

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

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

VOL.-7

JANUARY, 2003

No. 1

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INLAND—RS. 60/-

FOREIGN—US \$ 12/- OR RS. 450/-

SINGLE COPY—RS. 20/-



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MATRI VANI

Peace and happiness are found on the path to God, never in this world, where one gets a little happiness, which is invariably followed by its shadow-sorrow.

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At all times keep your mind immersed in the thought of God so that there may be no possibility of straying on to a path that leads to misery.

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Do service with the conviction that while serving, whomsoever it may be, you are serving the One, who alone exists.

* * *

Whatever God decrees is for your good. doesn't the Doctor hurt you in order to make you well? God also cleanses you before taking you in His arms. He is saying, "Give me all your uncleanness take in return this unsullied Immortal Life.

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You are asking if I love you? I say unto you, that unless I loved you, you could not love me, verily, you cannot love me as much as I love each one of you.

* * *

How much more time will you spend at a way side inn ? Don't you want to go home?

* * *

How exquisite it all is.....One is in his own self, the wanderer, the exile. the home coming and the homeOneself is all that exists.

* * *

Proper diet is *Satsang*-seek the company of devout people, read good books, and medicine is regular japa.

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Whether you like it or not give a little time to a daily routine of doing some *nāma japa* (repetition of God's Name); you will see that gradually your 'appetite' will awaken and function normally!

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The supreme duty of man is to undertake the quest for his true being - whether one takes the path of devotion, where the 'I' is lost in the 'Thou' or the path of self-inquiry, in search of the true 'I', it is He alone who is found in the Thou as well as in the 'I'.

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A child while studying doesn't understand how much knowledge he is acquiring. When he gets passmarks then he feels happy. Similarly when the time comes you will know how much progress you have made. Continue to live in God remembrance.

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This body says anything at all is possible, a narrowing of the vision is uncalled for. It is possible that exalted ideals may uplift a man from higher to higher stages. The target should be ever high.

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One should think, when a ray of light has brightened the inner life, is it not possible that the full illumination will also happen? Doubts and weakened efforts are natural, but he should not indulge in them. Be steadfast in your effort you will see that God's grace makes everything possible at any time.

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REPLIES TO WRITTEN QUERIES

BY

FOREIGN DEVOTEES

—Vijayananda

Q : *Who is Guru?*

V : "There is only one Guru, God." Ma often used to say that. But only now I completely realize what it does mean. Physical Guru may have defects, the body always has defects, but the Guru is an instrument, a canal of the Divine. There are bad conductors, good conductors and super-conductors. Ma was a super-conductor.

Q : *Does this view help the disciple not to see the guru in a personal way ?*

V : Ma said that even if a disciple should fall in love with the guru, if the latter is a sadguru, he would be able to transform this love and to redirect it towards the Divine.

Q : *Was Ma imparting instructions through discourses ?*

V : No, Ma did not make speeches, but she used to give clear-cut advice individually during private interviews. By the way she could also give practical suggestions to people; if they were able to catch them, they could escape the result of a bad *karma* of the past, an accident for instance. Ma could also make disciples' *kundalini* ascend and descend in a single look, in quite informal way and without appearing to do so. Sometimes, it was important to be able to take down those who had been awakened too quickly and could not face the sudden inflow of energy.

Q : *Could Ma perform miracles with everyone ?*

V : No. The one who performs the miracle and the one who receives it must be in perfect harmony like a couple of dancers. Even with Christ, it was like this. Those who had no faith could not be saved. When Ma was old, I had a dream, but those images which I saw were as vivid as in reality. I was with a group of visitors, mainly foreigners, on a verandah in charge of keeping Ma's door, and she passed by. I asked them, Did you see Ma? They answered me, No. When Ma was young, everyone was enthralled by her contact. Afterwards, she was more inside and only those who had intensity and great faith could perceive her power directly.

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V : *Speaking of someone who lived near the ashram for his sādhanā for many years: It takes time to go beyond time'*

Q : *Why some people meditate but do not seem to progress?*

V : This reminds me of what Laennec (a famous French professor of medicine in the 19th century) used to say regarding the treatment of the acute pulmonary oedema: *Start emptying the car before lashing the horses.* This means that one should begin by bleeding the patient before giving heart stimulating drugs, for in this way the work that it will have to do will be less and it will not risk collapsing completely. Likewise in the beginning of *sādhanā* one should first eliminate many negative tendencies before starting to stimulate the energy by intense meditative practices. Otherwise there is the risk of an 'acute heart failure', which means that nothing will work any longer.

