

# **MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA**

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

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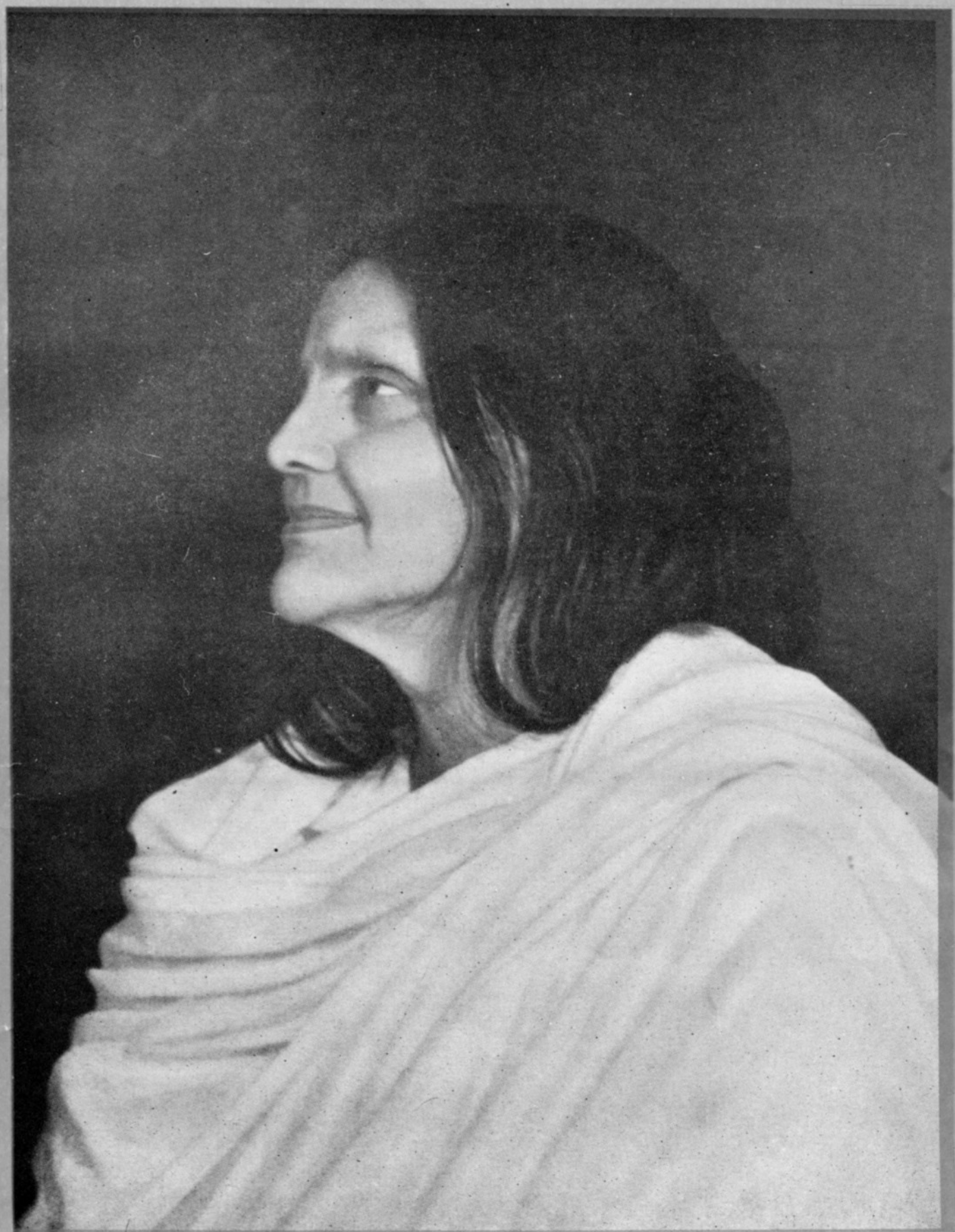
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## **MATRI VANI**

What is it that has to be attained? You will have to become conscious of your Self in its entirety, Nay, you will have to rise beyond consciousness and unconsciousness. The revelation of That what is wanted.

\* \* \*

It is thou that criest out helplessly in distress, and it is Thou Thyself that art the way and the Goal.

\* \* \*

Man should bind himself and, fixing his gaze on the One, advance along the path. Whatever ties, bonds or restraints he imposes upon himself should have for aim the Supreme Goal of life. With untrammelled energy one must forge ahead towards the discovery of one's own self.

\* \* \*

To find fault with others creates obstacles for all around : for him who criticizes, for him who is blamed as well as for those who listen to the criticism.

\* \* \*

Vedanta actually means the end of difference and non-difference. Differences do indeed exist on the path, but how can there be a difference of Goal ?

