, will have to study. Study signifies to acquire Knowledge of the Brahman (*Brahmavidyā*). 25/11/57

Question : In ancient days people used to perform rigorous *tapasyā* (asceticism). Nowadays it has become simple. The Mahātmās assert that merely by the constant remembrance of God everything can be achieved.

Mataji : What is the reason for this ?

Question : It is due to the grace of you all.

Mataji : Swami Sharanananda has spoken of the straight and simple path. By the *darśana* and blessings of mahātmās everything becomes bearable. This *darśana* takes place through the eyes. So long as the load of the ego remains on your head, the head will not bend down. Here at least you are practising to bow at the feet of mahātmās.

Question : So, nothing at all need be done. What alone is necessary is the grace that descends without cause or reason.

Mataji : If this be so, it is indeed exceedingly fortunate. Verily, this is true. If there is *darśana* and the assimilation (*grahana*) of it, this is surely excellent.

Question : To assimilate is difficult, while mere *darśana* is easy.

Mataji : Real *darśana* means assimilation. Giving means to receive. Concerning *pranāma* (obeisance) : So long as the load of pride is on your head, it will keep your head stiff. In the measure as one gives, so will one receive. There are two kinds of *pranāma* : One is like pouring powder through the tiny holes of your powder box and the other is like emptying your pitcher to the last drop. If your knots are untied, then all the contents of your vessel will be poured out. To dedicate oneself means complete surrender.

Matri Satsang in Ranchi

Recorded by Prof. Bireshwar Ganguli

(Translated from Bengali)

In 1954, Durgā Pūjā was celebrated in Mataji's presence in the newly inaugurated Ashram at Ranchi. A large congregation attended the functions. On some occasions Mataji replied to questions which were noted down together with Her replies by Prof. B. Ganguli and published in Bengali in Ānanda Vārtā, Vol. 2, No 3 in Nov. 1954.

* * *

Question : Ma, when is the right time to ask a question in the right manner ?

Mataji : When the desire to know arises.

Question : About what should one inquire ?

Mataji : About the nature of Reality (*ātmatattva*).

Question : Is the answer contained in the question ?

Mataji : Yes, often it is,

Question : Does one receive divine Grace by partaking of the prasāda of bātāshā (suger puffs) which is lying here in front of you ?

Mataji : Prasāda is one. The prasāda which transmits grace and blessedness is alone real prasāda.

Question : Does partaking of this prasāda here help one to develop the capacity to receive genuine prasāda ?

Mataji : Yes, by obtaining this prasāda again and again real blessedness will come.

Question : What is the state that supervenes after partaking of real prasāda ?

Mataji : This state cannot be understood ; because to understand¹ means to stand under a new burden, that's why.

Question : If by understanding one only increases the load on one's head, why do people study at all ?

Mataji : Who ! you have not understood. The world is based on duality and to understand duality it is necessary to study. This body indulges in this kind of incoherent talk because you have not taught Her anything. What is said in your Scriptures namely "roots above and branches below" (*ūrdhvamūlam, adhaḥśākham*) means that the brain is the root, it is the organ of understanding. Just as water has to be given at the root of the tree, so the head is the place of understanding. There indeed lies the capacity to grasp everything. This is why this body says, look you have understood one thing, but is not what you understood previously. In a very special way understanding grows by degrees. Although worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge are different, yet being one at the root, both have to be grasped by the brain. To understand the second one means to take on yet another load. By going beyond understanding (which means standing under a load) there will be true comprehension. So long as the *triputi*, i.e. the division between knowledge, knower and knowing has not been dissolved, the real THING cannot be grasped. The ONE is ever self-revealed.

Question : Why has it been said that reciting all the śāstras again and again is better than understanding ? (*"Āvrittih sarva-sāstrāṇām bodhādapi gariyasi ?*

Mataji : This holds good at one particular stage only. Reading is not done just for the sake of reading. By repeated

1. *Bhoja* to understand and also *bhoja* load, burden,

reading the real essence is discovered. By continued study and reflection the root-cause of things can be grasped. But of course reading is not superior to enlightenment. That is why I say it is a particular stage.

Question : What is the best path, the one of knowledge or self-inquiry, or the path of devotion, or the path of selfless action ?

Mataji : The same path is not for all. Whatever one's Guru prescribes is the best, although the Goal to be reached is one.

Question : Is there such a thing as mantraśakti (mantric power) ?

Mataji : There is and it does indeed act. The action produced by uttering a mantra is definite.

Question : Is it necessary to pronounce the mantra correctly ?

Mataji : At certain stages clear and correct intonation will produce the desired result. However, if someone pronounces incorrectly with deep devotion, this also will bear fruit. Intense devotion produces results. But in order to obtain the full and complete benefit both are necessary—correct pronunciation and intonation as well as profound devotion. Nīlmani please relate the story of “*jagat tipāya*” !

Nīlmani now related the following story : “A Vaiṣṇava devotee used to say “*Jagat tipāya Śrī Kṛṣṇāya Govindāya namaḥ*” instead of “*Jagat dhītāya Śrī Kṛṣṇāya Govindāya namaḥ*” when performing his daily pūjā. In spite of this he experienced horripilation, thrills, tears of joy and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's darśana every time. One day, a guest who was a saṁnyāsī pointed out his mistake and told him he should recite “*Jagat dhītāya*” instead of “*jagat tipāya*”. Accordingly the bhakta changed the word but he did not feel Śrī Kṛṣṇa's presence any more and thus became very

sad. A few days later he confided his plight to another Vaiṣṇava sādhu who came to visit him. The sādhu asked. 'Well, what did you mean when you said *'Jagat tipāya'*? The devotee replied." *'Jagat tipāya'* means that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has covered the whole world as an ant hill covers the earth. In this ant hill in the shape of Śrī Kṛṣṇa I live, free, from worries. "While explaining this he felt the touch of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body and tears of bliss rolled down his checks. The sādhu therefore advised him to stick to his original way of reciting the mantra and then the devotee again as before, experienced all the indications of the Lord's presence."

