

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Sri Anandamayi Ma

Vol.-5

April, 2000

No. 2

BOARD OF EDITORS

- Km. Chitra Ghosh
- Dr. Bithika Mukerji
- Dr. Krishna Banerjee
- Km. Guneeta



MANAGING EDITOR
Sri Panu Brahmachari



ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (POSTAGE FREE)
INLAND—RS. 60/-
FOREIGN—US \$ 12/- OR RS. 450/-
SINGLE COPY—RS. 20/-



—Courtesy : GOYAL STUDIO, DEHRADUN

CONTENTS

| | | | |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 1. | Matri Vani | ... | 1 |
| 2. | Pages from the diary of Didi Gurupriya | ... | 3 |
| 3. | Conversation with Western Devotees — <i>Vijoyananda</i> | ... | 6 |
| 4. | First darshan — <i>Shraddha Davenport</i> | ... | 12 |
| 5. | First darshan — <i>Antonio Eduardo Dagrino</i> | ... | 16 |
| 6. | The fundamentals of Indian Philosophy — <i>P.C. Mehta</i> | ... | 19 |
| 7. | Gleanings from "In association with Ma" — <i>Amulya Dutta Gupta</i> | ... | 26 |
| 8. | From notes taken in Sri Ma's presence — <i>'Kirpal'</i> | ... | 32 |
| 9. | The unforgettable <i>Mahakumbh</i> | ... | 34 |
| 10. | Ashram news | ... | 38 |
| 11. | In Memoriam | ... | 41 |



MATRI VANI

How can this little girl (Ma herself) possibly leave her father ? Even if he pushes her far away, this obstinate little child will still be with him.

* * *

By sorrow does the Lord dispel sorrow and by adversity does He destroy adversity. When this is done He sends no more suffering—this must be borne in mind at all times.

* * *

In very truth, the Eternal's offspring must centre their thoughts on Him. Divorced from Him there cannot be even a prospect of peace—never, never, never.

* * *

The Lord's is the body, the Lord's is the mind, the Lord's is all mankind.

* * *

Verily, He is all-pervading and therefore can be found everywhere. With your whole being invoke the Lord of Life.

* * *

No two days pass alike. Do not allow yourself to be overcome by despair. Have complete trust in Him in spite of everything—to Him you should call out in happiness and in pain.

* * *

He should say to Himself : "In whatever condition it pleases. God to keep me, I resign myself, surrendering to Him this body, that is His." Just that.

* * *

Travellers on the Supreme Path must strive to complete their journey; self-realization is its purpose and goal.

* * *

Silent japa should be engaged in at all times, one must not waste uselessly. Whenever one has nothing special to do, one should silently practice japa in rhythm

with one's breathing—in fact this exercise should go on continually until doing japa has become as natural as breathing.

*

*

*

Q—There are many creeds and many paths, 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 their different inclinations and likings. Vedānta may appeal to some, Vaishnavism to others, and the cult of Sakti to yet others. Therefore, it cannot be said that there is only one path. In fact seekers after Truth are moulded each in a unique way, different from others as well as from one another; but they all will have to pass through the gate of Truth.

*

*

*

Why should one's gaze be fixed, while treading the Path ? The gaze is He and the 'way' is also He. Whatever is revealed or hidden anywhere, in any way, is 'Thou', is "I". Negation, just as affirmation, are equally "Thou"—the One. You will be able to grasp this fully only when you find everything within yourself, in other words, in the state where there is nothing but the Self.

*

*

*

Very well, just as ice is nothing but water, so the Beloved is without form, without quality, and the question of manifestation does not arise. When this is realized, one has realized one's self.

*

*

*

For, to find the Beloved is to find my Self, to discover that God is my very own, wholly identical with myself, my innermost Self, the Self of my Self.

*

*

*

In this connection it must be said that, if one wants to find Truth, everything will have to be realized as it is in its own place, without choosing one thing rather than another. It is a kingdom without end, in which even what is discerned as non-existence is equally an expression of the One.

*

*

*

In accordance with your own particular line of approach, each one of you must seize the time, the moment that will reveal to you the eternal relationship by which you are united to the Infinite : this is the revelation of *Mahayoga*, SUPREME UNION.



PAGES FROM THE DIARY OF DIDI GURUPRIYA

(Translated from Bengali)

Dhaka, February, 1926

It was the day of the Saraswati Puja. The students of the Medical School were going to feed beggars and have a kirtan performance. They wanted Ma to be present, but Bholanath refused. Ma had such *bhāvas* during kirtan. If it were to happen in the school, outsiders would not understand this condition and one could not know who would view it from which angle and how they would comment. Ma was then keeping herself veiled; considering all this, the invitation was refused.

