

# MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

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## CONTENTS

1.	Matri Vani	...	1
2.	Replies to written queries .....	...	3
	— <i>Vijayananda</i>		
3.	A young man's journey	...	10
	— <i>Elizabeth Sims Moore</i>		
4.	The Passing away of Baba Bholanath	...	16
	— <i>Bithika Mukerji</i>		
5.	The fundamentals of Indian Philosophy	...	20
	— <i>P.C. Mehta</i>		
6.	The Divine Mother	...	27
	— <i>Antonio Eduardo Dagnino</i>		
7.	Our fourth trip to India	...	29
	— <i>Shraddha Davenport</i>		
8.	Offer to me .....	...	37
	— <i>Jaya D. Kania</i>		
9.	Deity of flowers	...	38
	— <i>'Shobha'</i>		
10.	The holy birth place	...	40
	— <i>Dr. S.C. Chandra</i>		

## MATRI VANI

When meditation occurs spontaneously, then only it is real meditation. It must come of itself, effortlessly.

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Let no gaps interrupt your attempt, for a gap will produce an eddy, whereas your striving must be continuous like the flowing of oil, it must be sustained, constant, an unbroken stream.

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Nobody is able to predict when for any particular individual that fateful Moment will reveal itself, Therefore keep on striving ceaselessly.

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The more ardent your pursuit the vaster the possibilities that will open out for you, and in proportion to your advance, suffering will diminish and not increase again.

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Body means perpetual change that which is ever moving away. But in the state when death may be said to be dead, can there be any question of a body ?

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If the teacher himself is in the state of ignorance, and the question is asked by one also in ignorance, how can there be even an expectation of the revelation of real knowledge ?

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Like a restless child, unconcerned with good or bad, you seek Supreme Bliss, never satisfied with transitory happiness and therefore ever wandering.

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How can you possibly be at rest until you have discovered a way to the Supreme Reality, until you become wholly absorbed in your source, reposing in your own self.

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In your innermost heart you know that you are free; that is why it is in your nature to yearn for freedom.

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Do not forget that it is the very mind which is the *mahayogi*, yes indeed the sublime *yogi*.

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As one is released from bondage, the destructible is destroyed, the Beloved alone shines forth.

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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

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## REPLIES TO WRITTEN QUERIES

by

FOREIGN DEVOTEES

—Vijayananda

### 1) About Ma

**Q :** *People often speak of Ma's look, that she used to gaze at some people for a long time; or did she not need that to impart what she wanted to ?*

**V :** A look is a full part of a facial countenance. It can communicate more clear and direct message than verbal phrases, because it directly expresses *bhava* (basic mood or spiritual state). That is why Ma, like other great sages, often used this medium to transmit a teaching or even simply to communicate a remark without needing to use words. Of course, Ma did not require to look at someone to give him a spiritual awakening. She could do it while being apparently busy with someone else or even from a distance.

In the beginning with Ma, I did not know any Hindi or Bengali (Ma did not speak English) and I used to communicate with her by look or simply by mental transmission. To take an example, I remember the first celebration of Ma's birthday which I attended. It must have been in Ambala, a big town in Punjab. At that time, the function was still very simple. Ma was lying on a small wooden bed and seemed to be in a state akin to deep sleep. Her devotees used to say that on these occasions she was entering *nirvikalpa samadhi*. In this state, empirical world has disappeared and an ocean of Bliss-Consciousness is left. At that time I was very attached to Ma's physical presence and I would have liked to have her near me always. I was sitting in front, at a short distance from Ma's bed. I was feeling quite bad that Ma had escaped into *samadhi* and said to myself. 'Ma went very far from us into *nirvikalpa samadhi*'. Almost immediately, Ma sat on her wooden bed, opened her eyes and intently gazed at me. It was a very long look full of tenderness which clearly conveyed that : 'No, I'm not far away from you, I'm always present in your heart'.