\* \* \*

Peace reigns where no coming exists and no going, no melting and no burning. Reverse your course, advance towards Him—then there will be hope of peace.

\* \* \*

Even if you donot feel inclined to meditate, conquer your reluctance and make an attempt. By your tenacity you will gain strength and be moulded. Make up your mind that however arduous the task, it will have to be accomplished.

\* \* \*

The sense of separateness is the root cause of misery, because it is founded on error, on the conception of duality. That is why the world is called *du-niya* (based on duality).

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Man thinks he is the doer of his actions, while actually everything is managed from "There"; the connection is "There", as well as the power-house. Yet, people say : 'I do'. How wonderful it is !

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Really speaking all work is your work — only how can you understand this ? Indeed the whole world is yours, of your Self, your very own.

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What will be the result of your surrender to Him ? None will seem alien, all will be your very own, your Self.

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It is the perception of the world based upon the identification of yourself with body and mind, that has all along been the source of your bondage.

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A time will come, when this kind of perception will give way before the awakening of universal consciousness, which will reveal itself as an aspect of Supreme Knowledge.

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As the individual self becomes gradually freed from all fetters, which are nothing but the veil of ignorance, it realizes its oneness with the *Paramātmā* (Supreme Spirit) and becomes established in its own Essential Being.



## **GLEANINGS FROM "IN ASSOCIATION WITH SRI MA"**

—Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

**Meeting with Yogiraj Swami Vishuddhananda Paramahansa**

**Dhaka, Ramma Ashram, 14th December, 1935 :**

Having completed my college duties, when I went to the Ashram at about 10 A.M. Ma was sitting inside the Nam-Ghar, but seeing me She came out instantly and sat down in the open, outside the ashram under a tree.

I bowed down to Ma, sat near her and said—

"Ma, please give me the account of your meeting with Baba Bishuddhananda."

Ma said, 'When this time I was coming via Varanasi, I met Babaji, but not for long. May be for half an hour or an hour at most. Gopi Baba took us there. Going there, I sat by Babaji. He had already arranged a seat for me. You know the way I speak. I pressed Babaji with a child-like importunity, 'Baba, they say you have shown magical feats to many. Do show me a few, will you?'

Babaji said, 'You are sitting quietly. Have you discovered any secret?'

I at once posed as a little girl and said, 'Baba, I am your daughter. What do I know? Shall learn what you would please to teach. Teach me all your secrets?'

Babaji then called Jyotish to him and showed him a crystal which he had made out of the petals of a flower. He also produced a number of scents. When Babaji was demonstrating these things I clapped and said, 'Baba, I can make out what you are doing. But I shall not divulge it. Then all will say to me, Ma, do tell us the secrets of Babaji. If I do so, Baba would strike me on the head with a cudgel.'

Babaji said, 'Beti (little girl) what is there that I can show you? You know all. I am demonstrating only to others.'

Next he brought some sweets and offered us to eat. He fed me and I also did the same with him. Babaji said, 'Beti, remember me. Never forget me. And whenever you come here make sure to meet me.'

Before I left I said to Gopi Baba, 'You see, Babaji is deluding you all with these demonstrations. You should not allow him to delude you. Try to elicit from him the other things that he has within him.'

Seeing that it was close to 12 noon, I took leave of Ma with these words, 'Ma, now I shall get up.'

Ma : Always try to rise. Never go down."

I smiled and said to myself, 'Ma, so be it with your blessings.'

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### Sri Subhas Chandra Bose comes to Ma

Calcutta, 20th October, 1938.

In the morning I came to learn that Ma was going to Dakshineswar by car. I also soon boarded a bus together with one of my friends. On arriving at Dakshineswar<sup>1</sup> we found that Ma was staying in Sri Sarada Ma's<sup>2</sup> cottage and Ma's *bhoga* (meal) was being prepared.

We were wandering about at random. After sometime we were called to have *prasada* of the goddess Kali. We all sat down on the veranda. Just then Sri Subhas Chandra Bose arrived to meet Ma. He also partook of the *prasada* along with us on the veranda.

After the meal, the Manager of the Dakshineswar mandir took Subhas Chandra to the *Panchavati*<sup>3</sup> and other places of interest. We also accompanied them. It was nearly 3-30 p.m. when we beheld Mataji proceeding to the *Panchavati*. An asana was spread for Sri Ma on the platform below the pipal tree. We all sat around Her. Subhas Chanda tendered his pranama to Ma and sat right in front of Her. Some time passed in silence. Neither Sri Ma nor he spoke a word.

Then Bhupati Babu introduced Subhas to Ma.

Ma : I met your brother at Ahmedabad.

Subhas : So you had been to Ahmedabad ?

Ma : Yes.