Ma had once said, "I can see beggars being fed." I was influenced by this statement and on the occasion of the death anniversary of my mother I organised a meal for beggars. My joy was in taking Ma there.

The owners of Shahbag did not grant permission to have the feast for beggars in the garden, as they thought that plants and trees might be damaged. Perchance the poor feeding was arranged at the Medical School itself. Food for almost three thousand people was prepared. Devotees of Ma and the students of the school made all arrangements. We took Ma and Bholanath with us on the eve of the day of the feeding and decided to stay there over night. Ma ordered that no cooking was to be started before the morning, for stale food was not to be served to *Daridra Nārāyaṇa* (God in the form of the poor). Vegetables were being cut. Ma said, "We shall also cut some vegetables, we should also work for the food to be offered to *Daridra Nārāyaṇa*." So we all sat and peeled vegetables.

The next morning the people who had been fixed to come and cook did not turn up. A devotee named Mathur Babu (who worked in the Police Department) bowed before Ma and said, "The Brahmins who were to cook the meal have not yet come and it is already morning." Ma said, "Come on, we shall start the cooking." By Ma's grace Mathur Babu after a little while brought the Brahmins who were to cook, and there was no need for us to start the cooking. The whole night Ma did not let any of us sleep. She said, "If you want to serve *Daridra Nārāyaṇa*, keep awake tonight. Before every work, self-control has to be practised with perseverance." In the morning she said to me, "Pray to *Daridra Nārāyaṇa* so that he will be present at your function." Then she at once said, "Will all the Nārāyaṇas

come alright ?" Somehow I stammered while replying, "If you so desire they will come." Ma said, "See how she speaks—it seems as if there will be some confusion."

What has to happen will happen. From about eleven o'clock in the morning the boys started kirtan. The image of Goddess Saraswati was still there. Ma laughed and said, "These boys wanted this body to be present for Saraswati *pūjā*, I have come while the image is still here." The kirtan gathered in intensity. Ma became engrossed in *bhāva*. Various kinds of *kriyās* began manifesting in her body. That day also, for a few moments, she assumed a wrathful posture with upturned eyes as if she were holding a sword and battling with someone. With the onset of this mood, Ma's tongue protruded. Within a few seconds the tongue went in and there was a change in the mood. Ma now assumed a very serene aspect, full of *bhāva*. Sometimes it seemed as if she were seated on an *āsana* performing worship—she was worshipping herself. Sometimes touching her own feet with her forehead she prostrated and then became powerless. Sometimes she revolved with great speed and rolled on the ground and then became very still and lay on her back. Her breathing was such that it seemed as if waves were playing about from the navel to the throat. Then again she would lie inert. I sat and carried her in my lap. Her whole body was as cold as stone. As she became a little steady, *śaliva* started pouring from her mouth in an impossible profusion. All my clothes got wet. Tears came gushing out of her eyes and her dress was soaked in tears. Then again suddenly, her body became lifeless. Her fingers and nails turned black, and her face turned yellow like that of a corpse. One could not make out whether her pulse was beating or not, nor were there any signs of breathing. We became terrified, but Ma had told us earlier, "You should perform *nāma kīrtana*. If this body is to recover it will do so only because of this." Therefore if Ma went into such states we would only perform *nāma kīrtana*. Bholanath also sang a lot of *nāma kīrtana*..

The kirtan was going on on the second floor. At that time my father was standing in the kitchen downstairs. A man went to father and said, "Go upstairs and see how Ma is completely immersed in a wonderful *bhāva*." Father ran upstairs, but he saw that Ma was seated with her hair all scattered and her head bent down. Father very sorrowfully thought : "Today I was duped. I did not get a glimpse of that aspect of yours." Reflecting thus he sat down to do japa. After a while his eyes opened suddenly looking towards Ma, he saw that her face was jet black and the lips seemed red. He did not see her tongue protruding. Father said, "I fixed my gaze and stared two or three times, wondering whether it was an illusion of the

eyes. But it was no illusion, I saw that form clearly. A little later the colour changed and her natural fair complexion returned." Ma lay down after sometime. When she sat up again, invocations started pouring from her lips in a stream, just like before. A little later *prasāda* was distributed. Ma calmed down slightly and lay down.

