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MATAJI'S AMARA VANI

(22)*

Mataji : Give in charity, engage yourself in service, bow down before God ("do *Pranam*")† and you will yourself come to understand in what spirit such acts are being performed by you. Feel convinced that in whatever state or condition you may be, out of that very state Enlightenment will occur. Never harbour the idea that you are involved in sin and evil deeds and can therefore never get anywhere. At all times and under all circumstances you must keep yourself in readiness to tread the path to God. Who can tell at what moment your giving, serving and bowing to God will become genuine ; for everything is possible.

Concerning *Diksha* (initiation) : He from whom you have received initiation will be able to bring you in touch with the level he himself has reached. Just as when you listen to a religious discourse the speaker will communicate to you as much as lies in his power. In this there are two factors. The effect inherent in spiritual discourses and the power of the speaker. Both are received and if the recipient has outstanding capacity, Supreme Knowledge will dawn on him at the very instant he receives the instruction.

There are various kinds of initiation : by Mantra, by touch, by a glance, by instruction. Contact with a Superman does bear fruit. Everyone will benefit in proportion to the degree of his own receptivity. There is also such a thing as special Grace by which unusual power to progress will be gained. On the other hand there are cases when even after actual contact no infusion of Grace has followed ; one who commands power is able to control it—giving and taking depend on His Will. When instruction frees a man from the knots that constitute the ego this is called initiation by instruction. On this case the instruction has fulfilled its purpose instantaneously.

* The Bengali original appeared in 'Ananda Varta', Vol. V/2, p. 84.

† See A. V. Vol. II/3, P. 281 where Mataji says : ".....To do *Pranam* means to pour oneself out at His Feet to become closely bound to them and thereby united to Him, to become His who alone is."

When *Mantra Diksha* is given the Mantra is whispered into the initiate's ear and the initiator will confer as much power as he himself wields. If he is all-powerful he will by his very touch or glance take the disciple to his final goal. But if he is not endowed with such supreme power, he can transmit to the initiate only whatever power he himself commands and guide him as far as he himself has reached ; it is obvious that the Guru can pass on only as much wealth as he possesses. If the person who has given the *Mantra* has not reached the final goal and hence is still on the way, the disciple cannot progress any further unless the Guru does. This is why the disciple has to wait on the path so long as the Guru does not advance. Anyone aspiring to the Realization of God who starts giving initiation while he is still on the way will remain stationary at the stage at which he has arrived.

However the possibility of the disciple surpassing the Guru exists : namely when someone initiated in the conventional way has been able through personal exertion to increase his inner strength to such an extent that he may go beyond the achievement of his Guru. Here the initiate needed only just the amount of power conferred by the *diksha* to take him to his goal. If a disciple has to rely entirely on the resources of his particular Guru he will have to move side by side with him. Furthermore in the state in which one realizes that one's Guru is the World-teacher and the World-teacher one's Guru (world meaning movement, while the individual is that which is bound—the Guru delivers from individuality as well as from the relation with the world) one comes to know oneself as His servant, or as His very own self or as part of Him, either of these, depending on one's line of approach.

How is it that my Guru may be said to be the World-teacher ? For the simple reason that this is the status of a Guru. Who for instance is a cook ? The word "cook" does not denote anyone's name, it means one who can prepare food. Likewise when the status of a Guru becomes revealed to one, one understands that it has nothing to do with any person ; the Guru is none else but the World-teacher. If the power of the Guru can become effective, there will be the realization of "Who am I ?" He who is able to bestow that power is indeed the World-teacher. Guru is the name for him who out of deep darkness can reveal the hidden Truth. My Guru exists in many forms as the Guru of each and everyone and everyone else's Guru is in fact my Guru : now you see how the Guru has become one.