- 
1. Dakshineswar—a place near Calcutta, renowned for the famous temple of Goddess Kali, where Sri Ramakrishna did his *sadhana*.
  2. Sri Sarada Ma, consort of Sri Ramakrishna, popularly known as "Sri Ma".
  3. *Panchavati*—a grove of five sacred trees viz, Banyan, Pipal, Asoka, Bel and Amlaki, which is considered a congenial place for meditation. Sri Ramakrishna is said to have done *sadhana* on this spot.

Again silence.

I indicated to Bhupati Babu to ask Subhas whether he wished to put some questions to Ma. He said he had no questions. Again silence. Sm. Bhramar sat next to me. At her insistence I at last had to introduce some topic.

I said : Ma, can one realize God by service to one's motherland ?

Ma : (to Subhas) Baba, do please tell us whether God can be found by service to one's country.

Subhas : Am I in search of God? (Every body laughs).

Ma : (smiling) So, what is it that you pursue ?

Subhas : But that question was not addressed to me ?

Ma : It was raised in connection with yourself. (glancing at me) Was it not ?

I : Yes, Ma.

Ma : (addressing Subhas) : Now please reply. Well, why do you serve your motherland ? What do you gain by it ? If you explain to them the merits of doing so, they will all start serving their country. Nobody does anything unless he profits by it. You give such eloquent lectures, so do now speak, please.

Subhas (smiling) : But I have not come here to deliver a lecture. I derive great happiness from serving my country, that is why I do it.

Ma : Is this happiness perpetual ?

Subhas : The meaning of the word 'perpetual' is not easy to understand.

Ma : That which remains all the time is perpetual. There is perpetual happiness in carrying out the dictates of one's true Nature (*svabhāva*). If service is performed in the right spirit, lasting happiness may be found. Is this so with you, Baba ?

At this point Ma was interrupted by a lady who started talking about her own problems. I gathered from what she said that she was a teacher of the Calcutta Corporation School. She would from time to time in her dreams obtain glimpses of Sri Krishna and also His instructions. She had come to Sri Ma today also in obedience to His direction. It was her belief that Sri Krishna would perform some work for the world through her. However, off and on she would feel afraid and desperately lonely. So she implored Sri Ma to help her.

Ma said : Since you are receiving His instructions, where is the need of help ? If you rely solely on God, everything will be all right.

(Addressing Subhas) : Baba, won't you say something ?

Subhas : I have not come here to speak, I am here to listen.

Ma : If this is so, will you then listen to what this little girl has to say ? Will you do as I tell you ?

Subhas : I cannot promise, but I shall make an attempt.



Ma : Look, all work performed in connection with worldly affairs is prompted by want (*abhāva*). Certainly when this want has been fulfilled one feels happy. But remember, the happiness obtained from accomplishing worldly work merely keeps the sense of want awake. Suppose you feel the need to acquire something and to fulfil this need you start on a certain course of action. As a result of your efforts you get rid of this want and therefore are full of joy. But along with this joy some other need will arise. This is, why I say that all actions connected with worldly affairs belong to the realm of want (*abhāva*). But by following the dictates of one's true Nature (*svabhāva*) perpetual joy will result. You say it makes you happy to serve your motherland. To serve one's country is of course very good. Your heart is noble, very large, try to make it even larger. If you serve your country without enthusiasm, this will be work prompted by the sense of want and the happiness derived from it will not be lasting. But everybody desires unbroken joy, the joy that is endless. If you follow the dictates of your true Nature (*svabhāva*), this will lead to permanent joy and you will become established in bliss. Now you may well retort : What is the use of bliss for myself alone when the whole world is full of gloom ? The answer to this is that if permanent bliss is realized, it will be communicated to others.

Subhas : What exactly does '*svabhāver karma*' mean ?

Ma : Action as such arises out of want (*abhāva*) because without a sense of want there is no action. However, action that leads to permanent bliss can be called '*svabhāver karma*', action prompted by one's true Nature. *Svabhāva* is that which is man's own through all eternity. Because the kernel of perpetual bliss lies hidden within yourself. You desire this permanent bliss. You cannot want anything that is not already potentially within you.

Subhas : Is everybody's *svabhāva* the same ?

Ma : Yes, all mankind basically desires constant happiness. In this whole universe there is but ONE without a second. When people serve others it is ultimately for their own Self. Happiness is derived from serving others because in essence all are one.

Subhash : You say that the true Nature of all is the same, but the Gita states : *Sreyan svadharmā vigunah paradharmā bhayāvahah*. "Better death in the discharge of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger."

Ma : What actually is *svadharma* ? The *dharma* of your true Nature is your *svadharma*. *Sadhana* is performed in order to fulfil one's *svadharma* (one's real duty). This body has no learning, so it speaks in an incoherent fashion. The effort to realize your inherent wealth *sva dhana* I call *sadhana*. The words of the

Bhagavad Gita are infallible indeed. To attain to the *dharma* of one's *sva bhāva* is the aim of mankind.