At three o'clock she was roused after several attempts. Now the *Daridra Nārāyaṇas* were to be seated for their meal. Ma rose, having recovered slightly. She looked through the grill at the beggars who had assembled. She said, "I do not see a big crowd. Arrangements are ready for three thousand. I doubt if there are even half the number. I had said in the morning that they would bungle today." Ma was taken downstairs where the food was ready. That day no special offering was to be made. Ma was to see the preparations and then *prasāda* was to be distributed as per the schedule and so my father took Ma downstairs. Ma placed her hand on my shoulder and went all round and saw everything. I remember to this day, the way in which Ma gazed from within her veil, how she rotated her eyes and looked at everything at once. Ma said, "I shall also serve a little." Everyone started shouting, "Jai Ma". Ma tied the end of her sari round her waist and served. A leper arrived. Ma fed him with special affection. Later Ma wanted to pick up the left-overs of *Daridra Nārāyaṇa* (to clean the place), but Bholanath forbade it and so she refrained from doing so. Devotees and students of the school cleared up the left-overs. Several ladies had turned up to watch the feeding. Ma said, "Today we are all poor, we will all obtain this *prasāda*." And so it was. All sat together to receive *prasāda*. No distinction existed between rich and poor. *Daridra Nārāyaṇa* sat down to eat. It became terribly dark and began to rain. All were seated in the field for the meal. Suddenly Ma went out of the room towards the field and started sauntering about. After completing their meal they all got up and Ma went inside the room and sat down. Then the rain again started pouring. We reckoned that Ma had started walking about outside so that the meal would not be spoilt by the rain. I have seen a similar thing once or twice later on.

In the night, after entrusting the entire burden of organising to a gentleman, Ma went to the field where the poor had been fed and sat down to eat in the darkness, saying, "Today we are also beggars. Give us alms." The gentleman who had been put in charge, quickly brought food and began serving Ma. All the people sat around Ma. Ma did not allow a light to be brought. She said, "Why, do beggars light a lamp and eat?" After eating everyone slowly took leave.



CONVERSATION WITH WESTERN DEVOTEES

[Eleven]

—Vijayananda

Bhakti

Q : Isn't there a danger in thinking that we are a divine channel as it is understood in the devotional path ?

A : For an ordinary person it is best to content oneself with doing one's duty the best way possible. One must be a very advanced sadhaka to be able to discern between what comes from God and what comes from himself. When we say 'I am an instrument of the divine', it is already not true, because the 'I' is there and it blocks the current. Those who are truly instruments of the divine are so naturally. In *bhakti*, it is good to see the action of God in everything that happens to us, as long as we have good discrimination. In this sense the famous story of Ramakrishna has great value : a guru recommended for his disciple to see God everywhere. So when the disciple saw a mad elephant running towards him, and heard the elephant's master shouting at him to move out of the way, the disciple thought : 'Why should I move, since God is everywhere?' And the elephant ran over him. The next day he went to complain to his guru. The guru answered him: "Haven't you yet understood that if God is everywhere, he is also in the elephant's master, who told you to move?" God is always used as an excuse, he has been used as a pretext for murderous wars.

Q : Is seeing everything as coming from God essential in all spiritual practice, or is it a method practiced only on the path of devotion?

A : In all religions there is this practice which consists of bringing everything back to divine actions. But after a while, we realise nothing happens by chance. The best example of this in Hinduism are Swami Ramda's books 'In Quest of God' and 'The Vision of God'.

Q : How do we understand grace?

A : We have already seen that aside from the normal result of our efforts, there is an uncommon type of grace, grace without cause, without reason. When we take

one step, God takes ten steps. The difference between *bhakta* and *purushatta*, the one who realises as the supreme by himself, is more a question of words. The latter receives grace from the inside, the former from the outside. What we must do is to prepare ourselves to be a receptacle to receive the water which pours down.

Q : Sometimes I feel that my heart is open as it would be during a surgical operation. What to do?

A : See the joy of the experience. To stabilise the opening of the *chakras* it is better to avoid deep breathing, which moves the energy to the sides, and it is better to keep superficial breathing, because it helps to gather the energy in the middle line. As far as the ventilation of the lungs is concerned, that resembles a respiratory arrest. It is a breathing which comes spontaneously in *samadhi*. Ma once told me in English regarding this subject : 'Lungs don't breathe'.

Q : What is the usefulness of deep breathing ?

A : To push the *prana* to a different part of the body; for example it is advised after a meal to open the right nostril, which has a heating effect, which favours digestion. We can see easily if one nostril is open or closed by breathing rapidly and comparing with the other side. To open a blocked nostril, e.g. the right one, we can lie on the left side. People who have practiced can open a nostril by direct concentration.