**Q :** *Ma's birthday centenary came to an end (May 1995-May 1996). It enabled us to remember temporal aspect of her life, its important events and so on. Now, how does one mediate on her timeless aspect ?*

**V :** Ma said that she came among us because there was an appeal which had attracted her on our plane of existence. We suppose that there was a group of spiritually advanced people with an intense devotion towards the female aspect of the Divine who made this appeal; but in reality, from where did she come ? Of course, these matters cannot possibly be conceived by mind. However, roughly speaking, we can say that there is a mass of Consciousness-Bliss, which has neither form nor place, but which is the support and basis of everything which exists. Modern scientists come near to this when they speak of a *unified field* which is the basis of every atom, molecule, etc.

So what appeared to us in the physical form of Ma was somehow a crystallization of the Omnipresent. Thanks to it, we could contact the Supreme in an easier way. The physical form has been removed from our visual field, but the Supreme of which she was the condensation is still the same. It (or She) will always answer our call if we do it with a devotion which is intense enough. Of course, most people cannot directly contact the formless and need a visual support. For those who were touched by this divine apparition which Ma Anandamayi was (even if they did not meet Her personally), a photo, reading a book or a meditation in front of the *samadhi* (tomb) can produce the necessary intensity so that the call might be effective.

## **II) Sadhana**

### **1) Generalities**

**Q :** *Is it better to meditate at a fixed time by disciplining one's body and mind or to meditate when we feel the need ?*

**V :** At the beginning of a sadhana, it is very useful to set a clear program for oneself and to meditate as far as possible at the same time and at the same place. One should sit during the duration which was decided on even if one does not feel like meditating. In this way, a habit will be developed, a good habit which will become a need, almost an addiction. Habit originates in *tamaguna* (the force of inertia) and from there comes its strength. The power of *tamas* lies in the fact that it is the inverted image of the Supreme : immutable, active, ever at rest. Hence *tamas* is such a considerable obstacle. But it is

possible to use this force by creating good habits for oneself, and the habit to meditate regularly is one of the best. This does not prevent one from meditating at any time whenever one feels like.

**Q :** *What is the relationship between marriage and spiritual life ?*

**V :** For those who want to reach the top of spiritual life (*moksha, nirvana, illumination, Self-Realization*), perfect chastity is a necessity, but those who can and want to reach this stage are very rare. The path of celibacy remains an exceptional one. This is why great sages have established and taught progressive paths leading an ordinary person from one stage to another until he or she has enough maturity to face this great problem, which is the discovery of Supreme Reality, and marriage is one of these stages. Sexual energy in a common human being must be channeled, then sublimated and divinized. Relationship between a man and a woman are part of nature, but of the inferior aspect of it (*aparā prakriti*). A level exists where this union occurs on the plane of pure consciousness without physical contact. In the usual marriage, man should consider his wife as an aspect of Divine Mother and the wife should see in her husband a manifestation of the male Divinity. Thus a relationship of mutual love and respect will develop which will eventually lead to the genuine love which is impersonal. And sexual relationships must be as rare as possible so that *sadhakas* might be prepared to reach the Supreme when the time comes.

**Q :** *May we consider anger as an addictive drug ? How does one overcome it ?*

**V :** The psychological mechanism of anger is as follows : the departure point is always a sensation of discomfort coming from our body which makes us ill at ease. The instinctive tendency is to free ourselves from it as quickly as possible and to come back to a state of euphoria. This sensation is not generally in the field of clear consciousness and mind tries to find a cause in the outer world to which it could attribute this feeling of being ill at ease and by destroying this cause it hopes to regain its balance. If an individual suddenly comes and abuses you or has rude behavior, that's it ! He is the one which is the cause of your uneasy feeling !

Mind then calls on this basic energy which is always present in *mulādhāra* and transforms it in a destructive force which is called anger. It directs it towards its enemy. Uneasiness, being projected outward, disappear from the



field of clear consciousness. The energy which was temporarily freed gives him a pleasant feeling of power, but when the fit of anger subsides, it is changed into a depression and the uneasy feeling comes back to the fore.

