

**“I AM WHAT I WAS AND SHALL  
REMAIN NOW AND FOR EVERMORE !”**

*“At all times and under all circumstances, in inspiration and in dryness, Ma remains and ever will remain with everyone.” “Solely, for you all is indeed everything that this body does—its actions, movements, its going hither and thither. Whatever is done for your sake through this body at any time, it is you who cause it to happen.”*

Ma has discarded Her body not because it was old and ailing. Ma is all-powerful. Had it been Her *kheyāla*, Her body would have remained young, radiant and healthy. Just as Her advent was an act of Supreme Divine Grace and Compassion, so was Her withdrawal.

Whatever is done by Ma is for the best of all. There are no exceptions.

*“The Ātmā of this body is everyone’s Ātmā. It cannot be that anybody, anywhere is not Ma’s very own.”*

What is perceived by the senses cannot last, however flawless, however perfect. Taking on a human body, Ma has given us a glimpse of Divinity, a taste of eternal Bliss. Ma is not only that bliss-permeated divine being that attracted us irresistibly, whom we loved and adored. Ma is the ONE equally present everywhere, in everyone, in everything and beyond. By withdrawing Her radiant form She has kindled in us a deep yearning to find Her within, so spend our lives in the sole endeavour to know HER AS SHE IS.



# ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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*The Eternal, the Ātman—  
Itself pilgrim and path of Immortality  
Self-contained—THAT is all in One.*

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*Mother ! you are my everything :  
My life, my breath, my body, my soul,  
The endless path to the Eternal Goal ;  
All in all, all in One,  
One in the many galaxies and suns —  
Ever moving, yet transfixed beyond Time,  
Super-conditional, beyond reason or rhyme.*

*I bow at your feet, enshrined in my heart —  
The ones I can't see — never seen from the start  
Of Creation and Movement of Shakti Divine,  
Till death and dissolution in Darkness Sublime.*

*I bow at your feet never seen by human eyes,  
Never touched by mortal hands  
Nor caressed with deep sighs.*

*I bow at your feet, I bow to my Self —  
I bow to the One who bows to Herself.*

**—Stephen M. Quong**

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# Sri Sri Ma's Utterances

*(Reported by Sri Gurupriya Devi in "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi," Vol. 3*

"I wanted to sit near you for some time, but my baby is pestering me so much that I am forced to go." With these words a lady took leave of Ma, bowing to Her. After her departure Ma commented with a smile : "This is how you should all behave, for you, too, are babies. Why can't you harass your Mother (God) in this way ? Why can't you raise your clamorous voice saying, 'O Lord, unless you grant us that Bliss of yours, we will trouble you day and night—we shall never leave you in peace ! We are but children—what do we know of service ? We shall vex you just for this gift of Bliss !

\* \* \*

The soil must indeed be made ready, this is why so much effort is required. The earth should be prepared so well that immediately after the sowing of seeds, plants may sprout forth, growing in no time into tall trees, gracefully laden with fruits and flowers.

\* \* \*

It is necessary to set to work with firm determination. Alive or dead, never lose sight of the Goal. Remain engaged with great regularity in the endeavour towards spiritual progress.

Make enquiries about your own real home ;  
time flies away quickly ; invoke Him.

\* \* \*

The hymns that are being sung here, this also is a kind of *sādhana*. When even temporarily our minds get detached and elevated from worldly cares by listening to the songs, this too is a mighty *sādhana*.