A person who performs rites and spiritual exercises of any kind is still on the path and not established in the Self, for he is still making effort. How can he be a Guru, since he has not transcended action? One speaks of brothers in the spirit: the Lord who is adored by the whole world is my Lord and my Lord is the Lord of the world. A Guru is not an ordinary preceptor—a Guru is he who has the capacity to deliver man from the sea of becoming (*Bhava-sagar*). Suppose an aspirant has been initiated by someone who does not command supreme power: he can progress only up to the Guru's stage and then will have to wait. Yet by some favourable conjunction, be it through his own overwhelming desire for Self-realization, or through faculties developed in former lives or even without these or similar causes, simply through the intervention of Divine Grace, he may by instruction, contact, a glance or a *Mantra* receive an influx of power that will enable him to proceed further. In the event of a flood it does not distinguish "this tree will have to be saved and that one uprooted", but carries away with it everything indiscriminately. Likewise there is no such thing as choice in the realm of the spirit, for here the Self reposes within Itself.

Then again there is yet another possibility: without instruction, without a glance, touch or *Mantra*, power may be conferred, whether the recipient be aware of it at the very moment it occurs or only very much later. The one who has bestowed the power carries along with him everything, just as the flood does. It is his very nature to bring round within himself everything, therefore it will not do to say in a particular case that initiation has been received from someone else and not from this source, for everything is His own, is verily He Himself. So then just as the flood carries everything along in complete equality, so that superman quite naturally and spontaneously makes His own what was wrongly believed to be alien. Here 'mine' and 'thine' do not exist—only the Self, Self-luminous, He and He alone. A mother does not keep accounts of what she does for her children—for are they not her own? Likewise here also there is no accounting of how much power has been communicated.

A certain person took initiation from some Guru. Later that person met another Mahatma and began to seek his company frequently, since he felt benefited by his contact. On hearing about this, the Guru became irri-

tated, saying: "I have cultivated the garden and you are giving its fruits away to someone else." The disciple replied: "Not so, my contact with the Mahatma has strengthened my faith in my Guru." But the Guru was unable to understand this. For the said Mahatma the world and what is beyond was all the same. For him there was complete equality, since he saw only the all-pervading Self. Whether one goes near such an one or not, He will carry along with Him everyone alike. Therefore it was said: It is not that the man had another Guru, for the conferring of power happens on the level where all are one; moreover it cannot either be said that to so and so much power was communicated, just as burning fire does not discriminate and dry up one object while leaving another wet. Spontaneously occur the instruction, touch, glance or *mantra* that constitute the *diksha*. Here there is no distinction between 'mine' and 'thine'. There are two ways: the power can either be controlled so that there will be unequal distribution of it; or else the distribution of power is universal. Which of the two methods He adopts depends on His Will.

(23)

Question: Are there as many names of God as there are creeds or is there in reality only one creed and one Name?

Mataji: What is your own line of approach, father?

Someone else: Every line represents a particular path, but as a matter of fact all roads lead to one and the same goal.

Mataji: Discussion and controversy belong to the path, but actually everyone is in his own home. The same path is not for everyone. Brothers of the same family will each have his different inclinations and likings. Vedanta may appeal to some, Vaishnavism to others and the cult of Shakti to yet others. Therefore it cannot be said that there is only one path. In fact seekers after truth are made each in a particular way, different from others as well as from one another, but in any case they will have to pass through the gate of Truth.

Question: Well then, are the creeds really different from one another?

Mataji: You can see for yourself that there is only one Guru who has any number of disciples. You are trying to convert everyone to the

same creed; in spite of that, what a lot of sects have not been founded, although many people have abandoned their own. What you said, father, is very true indeed—but where? In that which emerges when everything is given up. What then emerges? **HE HIMSELF—THAT.**

The Questioner : My opinion is a borrowed one, what I have heard various people say.

Mataji : Why have you adopted this particular point of view? This body presents the matter from the standpoint of the Rishis and Munis, from the line of approach which they chose. Countless opinions and schools of thought exist in the world, but those will not serve the purpose of a seeker. Everyone has to accept the method indicated by his Guru : by following that current he will be carried towards the ocean.

Question : Will all finally have to merge in that ocean? But then how can it be that those whose aims are so entirely different as for instance the Vaishnavites with their 'Salokya', 'Samipya' etc. and on the other hand the Vedantists with their 'Self-poised State' should end up by merging in the one ocean?