Subhas : But it is also true that different people have different natures. Nobody knows where his real duty lies.

Ma : Even though people's dispositions and inclinations (*samskāras*) vary, there is one *dharma* for everyone. Truth is one.

Subhas : But one cannot know by one's own efforts how to proceed.

Ma : Having started working in this direction, if you continue steadily, everything will fall into place. Then, whatever tendencies (*samskāras*) have been lying dormant in each person are aroused. Look, children do not feel inclined to study. But if for some time you compel them to pursue their studies, you will observe that each child does well in a different subject. One may excel in English, another in mathematics. So also when people start on this quest, it is seen after some time that they are advancing each according to their inherent dispositions.

Subhas : But you have not yet indicated a definite path.

Ma (smiling) : You will have to set to work. You must resolve : 'I will study.'

Myself : Ma, your reply is unclear. You say everybody desires uninterrupted happiness. Subhas babu finds happiness by serving his country. So should we understand that by serving one's motherland one can attain to perpetual joy and to God-realization ?

Ma : The service must be done with one's whole being. One must see to it that really genuine service is performed.

Subhas : There is a particular method for doing service. It is difficult to find the correct method.

Ma : The difficulties of choosing the right path are considerable and on the path the maximum toil is required. But just as you acquire knowledge, if you firmly make up your mind to study, so if you are totally and completely determined to realize THAT, you are bound to find the right path.

Subhas : While groping in darkness it is difficult to find the correct path.

Ma : Yes, but one has to start walking in darkness. Don't you call faith blind ? Taking recourse to this blind faith one must begin one's work. Later everything will be understood. When children start learning, do they understand anything ? Yet by protracted study knowledge supervenes.

Subhas : All the same, if the correct path is known, precious time can be saved.

At this stage the lady teacher from the Corporation School again volunteered : "If all of you permit me, I think I can explain the matter."

Ma : All right, do !

Now the lady started talking on work free from desire for results as expounded in the Gita. But Ma interrupted her, saying : "O Ma, all this is very well known to him. (Subhas Bose).

Whether due to these frequent interruptions or for some other reason, the conversation between Subhas Bose and Ma did not gather any momentum. We all felt somewhat frustrated.

Before leaving, Subhas asked Sri Ma : "For how long will you be here ?

Ma : Nothing has yet been decided This body has not been keeping good health for some time. Before coming here from Hardwar, the doctor examined this body and said travelling was not advisable. Later when the trouble subsided somewhat, the journey to Calcutta was undertaken. There is some talk no

w of proceeding to Dhaka. They so very kindly take care and look after this body, so I have put the full responsibility on them.

These words Sri Ma uttered like a little girl in broken sentences. How sweet this sounded I just cannot convey.

Subhas Bose tendered his *pranama* and took his leave. A little later Sri Ma also was taken away from the *Panchavati*.



**"Even though the Goal is the same, the paths taken by different people are of great variety. Some choose the path of knowledge, others of seva. But the objective is the same."**

**—Ma Anandamayee**

# CONVERSATION WITH WESTERN DEVOTEES

[Twelve]

—Vijayananda

## DETACHMENT

**Q:** What is to be said to those - at present many in the West-who don't have the slightest idea about the importance of detachment?

**A:** At their own level, people in the world are right when they say that religion is a load of rubbish, for they do not feel anything when they meditate; and the sadhakas are right when they say that the world is rubbish, because they do not feel anything when thinking of or looking at worldly pleasures.

A young French man had tried to go into a one month retreat with only one book, Freud's 'Interpretation of Dreams' and had attempted to dive into the realm of sleep. He had lost himself in it, had stayed three months in a psychiatric hospital and had been intelligent enough to realize that he needed expert advice to explore his inner world. He had come to India, including Kankhal, where he had done six weeks of a sustained and balanced sadhana. He asked : Does detachment not lead to depersonalization?

**A:** Look at me : I am perfectly detached and yet perfectly grounded.

**Q:** Should the guru push his disciples towards renunciation?

**A:** If someone asks a guru, 'should I renounce the world?' his answer will almost always be, 'No'. The one who has the true spirit of renunciation does not ask questions; for him, this is obvious, he quits the world as someone would run away from a burning house.

Ramakrishna tells a story connected to this : a wife tells her husband : 'I am afraid that my brother may become a renunciate; he trains himself to do more and more spiritual practices, gradually decreases his food intake, sleeps less and less.' 'Do not worry', says the husband, 'he doesn't have the true spirit of detachment'. 'What do you know about it?' replies the wife. 'See, this is the true spirit of detachment'. The husband takes his dhoti (a long piece of cloth worn around the waist), tears it into two parts and puts it as the brahmacharis do, and then goes away never to return.