\* \* \*

Look, if a room is jammed with many things, even a shout or a loud noise fail to produce any echo. Whereas even a faint sound does echo in an empty room. Likewise, if you are able to keep your mind clean, your true Self will automatically be revealed to you. Is it not your own voice that you hear in the echo ? Similarly what blossoms forth in the pure heart is your own true Self. Hence, I tell you, try to cleanse and purify your mind. Purification of the mind is achieved only by regular *upāsana*.\* Perform *upāsana* according to your predilection, be it the repetition of His name or singing kirtan, reading scriptures or discoursing on spiritual topics, etc. ; choosing the way according to your individual inclinations, try to purify your heart and mind. And daily before falling asleep one should retrospectively reflect on all the commissions and omissions done in the course of that day. Thus, if one tries to gradually

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\**Upāsana*—Effort to realize God through worship, meditation, japa, prayer, singing hymns, reading of holy scriptures etc.

remove wrong tendencies by constant discrimination, the mind gets purified by and by.

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*Prāṇāyāma* means control of *prāṇa*.<sup>\*</sup> If you can perform *nāma japa* in the right way, you will find *prāṇāyāma* coming about automatically. Engaging in *japa* with one's attention fixed on the rhythm of the breath does immense good.

\* \* \*

*Question* : Ma, would you please tell us about God ; what is He like ?

*Ma* : For every particular person He is precisely as that person desires Him to be.

Try to keep mind these words of mine ; devote as much time as you possibly can to His name ; remember all of you—days are speeding away ; bygone days never return.

\* \* \*

One has to endure all kinds of circumstances. To live always in comfort and at ease is not beneficial.

\* \* \*

No matter to what hardships one may be subjected at any time, one should accept them cheerfully.

\* \* \*

Ma's advice : "You should all go ahead regularly with your programme of spiritual discipline and prayer. Do not waste time. Your span of

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<sup>\*\*</sup>*Prāṇa*—The current of vital energy canalised through the breath.

life is getting shorter and shorter with each breath you take.

\* \* \*

Ma said in a particular context, "People say that even the *munis* and *rishis* used to get angry sometimes ; so what is our fault if we, too, are ill-tempered ? The reply to this would be that the *munis* and *rishis* were perfect beings. When they expressed anger, even that was done to perfection. And, in consequence, they could effect creation, sustenance and destruction. Just as they were capable of reducing one to ashes by their wrath, they could also create life. On account of this wide difference they should not be compared to ordinary people."

\* \* \*

Someone asked Ma inquiring about *dīkṣā* ; "Ma, in case no *bīja* mantra has been received, is it sufficient just to repeat the name of God ?"

Ma replied : "Yes, the Name alone is effective. Don't you see, when a small baby who has not yet learnt to pronounce "Ma" starts crying, the mother understands that the baby is calling her. Immediately she hurries to his side. But when the same child is grown up, if he simply cries, his mother won't understand that her son wants her to come. In the same way, while we are ignorant, God will surely understand our earnestness by whatever name we may invoke him."

\* \* \*

Explaining this point further on another occasion, Ma said : "Go on invoking God by which-



ever name you like best. If necessary, He Himself will come in time and tell you His real name. For example, suppose you do not know the actual name of a certain boy ; if you call him by the nickname of his childhood or simply by saying, "Hallo, boy," he may not respond at first, but on being called repeatedly, he is sure to listen and come to you. And then he himself will tell you his proper name. Thus, by whatever name you may call God, it will have the desired effect."

\* \* \*

Pursuit of a single objective with one-pointed concentration and purity of heart is truly like magic. If once you are in its grip, it will never let you go.

\* \* \*

Whatever work you are engaged in at any time you should do it with all your heart and soul. Whether the work is small or big, it matters little.

\* \* \*

A sādhu whom Ma gave some secret instructions was advised by Her in the following words, "Don't divulge it to anybody. If just after sowing a seed you dig it out again and again then that seed will never sprout. After sowing it in the soil it has to be carefully tended by regular sprinkling with water. At last when the sprout grows into a big tree, that big tree will again produce so many seeds. Innumerable flowers and fruits will then naturally shower from it."

On watching a potter busy turning out pots on his wheel, Ma observed pointing to him : “That lump of clay is undergoing great suffering, but it has got to be shaped in this very way, by turning it round on the wheel. ‘Making’ is always accomplished by a painful process.