A voice : Puffed rice and 'murmura' are names for one and the same thing!

Mataji : If puffed rice and *murmura* are the same, why should they be called by two different names? There must be some element of variation in the two—although essentially both are just rice. The sense of 'mine' and 'thine' has remained, what do you say, father? (Laughter). When discussing creeds and paths one has to remember that it is only while on the way that one speaks of various paths.

Question : When one has reached beyond the level where every creed represents a different line of approach, there is no more talk and controversy.

Mataji : In "there is not" the "there is" is also implied—for without it how could the "is not" have arisen at all? Take for instance the case of people who claim to belong to a particular creed. But in cases where there is no question of any doctrine, nor of delivering discourses, there is HE at the root—HE who is present in all these innumerable guises. When one speaks of the many and of the One, it is a matter of outlook. One seed is sown and a tree grows with countless flowers and leaves, displaying infinite ways of movement and an infinite number of stages of stability—yet essentially it is one.

Every creed, every school of thought has its particular method of approach. So long as you advance along one special path there is, for that period of time, only one path for you. Very well, let us leave this point now. You asked, did you not, father, how those who aim at entirely different goals can end up by merging in the one ocean? When you speak of an end this is within the limits of time and where time is there is something beyond it too. But where the question of 'end' or 'time' can no more arise, there everyone will be united.

Question : So long as one speaks about these things, does it mean that some sort of imperfection still persists?

Mataji : Yes; he who is still within the domain of speech, that is to say of worldly speech, is in the boundary of time. But 'there', (beyond time) the question of speech does not exist. In spite of this, one cannot place a real World-teacher into this category. He who is a World-teacher belongs to a category distinct from those of the world.

Question : Please explain the nature of worldly and divine happiness.

Mataji : Divine Happiness, that which you call *Parama Sukhadham* (=Supreme Happiness) is just pure, unalloyed happiness—happiness in its own right.

Question : But surely, there is happiness in the world too!

Mataji : Why then do you make this remark?

Question : Why do people run after material happiness?

Mataji : You know this happiness from experience and hence your question. But God is gracious and makes you see that this so-called happiness is not happiness. He kindles discontent and anguish in you which is due to the want of communion with the Divine. Worldly happiness is derived from the countless manifestations of God. People talk and marvel about those who have renounced, but in actual fact it is you yourself who have renounced everything. What is this 'everything'? God! Leaving Him aside everyone is literally practising supreme renunciation. (Laughter). It is only natural that the sense of want should awaken. Even in the midst of comforts and

pleasures one feels homesick in a foreign land. There is distress even in happiness, one's possessions are not really one's own — this is what He causes you to feel. It is said, is it not, that when being hit one recovers one's senses, one learns by receiving blows.

When He manifests Himself as worldly happiness one does not feel contented, for along with it He appears as the sense of want. But Divine Happiness, even the tiniest particle of a grain of it, never leaves one again ; and when one attains to the Essence of Things one finds one's Self ; This is Supreme Happiness—when it is found, nothing else remains to be found, the sense of want will not awaken anymore and the heart's torment be stilled for ever. Do not be satisfied with fragmentary happiness which is invariably interrupted by shocks and blows of fate, but become complete and, having attained to perfection, be **YOURSELF**.

The Relativity of Perfection

By

Lama Anagarika Govinda,

Acharya, Arya Maitreya Mandala.

Light incessantly moves through the universe, but it becomes visible only when it meets resistance. In the same way consciousness becomes aware of itself only when there is resistance. If this resistance is impenetrable or unsurmountable, it is felt as suffering, if it can be mastered, it is felt as joy.

Joy means the overcoming of resistance. This is why people climb mountains, endure self-imposed hardships, engage in all kinds of adventure and sports. Life becomes unbearable and worthless if either there is no resistance or if the obstacles cannot be mastered.