**Q:** Do you think that at the time of death, special practices of concentration are needed, or is it better to be completely detached?

**A:** The Masters who take the lotus pose or try to bring the *prāna* out of the *sahasrāra* show by this very fact that they are not realized. The realized sage's energy is everywhere. He does not have to take out his *prāna*. One Upanishad says of such a sage : '*Na tasya utkramante*', 'he is the one out of whom *prāna* does not leave'. Ramana Maharshi's or Ma Anandamayee's passing away have not been spectacular; nothing occurred. The dead leaf simply fell from the tree.

### **ACTION, COMPASSION**

**Q:** Is it possible to reach realization simply by serving humanity?

**A:** No, we can purify our mind, obtain good *karma* and go for some time to heavens, but we will have to be reborn. As for the sage, he is completely free; he can take a new birth out of compassion, as states Ma Amritanandamayee, or out of play (*lila*). Or else he can choose not to be born again, because he is fed up. (With a smile) I am afraid it is the case with Ma. Then, he or she becomes merged in the universal Consciousness. The compassion of a perfect *jnani* is spontaneous, while that of a *bodhisattva* comes from a vow, hence from a will and this very fact creates a *karma*.

To a young woman who is unsure of her willingness to start a *sadhana* leading to detachment:

**V:** You must ponder, take a firm resolve and harmonize intellect and heart. Then, a genuine intensity will appear, and what was a snowball in the beginning will become an avalanche. When you start working seriously, powers come to help you. When I was in France, I had already enough intensity to weep when simply hearing the word 'guru'. Mrs. Blavatsky says in 'The Voice of Silence' : 'It is the boldness of the heart which enlightens the way'.

**Q:** Is it indispensable to leave the world to obtain realization?

**A:** There are two points of view. The practical one, according to which leaving the world is very useful for a *sadhaka*, helping him to reach a good spiritual level. Afterwards, he can come back to it because he is very strong. There have been schools in India, Theravada Buddhism, Vijnanavada and a few late Vedantic schools as well that used to teach the notion of the complete unreality of the world. This attitude can be useful for some time to the *sadhaka* to develop a spirit of detachment; but this is not the position of Mahayana

Buddhism which believes that the world (*samsara*) and *nirvana* are one. Neither is it the case in the path I follow, Vedanta, which states that the world is not real since it is not pure Consciousness. As a substance, it is as real as water, but as a movement it is as transitory as the wave; but even there, it cannot be said that it is completely unreal; we just do not understand where its reality lies. It is said in Katha Upanishad : 'What is here is over there, what is over there is here; he who sees a difference goes from death to death.'

**Q:** Can't we see a touch of sentimentalism in those who say : 'I want to save the world', even if this looks nice socially?

**A:** The *jnani* is quite beyond that. Ma has never said she wanted to save the world, but all the same she has helped a great number of people. Genuine compassion is spontaneous, it is not in words but in actions.

### YOGA AND THE WEST

**Q:** Vijayananda, for forty years now you have been seeing Westerners on a spiritual quest passing through India; in your opinion, what is the main obstacle which impedes their progress on the Path?

**A:** They do not understand the utility of detachment. They make me think of the monkey in the story : a trap has been prepared for it : It consists of a cage whose bars are just far enough apart for its hand to sneak in and to grasp a banana inside; but when it wants to remove its hand with the banana, it is unable to do so. Then, the monkey hunter can take his time to arrive. The monkey, too greedy to give up its prey, let itself be caught by the scruff of the neck and says: 'Even if I loose my freedom, I will keep the banana!' At this juncture, the hunter strikes the monkey's elbow with a stick, and it has to loose its hold; thus, it has lost both its freedom and its banana.'

**Q:** What is in your opinion the main difference between East and West in their approach to the Absolute?

**A:** First, there is the duality between God and the creature which is fundamental in the West and which is much attenuated in the East : for instance every Hindu knows that God is inside him and that He is not different from his innermost Self. On the other hand, in the West, people are influenced by the Greek philosophy and they believe that they can reach the Absolute by discussion. In India, discussion is secondary. It is acknowledged that some sages have reached the Absolute and can give practical means to achieve it, and that's all. Yoga is a science : if one repeats the same experiment in the

same condition, he will have the same result. We have already said beforehand that one reason for the relative absence of sages in the West is that Westerners do not have the capacity of spontaneous trust which could enable them to blossom. This is why Jesus could not perform miracles in Nazareth. People would not trust him as a sage or as a divine incarnation, because they only projected an ordinary man - their former neighbour-on him.

A student from Paris : 'Is there not a contradiction between Art and Realization?'

V: No, they only are different stages. Beauty is an attribute of the Divine, its search can lead towards Realization. When a genius is inspired, he is inspired by this very reality. I mean that for a genius, not for an ordinary artist.