Mataji: Nevertheless, if the pronunciation is correct and devotion profound, then only will the full and complete result be experienced. The devotee in question was somewhat incomplete and therefore when he said the correct word "*jagatdhitāya*" he could not sustain the vision of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If there is melting through devotion or burning—whatever you may say—then Truth will certainly stand revealed. On the path of love there will be melting and on the path of knowledge burning by the fire of discrimination. By either method Reality will ultimately be revealed. When everything has been fully melted there will undoubtedly be full Realization.

Mantra¹ means that which delivers the mind. But in the higgledy-piggledy language of this little girl, 'mantra' means '*man tor*'—the mind is Thine. That is to say: He whose name you repeat, the mind becomes His. Have you understood?

Here Mataji broke out into ringing laughter and everybody present joined in spontaneously.

1. A play upon words: *Man* mind, *trān* deliverance.

Question : Without practising japa or meditation, is it possible to achieve everything by simply engaging in kirtana ?

Mataji : THERE—everything is possible. By the protracted repetition of God's name everything may come about.

Question : When engaged in kirtana, the mind does not become restless. But why do all kinds of thoughts crop up when one performs japa ?

Mataji : Kirtana is done collectively. Moreover melody, rhythm and words are all in harmony.

(At that moment a devotee requested Ma to speak in Hindi, which She did.)

The simple explanation is that all sing the name with the same tune, rhythm and words. It is the nature of the mind to cling to what is delightful. This is why the mind remains concentrated on the kirtana. There are of course people who are to concentrate also on japa. According to their temperament and predisposition (*samskāra*) people feel interested either in japa or in kirtana.

Question : Can a human being attain to liberation through kirtana ?

Mataji : If one is able to proceed in exactly the right manner, everything can be achieved by the name. God Himself manifests as the name, the *akṣara*¹ (indestructible). To keep company with the Name means to keep company with God. It is His very nature to reveal Himself. Therefore Nāma-kirtana can certainly help to take one right to the end.

Question : Some people attain to peace by the continued repetition of the Name. Will they be able to remain at peace at the critical moment ?

Mataji : Yes, definitely they will.

Question : Even though the Lord is not one's personal friend and companion as in the case of Arjuna, is it possible to tread the path of selfless Karmayoga ?

1. *akṣara* means letter of the alphabet or syllable as well as indestructible.

Mataji : Under God's reign everything is possible.

Question : Why does God lavish His grace on certain persons ?

Mataji : God's grace descends on all without exception. Grace manifests in many different ways. According to the manner in which any one desires God, God bestows His grace in that particular way. Whatever object anyone covets, God's grace comes to him as the enjoyment of this very object. The grace of the fulfilment of one's worldly desires is one type of grace. Another kind of grace opens the path to immortality. All humans are recipients of grace. Just as a mother gives to her children different kinds of food according to their need and digestive power—barley water to one, fried rice to the other, a sweet dish to the third and so on. Similarly various types of grace are received in the world. To some it comes as kindness or compassion, to others as restraint or punishment, to yet others as the opportunity to rule or as the annihilation of the results of one's actions.

Question : Why is one moved to tears when listening to religious discourses ?

Mataji : This is excellent. God is your Self, the Life of your heart. Separation from Him calls forth weeping, in other words tears of love. From the ordinary point of view it is very fortunate and to be welcomed if tears come. Even if not due to genuine pangs of separation.

Question : Have the consequences of one's actions to be experienced in keeping with one's tendencies and predispositions (*saṃskāra*) ?

Mataji : Yes, so long as that great fire has not been lit one has to enjoy and suffer them.

Question : By what means can that fire be lit ?

Mataji : Contemplation of THAT, concentration on the Real is one way. Yet another method is satsang, to seek the company of pilgrims on the Path.

MATRI UPADESHAMRITA

(*Mātri Upadeshāmṛita*, "the Nectar of Mother's Teaching" comprises excerpts from various sources of Sri Ma's spiritual instructions on selected subjects.)

On Praṇāma

Question : What is the right way of doing *praṇāma* ?*

Mataji : When doing *praṇāma* to a deity or living saint or mahātmā, first have *darśana* of his whole figure. Start with the feet and let your eyes wander right up to the head while inhaling slowly. Imagine that together with the breath you are absorbing power into yourself from Him to whom you are bowing. Then let your gaze descend slowly again to the feet while exhaling ; at the same time offer yourself to God with all that is in you, good and bad, try to pour yourself out completely, without reserve. When your head touches the feet of the deity or saint, his power enters your head. The head is said to be the root of the human being. When his hand is put on your head as you touch his feet, power is transmitted to you through his fingers.

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To do *praṇāma* means to dedicate oneself to one's *Iṣṭa* or to God with all that constitutes one's nature at the time, be it desirable or undesirable, one's virtues, vices, capacities, shortcomings—everything ; to offer one's whole being at His feet. Then, purified by His touch, to receive *oneself* back, as it were, as His *prasāda*.

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* Obeisance. It is done either by kneeling and touching the ground with one's forehead, or by lying on the ground full length, face downwards.