But, we may ask, what about aesthetic pleasure, the happiness of solitude or that of *samadhi*? There is no resistance apparently. However, these pleasures cannot be attained without overcoming hindrances or without mastering our instruments of perception and knowledge.

This is why we cannot dwell inde-

finitely in the bliss of *samadhi* or in the enjoyment of beauty. As soon as the effort ceases and we get accustomed to a certain condition, joy ceases.

It is only in the movement towards perfection that perfection can be experienced. Only in the movement towards the infinite, infinity can be experienced. Infinity which is attained is no more infinity. In order to enjoy the blissful state of *samadhi*, we have to develop it again and again. In order to enjoy beauty, we have to create it within ourselves.

Thus there cannot even be aesthetic pleasure without creative effort: and as there is more creative effort in the artist than in the person who beholds a work of art, the former one's joy is more intense and more lasting.

The way to *samadhi* is a continuous process of spiritual renunciation, a continuous giving up. To give up a thing means to be free from it, to

be master of oneself and one's decisions.

Freedom exists in the act of renunciation. In other words : it is the faculty of renunciation that gives us the power over ourselves and the things of the world around us. Not the things that we renounce but the act of renunciation is what matters. Therefore even *samadhi* has temporarily to be renounced, if we do not want to lose that faculty. Because a faculty, which is not constantly re-acquired, loses its power.

If renunciation is genuine, then things can no more enslave us, but we have become their masters and can use them without danger. Then we can fearlessly go from the unity of *samadhi* into the diversity of the world. After we have convinced ourselves that we can do without things, we have now to prove that we have no more reason to fear them, that we can accept and even create them without losing our independence, our inner freedom.

It is the Way of the Enlightened Ones: starting with the renunciation of the world, culminating in the realization of enlightenment, and leading back into the world through compassion. It is like the three fold process of breathing : the inward movement of

inhalation, the moment of stopping or motionlessness, and the outward movement of exhalation.

Both sides of this process are repeated in Tantric meditation, as practised in Tibet ; only that here first the objects are produced from a state of "perfect emptiness" (*sunyata*), and that afterwards they are again dissolved into "emptiness". Here the state of Buddhahood or Enlightenment, which lies between the two movements, has been chosen as starting-point.

But how can such a starting-point be chosen, if the state of Buddhahood has not yet been attained actually ? Through the practice of *sadhana*, in which, after an intricate process of inner purification and perfect identification with the spiritual image or symbol of Buddhahood, a temporary state of equilibrium, a flashlike vision of reality is produced ; because it is only in the movement towards perfection that perfection can be experienced.

Perfection is not an absolute value or a static condition, but the harmony of forces that can be established in every moment in which their movement is co-ordinated by the direction towards a common aim. In such a moment these forces form a "universal" group (the word "universal" taken in

its literal sense : directed towards one point), a universe in miniature.

But the ideal point towards which these forces move, must lie in the infinite and never be reached by them, otherwise they would clash and merge into each other ; *i.e.*, their ideal differentiation, which is balanced by their common direction, would be destroyed, and their movement, without which life is impossible, would be stopped. But harmony needs differentiation as much as it needs unity. One tone alone can not make music.

Thus we can say that perfection is possible at each stage of development, in each form of life. A human being who has properly developed all his or her human qualities can be called perfect, though there may be other beings surpassing humans in many respects. And in the same way we can say that an animal, which possesses all the qualities of its kind, is perfect ; and similarly a plant, or a crystal, which expresses the characteristics of its nature perfectly.

Thus, perfection neither exists as an end at the top of a scale, nor as an absolute or fixed measurement, but as an infinitesimal moment of harmony in movement.

In self-conscious beings this har-

mony is generally disturbed by exaggerated ego-centricity and a destructive type of intellectualism. "The ego is by its nature a smallness of being ; it brings contraction of the consciousness and with the contraction limitation of knowledge, disabling ignorance, confinement and a diminution of power and by that diminution incapacity and weakness—scission of oneness and by that scission disharmony and failure of sympathy and love and understanding,—inhibition or fragmentation of delight of being and by that fragmentation pain and sorrow. To recover what is lost we must break out of the worlds of ego."*

Only one who has completely overcome the illusion of egohood and its concomitant evils, *i.e.*, one who has attained enlightenment, is able to dwell permanently in a state of harmony, which ordinarily we are able to experience only for short moments.