Q : *Why do you not give kriyā to people so that they might purify their minds more quickly?*

V : Not by breathing exercises can people purify their mind, but by changing their lives. There is a difference between the simple relaxation practices which are in the field of psychology and the genuine *kriyā* which gives a great intensity, to teach these to someone, one must know what he will do with his or her spiritual energy once it is awakened, if it will not go towards negative reactions or be deviated toward a search for powers. Those who have a complete sincerity for *sādhanā* are very rare and even those who have even a beginning motivation for it are also rare.

Q : *To someone who was living a householder life, who thought that he was never angry and was wondering whether it was normal or a sign of suppression :*

V : (after speaking more with the visitor) In the beginning suppression is not so bad, it is much better than to let one's anger be vented through harsh words, even violent acts. You don't observe *brahmacharya*, do you? For those who practise it, anger is not a small matter as far as its mastery is concerned, because it basically comes from frustrated desire. Anger creates wounds in the *pranic* body. If repeated, it may lead to somatic diseases. (Speaking for a sadhu in the ashram whose sometimes undisciplined behaviour invited strong criticism): people reproach him with slight madness but he must have a certain spiritual level because he never answers the criticism with anger.

Q : *Is contentment an essential quality of sādhanā ?*

V : Yes. There was a hassidic sage who was asked to explain contentment. He answered by saying: Better go and see Zisia. Zisia means in Yuddish soft, like susse in German. He was a very poor man and, according to worldly criteria, he had had all kinds of problems and sufferings in his life. When visitors started hinting at this, he began laughing and said: *Ask this question from someone who suffered. As for me, I have never had sufferings!* He was mad for God, that which others considered a misfortune was not so for him. Once, people beat the living daylights out of him, but instead of defending himself he was laughing. He was among those great devotees of God who could perform a miracle just by one word.

Q : *What is the role of humility?*

V : If someone is arrogant you can be sure that he has not reached a high spiritual level. (Speaking of a guru who was annoyed that his name had been omitted in a program where he was invited): The more gurus or religious leaders are high in rank, the more they are sensitive to contempt. They expect to be cared for, while on the contrary if you send away a child he just will not worry. There will ever be reasons to be annoyed, so why should one be annoyed at all? And why should a sage be arrogant? His body is subject to a good deal of diseases, his mind produces all kinds of non-senses and his Self indeed is not personal, it is the same in each and everyone.

Q : *Is the vow of silence useful?*

V : I indeed know the best way to keep silent: being silent when you do not speak. it seems a joke, but in fact it is the sign of a high spiritual level: briefly telling what one has to say, and afterwards having a mind which is completely blank.

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Q : *What is spiritual psychology?*

V : This is silence.

Q : *Is not feeling the best leading thread to follow for meditation?*

V : Usually this 'feeling' corresponds to a bunch of superimpositions, of projections, but when we succeed in quietening the mind and have a really pure perception, we are very close to the Absolute.

Q : *When we have closed eyes in meditation, is not the only pure perception that of body?*

V : Perhaps, but body perception is indeed completely deformed by the representations which we have about it. When the complete stoppage of mind is reached, there is not even sensations to be perceived.

Q : *Is this the direct perception of being ?*

V : There are not even perception, there is pure subjectivity only.

Q : *(A German who had visied a few vedantin gurus): To get rid of ego, I observe my anger and all my emotions and I say to myself that in the midst of all that, there is no ego.*

V : These are mere words. Where there is anger there is ego, and where there is no anger there is no ego. However, it is true that we should not try to 'Kill' an ego which anyway does not have any essential existence. It would be like taking a stick and trying to kill a shadow by giving it a good thrash.

Q : *You started your sādhanā during the war when your life was constantly in danger and afterwards, when all the horrors which happened came to be fully known. Have you not been disturbed then?*

V : No, not even while it was happening. I took it as a game, the ones running after others, it was like playing cops and robbers. And after the events, as the past has no reality, there was no reason to be disturbed either.

Q : *If past has no reality, what is left of Tradition?*

V : Tradition is indeed experienced in the present, when we follow what our guru tells or told us to do. From the relative and empirical point of view, the question of past and its heritage arises, but in sage's experience, this kind of questions do not arise. If you ask them, it means that you still are on the empirical plane.

Q : *How does one differentiate between mental and vital being?*

V : To know the mental being of a person, one takes the help of his face and voice; to perceive his vital state, it is enough to be physically close to him or to take his hand for some time. The yogic body is realized when there is the union of the male and female forces inside. The causal body is so called because it corresponds to that part of the ego which migrates from one life to another and thus represents the cause of rebirth. There is a stage in *sādhanā* where the subtle body is felt as a wonderful coat that nobody should touch; but this is pride, one should go beyond. All that is a question of experience.