Another fit of anger and the same process takes place. An association of ideas is established between uneasiness and this anger which relieves it for some time. Then for certain people an addiction to the fits of anger occurs. They find an impression of power and a relative euphoria in them. Naturally, there is all the bad *karma* which is created by these fits of anger and which will have to be repaid by other sufferings. How to be cured from anger ? First, seeing clearly this mechanism of projection of an uneasy sensation toward an outer object. And also understanding all the sufferings imposed on others and oneself when we get angry. As scriptures say, anger is one of the doors to hell.

## 2) Psychology of *sadhana*

**Q :** *What is the real nature of the ego ?*

**V :** Ego is this entity (*ahamkār* in sanskrit) which makes us believe that we are a different personality from others, which gives us the feeling of 'I', 'I am'. It is also the root of our mind on which the whole superstructure of our thoughts and emotions is based; but it is only an empirical reality and exists simply as long as we have not yet discovered the play of illusion which created it. Our mind is a very complicated machine, but has no consciousness by itself. The uppermost part of the mind is *buddhi* (intellect) which decides and discriminates between what should be done or not; but intellect is deprived of consciousness, if left alone. It becomes animated when pure Consciousness, *Ātman*, reflects itself in it. Then it becomes this composite entity called ego. It participates in the nature of *Ātman*, i.e., Consciousness-Bliss, but with the limitations which its support, the mind, as well as the *prānic* and physical body, impose on it.

**Q :** *Is there no danger in constantly controlling mind ?*

**V :** Everything depends upon the method which is employed. it should be done skillfully and by adapting oneself to the variation of one's mind. This is similar to the way a rider behaves with a horse which he wants to tame. he or she should strike or hurt him as little as possible. Suppression of emotions should be avoided as far as one can, but this ought not to be taken as an axiom because there are cases where it is necessary. There are circumstances

where it is morally or socially harmful to yield to an emotion or to a forbidden act. In these cases suppression is a must, but on the other hand there is no danger at all to constantly check the mind. Danger would be in loosening the control. The best would be to consider one's mind as a child that we love and to make him understand what is for his own good. Mind ever looks for happiness and peace because it is its intimate nature and it is conscious of it; but it looks for happiness in the wrong direction, in reflected images like in a mirror. One should explain this error to it. And once it has understood, it will behave as a friend and will put all its attention in the good direction.

**Q :** *But who really controls the mind ?*

**V :** Control of mind and extinction of the thinking process should be distinguished. Control of mind consists of having under his sway negative emotions such as fear, sexual desire, greediness, anguish, anxiety, jealousy, etc. These emotions are part of the *tāmasic* and *rājasic* mind. Hence one should cultivate *satvic* states of mind, like serenity, softness, goodness, inner peace, thoughts going towards the Divine, etc. This work is accomplished by a purified intellect, i.e., a *satvic* ego. Ego is used to root out negative emotions. If a thorn went into our flesh, another thorn may be used to take it out. Once this is done, both thorns may be disposed of. When mind is purified, what is left is a *satvic* ego through which one can see Reality like a transparent veil through which someone can be seen. This *satvic* ego must also be dissolved so that we might be identified with the Real, because the joy and satisfaction in being a pure and saintly person is also a golden cage which imprisons you. Generally, by Guru's grace only this last bondage can be broken.

**Q :** *Can we indirectly dissolve ego without going through the control of the various layers of mind ?*

**V :** Yes, this is possible, but in those cases mental layers manifest themselves while we progress. For instance, in the path of devotion the ultimate goal is dissolution of ego in the Beloved; but before reaching that final stage, many obstacles will arise and they will do it from a mind that we must learn to know and master.