Q: Spiritual teachers, who are not realized, think that they however render service to others by guiding them. Is it right?

A: It is true that in the West, still more than in India, many teachers think so. They give up an intensive practice to perform what they think to be a service; some even say that they have received from their spiritual master the order to do so. But they help by words; should they have a superior level of realization, they could help many more people more efficiently.

Q: Is objectivity in relationships possible?

A: My first guru in France, who was a psychiatrist, used to say a Vedantic truth very well in his own way: 'Everyone hallucinates in his small corner.' In this sense, the world is a huge asylum.

To a student from Paris who has got a catholic education and who complains of a 'small voice' which persecutes him:

V: It is your interest, your negative concentration on it which gives it strength. This type of concentration-the endeavour not to think-is easier for the mind than the positive concentration itself. Do you know the story of the lover who comes to a magician asking for a spell to get back his beloved. The man of the art told him: 'Recite this formula, but over all, do not think of a monkey while reciting it'. Needless to say, the very fact of trying not to think of a monkey makes him think of it.....The best is to remain indifferent, to have no interest at all in this negativity. If you do not succeed in it, you can recite a formula which is dear to you. 'I greet you, Mary...'for instance.

Q: How to get rid of the negativity?

A: Think that you are the Self which does not move.

**Q:** But practically?

**A:** You must repeat, repeat, repeat.

**Q:** Is it self-persuasion?

**A:** Yes, somehow. But since this is something true, something real, it is permissible to persuade oneself in this direction.

**Q:** Is it not strange that the Self, which is nearest to you, is also the most difficult to observe.?

**A:** The Self is the one who sees. Observing one's own eye is difficult. Speaking of this, there is the well-known story of ten people crossing a river. Eventually, they want to count themselves to know if everyone has reached safely, but at every try they can count only nine of them, until a passer-by arrives and says to the one who has just counted his friends: 'You are the tenth'. Being conscious of the Self is difficult, but not impossible.

**Q:** What is the meaning of suffering?

**A:** It wakes us up : the most difficult people to awaken spiritually are those who pretend to be happy. We can see this for instance with couples who pretend to be happy for the show when they are in society, but in reality they are not much so. They can barely do anything but constantly tolerate the other's defects and resign themselves to it.

**Q:** How to explain the paradoxical energy which comes to people when they go beyond their limits?

**A:** Many people, when they go beyond their limits, have a cosmic force which comes to help them, be it called the 'Power of the other' or Kundalini, be it thought of in the upper or in the lower part of the body. One cannot reduce these phenomena, or ecstasies, to a mere chemical secretion. Wanting to explain everything through chemistry is a XIXth century vision. The fact is that we are connected to the outer world, we are not isolated. Now, this notion is emerging, even in science.

A Californian psychotherapist, who has strong mystical characteristics, but at the same time some difficulties to remain balanced, says all of a sudden in the conversation: 'I feel I am becoming crazy!'

**V:** Become crazy for God!

**Q:** I feel to weep.

**A:** Tears are pearls; weeping for God purifies.

**Q:** I feel I am a pregnant woman.

**A:** Be pregnant with the God-child.

**Q:** I feel I am shrinking : soon nothing will be left of me.



A: That is the best; when nothing remains, you will see God.

A young woman disciple of Ma : 'Are not wounds from the past the greatest obstacle in sadhana?

V: Let the past be healed by itself. When you succeed in really being in the present, you succeed in 90% of your sadhana.

To an elderly Western man who complains of the immorality of today's youth:

V: In the Hindu scriptures, it is said that in Kali Yuga (the worst of the four eras, usually associated with our times), people die younger and younger; but at present, people die older and older. This means that we are coming back to Satya Yuga. I do not believe that our epoch is Kali Yuga.

Q: Do you believe in the possibility of a Christian Vedanta?

A: Looking for a Christian Vedanta is somehow an impossibility, because Christianity is dualist and Vedanta non-dualist. However, Ramana Maharshi was right when he was advising Christians to meditate directly on 'I am who I am'. This definition of God by himself is pure Vedanta. The very word '*Yahwe*' contains past, present and future. From another point of view, the Western system has its advantages as well : frankly dualist for the people, and with a non-dualistic tendency for mystics. In any case, a mystic who has a true realization, whatever path he may follow, cannot speak of it. Vedanta is not a description of reality, it is simply a path to reach it. By focussing on the Self, on the *mahāvākya* (a 'great utterance' such as 'You are That') as a kind of mantra, one experiences Reality, but it is not a description.

Q: Do we find among biblical saints the same will to go beyond the body as is found in Yoga?