Q : I practiced by *mantra* during an extensive period of time, but I felt that this was superimposed upon my personality.

A : When one recites a *mantra*, one must do it with love.

Q : Where does the power of a *mantra* come from?

A : There are three sources. First, there is the faith of the disciple, then there is the energy, the guru put into the *mantra*, if he is capable, and finally with a Vedic *mantra*. There is power which is inherent in the *mantra*, as a result of generations of recitations by *Rishis*.....

Q : Is there a relationship between *mantra* and *nāda*, the inner sound?

A : While reciting the *mantra*, there are three stages. Words with their meaning, the sounds of the syllables themselves, and finally a continuous *Om*, as a kind of vibration. To hear the inner sound is easier when we meditate in solitude, especially when we meditate in a cave. The first noise is that of the ocean, then the other nine

are, as described in tradition, for instance, in Nadabindu Uanishad. We can integrate the *mantra* to this sound if we repeat it indefinitely, like a tape recorder. It sounds easy to transform these sounds which are discontinuous in one continuous sound, but it is in fact very difficult. When we have reached the continuous sound, we have reached the silence of the mind.

Q : What is *bhakti*? Is it simply to merge in emotion, or is it more than that?

A : Several times Ma did something to make me merge completely in emotion, dissolve in the emotion. But I didn't want to. In fact, I don't know what would have happened if I had let myself be dissolved completely. But that was precisely the question, I didn't want to let myself be carried away in a direction where I had no power to control my mind. Perhaps if I had let myself go, I would have been a great sage. However, be it for a *bhakta* or *jnani*, it is not good to let oneself go completely. In sadhana one has much more intense emotions than in ordinary life. But that is only the beginning. Real experiences in yoga go well beyond the emotions.

Jnāna

Q : Isn't Vedanta, which doesn't include belief in a personal God, a form of atheism?

A : In reality, true atheists are unusual, because each one usually believes in his own existence, or in the existence of the outside world. So finally, everyone believes in the Self, because God is existence.

Q : How do we get rid of the ego?

A : It is only through complete realization that we can get rid of the ego. As far as the best path to follow, that depends. If we have a very strong ego, it is better to say, I am That, because everything is part of the divine, even the ego. If instead one has a weak ego, it is better to follow the path of devotion, and say, I am nothing, there is only God.

Q : Isn't Vedanta a bit too simple?

A : Some say, the theory of Vedanta is simple, but its practice is difficult, while the theory of *bhakti*, especially Vaishnavism, is complicated, but its practice is simple. In Vaishnavism, they have a number of theories on the different *lokas*, etc.....but their practice is simple, it is japa. On the other hand, the theory of Vedanta is very simple, and can be expressed in a single sentence : 'Brahman is

real, the world is illusion, the individual soul (*jivātmā*) is one with the Self (*Ātmā*), but his practice is difficult, because it is not easy to observe one's own mind without any support.

Q : How can one know if one has reached realization?

A : When the ego has completely disappeared, when there is no one left to say, 'I am realized : in the Upanishads, however, certain Rishis say : "*Vedam aham Purusham āditya varnam*" : "I know that Supreme Person (shining) with the colour of the sun". In Taittiriya Upanishad, Trishanku summarizes the knowledge in this way :

"I am there Supreme of the trees!
My fame is like a mountain peak!
Exaltedly pure, like the excellent nectar in the sun,
I am a shining treasure,
Wise, immortal, indestructible!" (Transl. D.Hume)

There are two possibilities: either the *rishis* who were saying 'I' in this manner were not completely realized, or they were giving these sayings to their disciples as a sort of *mantra* to meditate. Swami Rama Tirtha (a vedantic sage of the XXth century) used to say : 'It is a sin to believe that we are not God'.

Q : How to break the ego?

A : Why tackling this question in a negative way? Consider this matter in a positive way : why is the ego so strong? Because it has its roots something universal, in an ultimate basis of bliss.

*

*

*

A lady visitor reminds us of Swami Ramdas' answer to the question :

'What is the sex of God? 'God is neither he, nor she, nor it : it is a mystery.'
Vijayananda is asked : 'What about your experience regarding this?'

A : The Absolute is like a stone which occupies all space; there is a crystal of this stone in our heart; it is indestructible, imperishable, immortal; it is *ananda* (bliss); we should become attached to this *ananda*. Nevertheless, this Absolute may take any form and play the game of being female or male or both together.

Q : How to develop self-confidence?

A : By being disentangled from the body and mind which are changing and by becoming identified to the immortal basis which does not change. What gives its