While harmony establishes itself more or less permanently by an organic or subconscious process of continuous re-adjustment in such forms of life, in which the balance has not yet been upset by the hypertrophic growth of "ego-consciousness", a similar continuous re-adjustment takes place in those individuals who

*"The Synthesis of Yoga". p. 408.

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RUBRIC FOR WESTERNERS

Our relationship with the Indian surroundings.

By Vijayananda (Dr. A. J. Weintrob)

A great number of Westerners have already come in contact with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi, and more and more are most probably still to come. Almost all are deeply impressed; many are eager to keep up the contact with Her—some even venerate Her as their *Guru*. A few have devoted their life to Her and live under Her guidance. But most of them find it more or less difficult to adapt themselves to Indian surroundings—some complain of lack of understanding. A few are obviously unadapted and even in conflict with their surroundings. The reason is, it seems to me, a confusion of different levels of thinking. This confusion is quite common, for the whole illusion of the mind is built on mistaking one thing for another.

But Westerners coming to India in quest of spirituality are not quite common people, and we may expect that they will behave accordingly. Those who, for the sake of the Supreme, have left their family, their country, a comfortable life in a suitable

climate to stay in environments where all details of what is a natural and comfortable daily life for others, require a painful effort of adjustment, are surely not ordinary people.

Let us then examine where this confusion of planes of thinking lies. Our relationship with our human surroundings can be said to be simultaneously on four levels:—(1) The *Atmic Sambandha*—the relationship of oneness in the Universal Self, (2) The *Paramarthic Sambandha* which unites two seekers on the spiritual path, (3) The *Dharma Sambandha* the link between the devotees of the same religion, or the worshippers of the same deity, (4) The *Jati Sambandha* or blood relationship. These planes are of course not completely separate and interpenetrate one another. But what is true on one level, may be false on the other.

All men are one in the *Atmic Sambandha*, the relationship in the Universal Self. This can hardly be called a plane of thinking. It is the final goal of all true spiritual seekers.

From the absolute point of view, there is only One Consciousness which abides in all beings. The obvious differences of name and form have only a transitory reality, or even as some say are quite unreal and illusory. Of course when one has realised this Supreme Truth, no conflict or opposition can arise with regard to anybody or anything.

This exalted consciousness is the one in which Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi lives, speaks, acts under all conditions, without any break, by day and by night since the very moment She has assumed a physical frame. For Her there are no differences of race or nation, caste or creed. In Her eyes all are the manifestations of the same Divine Consciousness, nay Her very own Self, as She has Herself stated on many occasions and in many ways. If it appears to us sometimes that She behaves differently with different people, it may be due to two reasons. First it may appear to us so from our limited angle of vision. As one advances on the spiritual path, one can understand progressively how the intellect of which we are so proud, and in which we have put all our faith, makes mistakes and deludes us continually. The second reason is that Mataji is not only a great realised

Being but also a great Guru among the greatest and what she does aim at awakening us to our true Nature. As regards Her attitude towards social customs and so on, it may be due to the above noted reasons. Furthermore a realised Being is not a reformer, nor a founder of a new religion. He wants only to remind us of the Eternal Truth, "THOU ART THAT". Concerning social customs and so on He may take things as they are and use them as a lever to lead us to the recognition of the source of all suffering which is unawareness of our own real nature. To change the details without having penetrated to the root will not bring any real relief. But for us who have not realised our true nature it is not possible to live in this elevated state of consciousness. Let us then consider the *Paramarthic* which is nearer at hand.