\* \* \*

### Ma’s advice to children

“You should repeat the name of God just a little ; this will be beneficial to you. Do one thing : Each of you keep a special notebook and every morning, as soon as you get up and finish washing your face and hands, start your day with writing in the notebook the name of God you like best 5 or 10 or 12 times (according to your age) and do *namaskār*. Only after that take your breakfast, study and attend to whatever else you have got to do. When the notebook is filled up, do obeissance and throw it into the river ; then start a new notebook. Well, will you remember my words ?”

\* \* \*

Someone asked : “Ma, does spiritual realization depend on one’s effort (karma) or on grace ?”

Ma responded : “First effort (karma) is needed. Grace follows Karma (endeavour).”

*Question* : Then, is there no grace as such (apart from karma) ?” Ma said, “After accomplishing a series of spiritual practices the aspirant reaches a stage where he finds that he is unable to achieve anything further without Divine Grace.

So long as there is ego-consciousness one does not understand the factor of grace. When heart and mind have been purified then only it can be understood what grace essentially is; then only the aspirant realizes that *Puruṣakāra*, the doing of the *Puruṣa*, is everything. *Puruṣakāra* means whatever the *Puruṣa* (God, the Universal Spirit) does—whatever the Supreme *Puruṣa* chooses to do that will be done.

\* \* \* \*

“Both before and after kirtan it is good to meditate for some time with the eyes closed. And when the kirtan is over, before you return home, it is advisable to discuss among yourselves the thoughts and feeling that arose in your mind during meditation.” Then Ma added, “Moving slowly in a circle during the kirtan with one’s gaze turned upwards generates a special *kriyā* (yogic effect) in the body.”

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*“The repetition aloud of His name is better than praises. Better still is the faint murmur. But the best is repetition within the mind and that is meditation.”*

—Ramana Maharshi

# In Association with Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi

Amulya Datta Gupta

( Translated from Bengali )

( Continued from A. V. Oct. 1982 )

*Dacca, August 20th, 1939.*

This morning Ma was sitting on the Veranda of the Smriti Mandir surrounded by devotees. Everyone was anxious to hear Ma talk but nobody had any questions ready. At last Pramatha Babu requested : "Ma, please say something !"

*Ma* : What shall I say ?

*Pramatha Babu* : Whatever you have in mind.

*Ma* : That is the trouble, there is no mind here. (Turning to me) Baba, what should I say ?

*I* : Whatever you feel inclined to.

*Ma* : Here, there is no inclination or disinclination.

*I* : Speak of something that will be of benefit to all of us. (Everybody laughs.)

*Abhaya* : At Azimgunge you spoke for three or four hours about *dīkṣā*, *samādhi*, etc. Please repeat some of that !

*Ma* : The reason for so much conversation was that several people had asked various questions about their personal *sāadhanā*. This was their own individual affair. Hence it cannot be given as general advice.

*I* : Please, tell us something concerning *dīkṣā* (initiation). What exactly is *dīkṣā* ?

*Ma* : Why do you study ?

*I* : To acquire knowledge.

*Ma* : So I say that just as after completing your studies you do professional work and thus reap the benefits of pension, so also there is a kind of pension to be enjoyed on this path.

*I* : When Sri Ram Thakur's disciples complained to him in their disappointment : "Baba, we are unable to repeat the Name properly, so what is to be done ?" Thakur would reply : "Can the Name be repeated deliberately ? The Name comes about spontaneously. Even though you may not be doing anything, the Name is there automatically. If this were not so, what did I bestow on you ?" What is the purport of these words of Ram Thakur ? What precisely does the Guru give by *dikṣā*? Even though we have no experience of it, yet a certain action is taking place within us. How is this possible ?

*Ma* : What do you understand by *dikṣā* ?