In Karma-Yoga, we attack ego at the root right from the beginning. This root is the wrong belief that is 'I' who acts, 'I' who reaps the fruit of actions. We will have to get rid of this illusion by performing actions only for the joy of a work which is well done, without caring for results, i.e., being indifferent

to success or failure. There again, obstructions built by mind will oblige us to know it and to master it. In the Path of knowledge-if one follows instructions given by Ramana Maharshi- one directly tackles the ego by wondering 'Who am I in reality ?' But before being able to find the solution of this problem, facing the storms of mind, knowing it and mastering it, will be necessary.

**Q :** *In the Upanishads, one speaks of rasa (the essence of happiness) which motivates all our actions and thoughts. Could you elaborate ?*

**V :** Sanskrit words have different meanings according to the context where they are used. It is so for the word *rasa*; but in Taittiriya Upanishad this word is used with a special meaning (II, 7). *Rasa* is there the very substance out of which the Divine is made. *Raso vaisha*, this in truth is Brahman. In all objects of desire what we are looking for is the pleasure they give us, ie, the *rasa*, the taste of these objects. These pleasures are only a reflection of the Supreme *Rasa*, he who gets this *rasa* becomes happy, *ananda bhavati*, the Upanishad says. All our movements, all our thoughts, even our respiration is moved by this Supreme Happiness which pervades space.

**Q :** *(An Italian visitor) Where can bliss be found ?*

**V :** Bliss, *Ananda* is everywhere, it is the basis, the essential motivation for all our actions, in fact of our life. Taittiriya Upanishad says : *Who then would act, who would breathe if this bliss was not in space ?* This base of all existence, the unified field of *physicians*, is made of an undivided mass of Consciousness-Bliss, *Chidananda*. We perceive it through the thick veil of our mental agitation. Clouds hide the sun, but even the black colour is visible because the sun is behind them.

**Q :** *Sometimes you say that one must face up to one's fears, and even one's desire and at other times that it is better to look at the mind on the side. Is that not contradictory ?*

**V :** Yes, the right method to look at the mind is 'from the side' by concentrating attention on a support (mantra, image, etc.) because if we look at the mind face to face, there is the danger that it will create artificial formations; its nature is indeed to swell when we try to analyze it. I said that we must face a fear, this was because if we try to run away from it, it will only intensify; but in this case what is required is looking at the *object* which produced this fear and not to the thought of fear. One should not focus on the feeling of fear. it

the householder in an experience of personal commitment (*sankalpa*) to the common goal. This again recreates the opportunity of a religious experience which is perpetuated by such repeated celebrations.

Mataji, in general, accepted invitations and suggestions for attending the *Kumbha* festivals, mostly because her presence made it possible for many people to take part in it. Hundreds of devotees have had occasion to become alive to her kindness and thoughtfulness in bringing the *Kumbha* within the bounds of possibility for them.

In 1938, Mataji already happened to be in Hardwar, having arrived there a few months before. She was staying at the house of Dr. Pitambar Panth on the bank of the Ganges.

Hardwar was becoming crowded with the rush of pilgrims for the coming *Kumbha* on April 13th. Bholanath was always happy on such occasions of religious significance. Every morning, he would collect all available men and set out walking through the streets of the town, singing kirtan (*nagar-kirtan*). His tall and dignified personality commanded respect from all passers-by. Strangers came up and bowed to him and stayed to swell the throng of his *kirtan* party.

On April 13th, the final day of the festival, Bholanath accompanied by a great crowd of devotees went to *Brahmakunda* for the ceremony of the bath. He was spontaneously acclaimed by the other ascetics gathered there for the same purpose. They did not know who he was but must have perceived in him an exalted personality commanding respect.

Unknown to others Bholanath, while bathing in the holy river, performed by himself the rituals of adopting formally a life of renunciation. This was in pursuance of some conversation he had had with Mataji earlier.

At the conclusion of the *Kumbha*, the pilgrims are always in a great hurry to leave the town, creating difficult travelling conditions. The devotees thought it better that Mataji should also leave immediately by car for Dehradun. Bholanath stayed behind to escort all those who wished to go on to Dehradun.