A: Yes; for instance, the version of Rabbi Akiba's death, I prefer, is the following: he has been captured by the Roman and sentenced to death; the punishment consists in being torn to shreds with iron combs. During this torture, his surrounding disciples were asking him: 'How can you be so shining? You have made so much good in your life; how aren't you resentful to God, who has abandoned you in this manner? The Rabbi answered by taking the daily Jewish prayer: "Shema Israel" : "Today is the most beautiful day in my life. I knew I was loving God with all my heart (*Levaha*), with all my power (*meodeha*), but was not sure to be able to love Him with all my vital being (*nefesh*); now, I know that I am capable of it.'

Q: What do you think of the link relation between celibacy and religion in the West?

- A:** There were great men like Tolstoy who used to preach celibacy. One day he was asked: Should everybody follow your advice, would not the human species be extinguished? He answered ; 'There will always be enough idiots to have children.' In spite of this opinion, we may wonder if the weakening of the Catholic Church in the long run does not come from the fact that this elite has no progeny, unlike the Reformed Church for instance. In this sense, the brahmanical system where one first gets married to have children and then only later renounces the world may be healthier; but this is a mere hypothesis, those phenomena are difficult to prove.
- Q:** After forty-five years in India, do you feel you are a Hindu?
- A:** When will human beings understand there is only one religion, that of man? The various religions are merely sects, and these sects create wars.
- Q:** Could the solution be a return to the religion of nature? As a hermit you spent seven years in the solitude of the Himalayas fully surrounded by nature and facing a scenery of year-around snow; what do you think about this?
- A:** There is no reason to be attached to nature as such. Natural beauty is a reflection of the Supreme Beauty, its silence an echo of the Supreme Silence. What attracts us in nature is a mirror-like effect, but we should not take the reflection for the real thing. In this sense, there is no reason to come back to the cult of nature found for instance in animism.
- Q:** Do you think that the Song of Solomon and its spiritual teaching may be useful to people who follow an Eastern spiritual path?
- A:** Yes, for instance, one night, the lover comes to the door of the beloved; she is not ready and makes him wait; so that when she opens, he is no longer there, and she has to go out in search of him. As many others, I have often lost chances that Ma was offering me. When God's or guru's grace occurs, we should not let the opportunity go away. Just before this episode, the beloved say: 'I sleep, but my heart is awaken. "This is a hint to the state of meditation.
- Q:** Can Bhagavad Gita help us in understanding what can be genuine spiritual teachings?
- A:** In the last chapter of the Gita (XVIII-63), Krishna says : 'I have revealed to you the Knowledge, the mystery of mysteries. Ponder deeply on this, and do as you like.' Yet, Krishna was both guru and God. He could have easily said, 'Obey me, if not I will send you to hell'. But left the freedom to his disciple and told him : 'Do as you wish'.
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## PURNA . BRAHMA NARAYANI

—Antonio Eduardo Dagnino

**Om Ma**

With tenderness,  
with the longing of the blazing day  
for the cool, infinite night,  
with the humility of the earth  
open to the rains :  
With pleasure and pain as altar,  
and the accumulation of past actions  
good or bad, conscious or unconscious  
as ghee to be poured in the sacred fire;  
With passion as the flames  
and the mysterious unfathomable mind  
as the wind that feeds the flames;  
With the whole of life  
the throb, the pulsating energy,  
the wonderful diversity of forms and beings,  
the toil, the contradictions, the battles,  
as the sacrificial field,  
with Time as priest  
and Death as witness :  
I adore you,  
I exalt you,  
I fall at your all-pervading feet.

With fear of losing what is left of my old self,  
and yet desperate to melt that ugliness  
in your light.

With fear of dying finally  
to the torturing egotism that limits love  
and shuts me off from your beauty,  
and yet desperate to see with your eyes.  
With fear of never being able

to purify wholly what obscures virtue,  
 and yet certain that without virtue  
 there can be no joy.  
 With fear of smallness, limitation, guilt;  
 self-created prisons  
 that have to be burnt  
 by the fire of your transcendental inspiration.  
 With fear of myself—  
 I offer myself in sacrifice.

## MA IS OMNIPRESENT

—A devotee

On the eve of 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2001 I met a Canadian lady with her husband in the lawns of the International Guest House in Kankhal. She was about 60 years of age. I asked her, "When did you meet Ma?" She then told me as under—

She had a dream about a lady in white clothes whom she had never met and the lady was saying to her with open arms, "Come here." After a few days she had the same dream. She ran towards her and the lady embraced her. Then the lady in white clothes fed her like a mother and she felt that while sucking the milk light was entering her body. As she told me this the Canadian lady's eyes were overflowing with tears of joy. She said that she wondered who the lady in white was and where she could find her. After a few days something astonishing happened. She went to somebody's house with her friend and saw the photograph of the lady who had appeared in her dreams. She enquired who the lady was and was told that she was Ma Anandamayee. She then started searching about Ma on the internet, but was unable to get further information. She enquired from one of the bookstores and was given the address and phone number of the Varanasi ashram from one of Ma's books. From there she called the Varanasi ashram. Sri Panu Brahmachari attended her phone call and when she told him that she wanted to visit Ma's ashram he advised her to first go to Kankhal Ashram and meet Swami Vijoyanandji. She has now met Swamiji and Swamiji has told her in details about Ma and has advised her to study books of Ma.

# THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

[Continued from before]

—P.C.Mehta

## 1. Historical :

The Vedic period ended at about 487 B.C. being the date of *mahānirvāna* of Gautam Buddha. To this period belong the revealed literature called 'Sruti'. Then started the Sanskrit or classical period. The first part of it known as the 'early post-Vedic period', lasted till the beginning of the Christian era. The latter part of it is described as 'the age of systems'.

The exact interval between the close of the Vedic period and the beginning of the period of the systems is uncertain. But without doubt a considerable time has elapsed. Jacobi places 'Mimamsa sutra' about 300-200 B.C. the 'Vaisesika sutra' about 100 B.C. and the 'Nyaya sutra' a little later.

This period of interval was a period of great intellectual stir both in India and Greece. It marks the beginning of western philosophy. During this period two divergent thought currents, one having its source in the Vedas which is called orthodox and the other independent of it, which is called heterodox, have through their interactions on each other, brought about richness and variety to Indian philosophy. Both the schools barring materialism have i) *Moksa* or liberation as the goal of life and ii) asceticism as the life style to achieve it.

We now turn to the growth of Indian thought between the close of Vedic period and the beginning of the age of the systems. Though heterodox thought patterns existed from early times, they now emerged with greater emphasis and formed definite schools of thought to contend with. The rift between orthodox and heterodox thought patterns has never since been fully mended.

The heterodox systems are i) materialism ii) Jainism and iii) Buddhism. Jainism and Buddhism preached only the exoteric teachings which were appropriate for the listeners of the time. So far, Hinduism had laid greater emphasis on esoteric teachings and as we saw, while dealing with the Upanisads, this teaching was secretly imparted only to pupils of tried character and jealously guarded from the unworthy. Now the time had come for greater emphasis on exoteric teachings suitable to the masses. This was provided by the Mahabharata. It contained the

exoteric Hindu teachings in substance, if not in form and was available to all. The declared teachings of Jainism and Buddhism were realistic. As we saw before 'pluralism or the belief that the ultimate entities are many and realism or the belief that matter is as real as spirit or mind, are not unknown to the Upanisads taken as a whole. They are not prominent, but appear as reminders of the various angles covered in the Vedas'. Now Hinduism gave greater emphasis to realism and the cosmic or *saprapanca* aspect of absolutism, thereby ushering in well defined theism.

Thus the two notable features of this period common to both orthodox and heterodox schools are that the teachings were realistic and made available to all without distinction of caste or sex.

The chief sources of information for this period are :

- 1) For heterodox opinion they are Prakrit including Pali and Ardhamagadhi literature as well as what is found in the Sanskrit writings.
- 2) As regards orthodox thought they are :

i) some of the minor *Upanisads*, ii) the three classes of *Kalpa sutras*, being *srauta*, *grhya* and *dharma*, in which the ritualistic aspect of the Vedas is dealt with in short aphorisms. Their aim is the systematization of ceremonials, iii) the older sections the of Mahabharata is a store house of post-Vedic mythology and doctrine and human wisdom. Its drawback is that therein the orthodox and heterodox doctrines are mixed up, iv) the *Bhagavad Gita* and v) the *Markandeya Purāna*.

Before we go further, let us look at the Smriti literature and the Puranas.

## 2. The Smriti literature :

The word *Smriti* in Sanskrit means 'that which is remembered' in contradistinction to *Sruti* or that which is heard. We have dealt with these terms before. The *Sruti* is of the utmost holiness because it is thought to have been supernaturally revealed. All of the Vedas, inclusive of the Brahmanas, Āranyakas and Upanisads, is *Sruti*. *Smriti* is next in holiness and includes the entire body of sacred tradition, what is remembered by human teachers. In the *Smriti* are included the six *Vedāngas*, meaning 'limbs of the Vedas', the most famous *Manu-Smriti* or the laws of Manu, the two great Epics, being the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the Puranas and the literature called *Niti sāstras*, being literature dealing with worldly wisdom, such as the book of fables, known as the *Panchatantra* and the well-known *Artha-Sāstra* of Kautilya, which is a work on the science of polity.

## 3. The Vedangas :

The six Vedangas or 'the limbs of the Vedas' are i) rituals, ii) phonetics, iii) grammar, iv) etymology, v) metrics and vi) astronomy. Learning on these subjects