There is a deep kinship, a mystic brotherhood between all true spiritual seekers in the world, which can be felt at the first contact. By "a true spiritual seeker", I mean: not those who have come for name and fame, nor those aiming at the development of psychic powers which will only increase their bondage; nor even the worshippers of deities who expect a reward here or hereafter; but those who have dedicated themselves

to the Supreme, the Eternal Self abiding in all beings. It is of this relationship that we think when we call one another "Brother"—it is in this spirit that we have come to India in order to claim our right of inheritance to this immense treasure of wisdom, the *Atma Vidya* transmitted since the days of yore by the great Rishis, the great saints, the great sages of India among whom Sri Sri Anandamayi is one of the greatest among the great.

Nobody in the world has ever expressed the highest Truth in such clear and sublime language as the Seers of India. No land has ever been blessed by so many Great Beings succeeding one another probably without any break for thousands and thousands of years.

The flame of this Wisdom has ever been kept burning brightly notwithstanding the invaders or the calamities in the country—much more, every saint, every seer, every sage has enriched this Divine Treasure by his own personal touch.

Our brothers of India generously open for us all the store-houses of the treasure. Every facility is given to Westerners coming to study the Wisdom of India. Indeed I have been moved to see how much interest

and kindness our brothers of India show to Westerners who have even a slight interest in spiritual matters. What then to say of the great sages who are much more eager than we ourselves are to bring us on the path leading to the knowledge of our real divine Nature.

It is with the Great Sages and above all, with the *Guru* that the *Paramarthic Sambandha* finds its culmination. The *Guru* is not only a teacher. No one who has not experienced it himself can possibly imagine the deep relationship that unites *Guru* and disciple. The tender love of the most affectionate mother, the deep and manly affection of a father to his son, the faithfulness of the dearest friend all these are contained in, and transcended by the love of the *Guru* for the disciple. Nothing and nobody on earth or in heaven can ever break this relationship. It is stronger even than death. It finds its end only in the Eternal *Atman* where *Guru* and *Shishya* merge into one.

Although Mataji does not give *Mantra-Diksha*, formal initiation, a great number of people venerate Her as their *Guru*. Such a great Being has no need to go through the ceremonial of a formal initiation. The *Shakti-dana*, the transmission of Power, which is in fact the real initiation, can be

given in many ways, as for example by touch *Sparsha Diksha*, by mere sight *Dristi-Diksha* and even from a distance. The *Paramarthic Sambandha* which unites the spiritual seekers, the *Guru* and the disciple, and the disciples of the same *Guru* (*Guru-Bhai*) is the deepest relationship one can ever have on earth—much more so than blood relationship which pertains only to the physical body.

The *Paramarthic Sambandha* is frequently mistaken for the *Dharmic Sambandha*, the religious relationship. And it is there that lies the knot of the misunderstanding. Although these relationships frequently go side by side, they signify two quite different things. By *Dharmic Sambandha* I mean here the relationship between the members of the same religion ; Catholics, Protestants, Jews, or the relationship between the worshippers of the same deity as for example in India, the *Saivites*, the *Shaktas*, the *Vaishnavites* etc.

In the West we think that man can change his religion, become a convert of another one if he so desires. But in India it is quite different. To every average cultured Indian it is self-evident that the religion in which we are born, is a part of our nature, as much as our race, caste etc. The question of changing over to another religion does not arise. We are born

in one or another religion according to "*Samskaras*" the impressions left by our previous lives.

Some Westerners coming to India with the idea of becoming converts of Hinduism are rapidly disappointed; this becomes an important point of friction with their surroundings and many misunderstandings may thus arise. Due to different habits of thinking deeply rooted in the subconscious mind, it is very difficult to grasp the point of view of another. Religion or in other words the approach to the Supreme through the personal aspect by the medium of name and form, can be a great help to spiritual realisation. But this name or form, must be deeply rooted in the subconscious mind.

Some exceptional Westerners, who in reality are Indians, born in the West only for a temporary sojourn, are able to adjust themselves to the worship of an Indian deity. But this can be effective only after advice by the *Guru*.

However, what is wanted is not to change one's religion, but to find the common ground where all religions have their source : the Eternal One residing in the hearts of all.

It happens frequently that Westerners get offended when not allowed