On April 24th, Didi's father, Swami Akhandananda and Bholanath returned again to Hardwar to attend the *sumnaysa* ceremony of Akhandananda's brother, Kunja Mohan. Bholanath was feeling indisposed but did not regard it seriously. Mataji said to Didi, "Bholanath is going to be very seriously ill." Didi alarmed at these words, wished to persuade Bholanath not to undertake the trip, but Mataji said again, "You may try, but he will insist on going and the illness is also inevitable."

Bholanath returned from Hardwar with a high fever and complaining of pain in the stomach. The fever persisted and in a few days the doctors pronounced that he was suffering from chicken-pox.

Mataji said quietly to her companions, "It does not appear to me to be chicken-pox. You see, diseases reveal themselves to me just like persons. The personification seen by me I have heard described by all of you as being much more fearful than chicken-pox. I do not know about symptoms, but I can tell you what I have seen."

Within a short time nobody was left in doubt about Bholanath's illness which turned out to be the dreaded small-pox. Bholanath was given the best medical treatment available in the town and the very loving care of the devotees but the terrible nature of the disease made him suffer excruciatingly. Mataji visited his room at frequent intervals and made such suggestions for his care and comfort as she alone knew how to do.

Bholanath's condition deteriorated rapidly. Everyone was in despair at the impending calamity. At this crucial time Mataji unexpectedly asked Didi and Swami Akhandananda to leave Dehradun immediately and to take Didima also with them.

Although Mataji had spoken quietly in her usual manner, Didi knew that this was one of those occasions when Mataji's *kheyala* was not to be deflected. To forestall any pleadings toward this attempt, Mataji further said, "It must be either all of you or I. If you do not leave, I shall." This was not to be thought of, so Didi with great misgivings in her heart, and in utter dejection of spirit at being obliged to leave Mataji under such difficult conditions, set about making arrangements for their immediate departure. Swami Akhandananda expressed his bewilderment by saying, "Ma, why are you sending us away when we require as many as we can have here to look after Bholanath?"

Mataji said gently, "You are a *samnyasi*. You are not required to render Bholanath any physical service. The only way you can be of help to him is to engage steadfastly in your own undertaking of the contemplative life."

To inconsolable Didima, she said, "Is it not agonizing for you to watch Bholanath's suffering? At this time he does not require your physical presence. You can help him by your prayers and healing thoughts. Do that for him now." To Didi, to whom nothing at all made any sense apart from Mataji, she could only enjoin patience and fortitude. Didi and others left for Varanasi on May 4th.

Mataji spent most of her time in Bholanath's room. Bholanath had been calling out to her as 'Ma' like a child in distress and Mataji responded to his call naturally and spontaneously. Proximity to death had dissolved the unauthentic barriers to a

disclosure of this relationship. Bholanath now was not self-conscious anymore in showing his total surrender publicly. Sitting by his bedside on the last day of his life Mataji asked him, "Are you in great pain?" Bholanath replied that he was, but that he could not quite locate where the pain was. His whole body was under the influence of the dreadful disease and his suffering could be easily imagined. He was lying on his side facing her and Mataji was seen to pass her hand over his entire body, from head to toe and seemed to perform some *kriya* over it. After some time, in answer to a question, Bholanath replied that he did not have any pain and was completely relaxed. Since the beginning of the illness, this was the first time, he was at peace. He murmured, "*Ananda.*"

At one time he said, "I am going." Mataji responded by saying, "Why do you think so? There are no goings or comings, but a presence only in which there is no room for such things." Bholanath seemed to agree, saying, "Yes, so you have always said." Mataji's hand was on Bholanath's head when he breathed his last on the night of May 7th, 1938. His death was calm and peaceful. For the people who were keeping vigil at his bedside this created an atmosphere of reverence in the face of the most mysterious event of life.