Q : *Can we say that samādhi is a form of sleep?*

V : I found a way of being completely conscious while body is as if asleep, for instance when I remain lying in the early morning or even sitting. This is nevertheless not *samādhi*, because in the latter there is intense joy. Near death

experiences are not really experiences of death but give a feeling of happiness and light as we may have in deep sleep.

Q : *Many people came to Ma, and are coming to Amma for physical healing. Can we say that these sages see diseases?*

V : They see the spiritual origin of diseases in the form of spirits which possess the body and appear in some of its parts.

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Q : *People in the West speak more of vedanta nowadays. Do you think that the passage from one culture to another happens in good conditions?*

V : The two pillars of vedanta are *vairāgya*, detachment and *viveka*, discrimination. If they are not present, it will be a westernized vedanta which will end into words. Reading Shankaracharya or learning Sanskrit is not enough, one must practise. After a beginning period where one may study all the paths, it is better to choose one and to deeply study the Sacred Scriptures of that given path. By jumping from one path to another Westerners imagine they are following lofty teachings while they do not have even a firm basis. For instance, Jewish people have a tradition of sacred sexuality, but you should practise with it all the basis of Torah. In any case I do not know the details, this is not my line. It is told that at the passing away of his wife, the Baal-Shem-Tov said: 'I thought that if I was the first to die, I could ascend in the heavens on a car of fire; but now she passed away first, I lost half of my power.' I have a friend who had bought a real Rollex watch, which was very expensive, but because he was afraid to be robbed of it, he bought an imitation of the real one and used to wear this one. In the West, this is so; people do an imitation of *sāadhanā*, they do not even know the requirement of true sadhana. It is true that in India as well, few people do real *sāadhanā*, but at least they are aware of its prerequisites. Westerners often intellectualize too much. This is a big obstacle, specially when approaching a sage. In front of him or her, one should be able to be open and humble like a child. If Saint Francis of Assisi is so loved in the West, I do not think that it is because of his love or of his close contact with nature, I think that this is mainly because of his humility.

Q : *India believes in asuras, 'demons' who may however have good sides, just as gods may have their weak points, but she does not believe in the 'Prince of Darkness', in the absolute Evil like recent Christianity or Judaism. What is the advantage of the Indian point of view?*

V : The belief in the Devil of the first Christian monks for instance is good for people with an aggressive temperament because it provides them with an

enemy to fight with. In fact, the Devil in the Bible is merely a petty personage, God only has created everything, good or bad, the Devil is not more than his servant. On the opposite in Kabbala, he became so important that people do not even dare to utter his name lest he felt that he is invoked. He is called by the first two letters of his name Samashem (from Samael, which means the blind angel), and he is termed as *the other side*. There is probably an influence of Manicheism in late Judaism. One day the Baal Shem Tov (the bearer of the good Name) uttered Satan's name in spite of the taboo. He came furious saying, 'Only two times I was disturbed by the call of human beings, the first time by Eve in the garden of Eden, the second time during the destruction of the Temple. What do you want of me?' Just at that time the Devil started seeing the light coming from the eyebrow of the disciples of the Baal-Shem-Tov, and he was so impressed by it that he thanked the sage to have called him.

Q : *Do you think that Buddhism can bring much to the West?*

V : Yes. First, in early Buddhism emphasis is on awareness which actually is the foundation of sadhana. However, one should well understand the meaning of *vipassana*: bring back one's emotions or mental activity to the body to calm and master them; but the body is not an end in itself, if not this would be a kind of hypochondria. If one feels that he loses his control during intensive periods of practice, he has better to stop them immediately, otherwise there is the danger of becoming unhinged. Zen may be also very beneficial for Westerners, it is very close to vedanta, it cuts the intellectualizing tendency to the root; it has the feet firmly planted on earth but the head in the sky. Once a zen master asked his disciple a question, and the latter started answering by lengthy quotes from Buddhist scriptures, etc. The master just said: 'There is too much Buddhism in what you said...'

Q : *A Western lady who spent much time near Ma's ashram in Kankhal was hearing, during satsang, of the beauty of Easter Eve in Judaism and Christianity. She asked: 'Do I not have a great handicap right from the beginning due to my lack of basic religious training?'*

V : No, religion means linking, uniting, like the word yoga itself. It can be said that you have the religion of Ma, since you spent a long time here trying to follow her teaching... There is no need to wait for realization to be completely independent of the outer Guru. That occurs only when the inner Guru is awakened.