The man who had so joyfully and so completely given of himself in the service of Mataji and who was like a beloved parent to the devotees was no more.

# THE FUNDAMENTALS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

[ Continued from before ]

—Sri P. C. Mehta

## Various schools of Indian Philosophy:

### 1. The orthodox schools:

The following six schools identifiable during the post-Vedic period are considered orthodox because, they either declare allegiance to the Vedas or are directly based on them

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| i) <i>Nyāya</i>      | iv) <i>Yoga</i>                         |
| ii) <i>Vaisesika</i> | v) <i>Purva-mimāmsā</i>                 |
| iii) <i>Sāṅkhya</i>  | vi) <i>Uttara-mimāmsā i.e. Vedanta.</i> |

i) *Nyāya-Vaisesika and Sāṅkhya-Yoga* are grouped in twos being allied.

These four doctrines in their present form declare allegiance to the Vedas, although they put their own interpretation on it. It is doubtful if they were Vedic from the beginning. However in view of their later features, they are described as orthodox.

*Purva-mimāmsā* and *Uttara-mimāmsā i. e. Vedanta*, are directly based on the Vedas, but need independent treatment .

The six systems, being rather technical, will be dealt with very briefly in a later chapter.

### 2. The Heterodox schools:

During this period, we also find views in opposition to the teachings of the *Vedas*, called non-Vedic views. The three schools which as systems reject the authority of the Vedas and therefore are called heterodox are;

i) Materialism, including (a) *Svabhāva-vāda* or 'Naturalism' and (b) the *Cārvāka* system.

ii) *Jainism* and iii) *Buddhism*.

Though we do not know the origin of these views, it is certain that they did not originate in the post-Vedic period. They are older, because we find allusions to them at all the important stages of Vedic literature. They are found as early as the hymns of the Rg. Veda. They now gets strengthened. They persist even today. Jain and Buddhistic works refer to a number of non-Vedic philosophical schools existing at the time of Mahavira and Gautama. The Kalpa-Sutras also refer to

*Nāstika* or unbelievers. This heretical thought gives rise to the distinction between the ideals of the Brahmanas and the Sramanas or non-priestly ascetics, recorded and noticed even by travellers like Megasthenes.

The followers of these views were also Aryans. If the theory of Aryan invasion of India is correct, the question arises whether these views were held by some Aryans under the influence of local thoughts and beliefs or whether they were naturally held, since people hold different views.

From early Buddhist literature we find that the concepts of a surviving soul and transmigration were denied by some Brahmins and Sramanas. Heterodox doctrine has left its permanent stamp on the Sankhya's system.

No detailed critique of heretical view is found in Sanskrit literature. Our main source is Mahabharata, though therein they are unclear and mixed up with other faiths. The Svetasvatara Upanisad as well as Mahabharata mentions half a dozen such views.

The impact of heretical views on orthodoxy, set in motion division of orthodoxy in two channels. Whatever the origin, these views play an important part from about the beginning of the post-Vedic period. They have greatly helped the progress of Indian thought as a whole and enriched it.

i) While the Vedic thought point to the north and the west as their home, these non-Vedic thoughts indicate east as their home.

ii) While Jainism has remained within India, Buddhism has spread all over the world.

iii) The literature of both Jainism and Buddhism is not in Sanskrit but in Prakrit (*ardhamagadhi*) and Pali respectively, being the language commonly spoken at the time. This suggests that their views or teachings were popular rather than priestly in character.

iv) The earliest part of their literature is some centuries later than the period when their exponents spoke; but we may be sure that much of the tradition which they enshrine reaches back to that age.

v) As for Naturalism, there is no such literature. There are only stray references to it, which are found in the writings of both orthodox and heterodox schools. Mahabharata appears to be the best source.

### **3. *Pramānas* or nature and function of knowledge:**

Indian philosophical thought of the previous period deals more with conclusion and we know little of the process by which they are arrived at. The philosophy of the present period gives us both. They have provided a critique of knowledge i. e.