AT THE FEET OF THE MOTHER

— U.C. Dutt

I went to Rajpur, Dehra Dun, on an invitation from a training institute and stayed there for a week. At Mata Anandamayee Ashram, Kishenpur, I learnt that Mother was ill and was convalescing at Ananda Kashi, a rest house of Rajmata Kamalendu Mati Shah of Tehri. The place, in the lap of the Himalayas, is thirty miles from Hardwar on the road to Deva Prayag. I did not want to miss the opportunity of seeing Mother in Her paternal surroundings—the Ganga flowing through the Himalayas.

Before leaving the area, I went to Mussoorie to see a friend, Dr. Jyoti Kanchan Dutta, Medical Officer of St Georges College. On the *Mahashtami* evening (4th of April) Dr. Dutta and I were resting in silence. Dr. Dutta suddenly exclaimed, "What is this? How is it possible? Ma appeared with a crown on Her head. She stood for a while. Does She wear a crown?" I told him that Ma was given a crown on Her 60th birthday. I enquired if the crown was white. Doctor informed that it was yellow. I became speechless; Doctor was lucky to have Mother's darshan, while I saw only the bare walls!

On 9th of April I went to Ananda Kashi. It is a beauty spot, lofty green hillocks ranged in a line like sentinels over looking the babbling greenish white streams below. Red, white, pink, and yellow flowers were in bloom in the garden and the trees were bent with the weight of their fruits. The blue vault of heaven hang over head as symbol of the infinite. All the aspects of nature vied with one another to add to the sublimity of Ananda Kashi. Why is it so called? It is named Kashi as the Ganga flows northward and Ananda after the blissful Mother, Anandamayee.

It was nine in the morning when the lovely sight greeted me. Besides some known faces, I found there two foreign devotees, an old lady and a young stalwart, waiting to bid good bye to Mother.

I met them in a porch close to Mother's room. The young man seemed to take keen interest in Yoga. He had a giant figure, jovial by nature and friendly. After a word or two he asked me which theological person he could be compared with. I said Bhima. He did not want to be compared to the Indian Hercules, he preferred to be Ganesh, with a quill pen as a scribe to Vyasji. He also wanted to be a child to the Mother. He took my address and told me that I would be seeing him in the long robe of a wanderer, moving along the Indian roads.

[The following note was found in the papers of late Upendra Chandra Dutt by his son and was perhaps written in the year Mother's 65th birthday was celebrated. "Didimā" in Bengali would refer to Mother's mother-Nani in Hindi]

Mother came out of Her room, sat in the veranda and showered grace on all present. She smiled as usual and chatted humorously with the guests. While taking leave, the Ganesh was in tears.

At the after-dusk sitting I related to Mother Dr. Dutta's vision on the *Mahāshṭamī*. Mother said that she was thinking of him that day. She had visited their home in Mussoorie once with Bhaiji when the Doctor's wife had cooked and entertained Her.

That day Mother was walking down the Rajpur road and felt exhausted. A devotee offered water melon. Mother thought of the Doctor and that thought had appeared before the Doctor. Thought and appearance became identical. How to explain the golden crown? On that very day, I was told, a devotee had placed a *Mukut* of yellow flowers on Her Head. That explained the vision's golden crown. Bhaiji confirmed these facts.

It was a rare privilege to get Mother so close and with such frequency-at noon, afternoon and night; talking, smiling, moving about freely and conferring grace on the fortunate few in Her presence then. We talked of topics such as exalted souls, deities speaking through human media, Yogis assuming astral or subtle bodies and their visits to distant places and planets, the secrets of *Nāda* (sound), *Parā*, *Pashyantī*, *Madhyamā*, *Vaikhari* and so on.

We had the pleasure of musical entertainment by Brahmachari Bibhu, an excellent artist with a sweet melodious voice; collective recitations of the Geeta, the Chandi and the Upanishads, and humourous discourses (*kathā*) of the Devi Bhagwata by kanti Bhai. The night programmes included devotional reading of the Ramayana by Rajmata herself.

I offered a picture book, a collection of Krishna *Līlās*, to Mother saying that as a child I was very fond of pictures, so I have got some pictures for "the little girl". Mother was amused and replied, "the little girl has great liking for pictures as you people have not taught her reading and writing". Mother often speaks of herself as "the little girl".

Captain Amal Roy was with us; he is a disciple of Baba Bholanath. At one sitting he gave a vivid description as to how Mother had saved his life in the battle field of Kashmir when bombs and shells were dropped by the Pakistanis. Charms of a moonlit night in the 'heaven on earth' (*Bhūsvarga*) had attracted him out of his safe shelter and almost unconsciously he strayed into the danger zone. As he was attempting to take cover from the valley of death, he heard a sweet and distinct command, "do not sit here". He recognised the voice and moved behind a nearby boulder. A bomb exploded right at the place he was about to sit. The explosion