*I* : I know nothing myself, I can only repeat what I have heard from revered Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj on this subject. He has said that *dikṣā* connotes making a connection between the power of God and the individual power of the disciple. If the disciple can be linked to the current of the Lord's might, then the force of this current will one day or another lead the disciple to the Supreme Goal. Even if the aspirant makes no effort, the force of the current will gradually draw him towards God—there is no doubt about this. And if he regularly engages in spiritual exercises or worship, he will be able to progress very much faster—it is just like swimming with the current.

*Ma* : All this is very true, completely true.

*I* : Very well. So there is no need for us to repeat God's name or do anything in this direction, for in any case we are bound to reach the Goal one day !

*Ma* : (laughing) But you want to get there quickly, you feel the urgency of it, don't you ? So for this reason you will have to set to work.

*Didi* : While being carried along by the current, you may be held up by some obstacle and come to a standstill.

*I* : No, *Didi*, there is no fear of that. *Ma* has declared that once the mercy of a Sadguru has been won, there can be no more fall from Grace.

*Ma* : Yes, if a Sadguru has bestowed his Grace, how can there be danger of a fall ? Some devotees are of the opinion, "since I have been blessed by the Grace of the Sadguru why should I take the trouble to practise sādhanā ? The Guru will accomplish everything. So I can continue to enjoy my life." Again, someone else feels the intense urge to make quick progress, so he performs *japa* and meditation. There are so many different types. It is of course a fact that once the timber catches fire, it will in due course be reduced to ashes, *That seed* (of initiation) cannot be destroyed. When a seed is buried in the ground, in some cases the plant grows quickly and in other cases there may be delay. If the soil is well prepared beforehand the plant grows fast, but if not it may be a slow process.

*A devotee* : Could not some of the seeds rot in the ground ?

*Ma* : Yes, a few seeds may possibly become rotten in the ground. But even this does not render them useless. After rotting they remain in the soil as fertilizers. Nothing is wasted.

It may happen that some people receive the Sadguru's grace at any early age but for many years are not interested in the spiritual path. Eventually, in old age devotion for God awakens in them. For others nothing may be achieved during the present birth, but in a subsequent birth there may be fulfilment. Is it not said that after leaving the body one has to return and live in another body. This world is a continuous coming and going. Here there is only birth, death and rebirth. But it may also happen that after leaving the body one may never have to return again. For once the fire of the Knowledge of Reality is kindled it can reduce everything to ashes within a split second. Thereafter there is no more coming and going.

*I*: Ma, it is believed that in order to exhaust one's karma (results of former actions) one has to take on a body. Can karma not be exhausted without assuming another body ?

*Ma*: Even when the physical body dies, there are other subtle bodies.

*I*: Then is it possible to work out one's karma in an etherial body ?

*Ma*: There are quite a lot of karmas for which a physical body is needed, so one has to be reborn in a new body. But there are other karmas that can be worked out in a subtle body. The ONE is constantly leading human beings towards Himself. Everyone will at sometime or other reach the Supreme Goal because this is man's destiny. To become established in his own true Being is man's inherent tendency (*samskara*).

*I*: Ma, by *samskāra* we usually understand the results that will ensue due to one's previous actions. Has a human being the capacity to perform actions that will enable him to attain to the Supreme Brahman or the Supreme Goal.

*Ma*: This is why it is said that it is the Guru who out of His Grace leads to that Goal. It is impossible to achieve merely by performing action.

*I*: When you speak of becoming established in one's true Being, this seems to be the ultimate state reached by *sādhana*. But one also hears of states of existence such as *Śivaloka* or *Viṣṇuloka*, etc., which the power instilled by the Guru into the disciple may subsequently enable him to attain, but beyond which the disciple cannot proceed. So how can it be that everybody is able to reach the Supreme Goal, which is to be established in one's own Self?

*Ma*: What you say is also true. Frequently it is seen that human beings become arrested on particular levels. But if a person has the inborn tendency, he may after temporary confinement at one level, proceed higher up. Others may spend age after age in the same state. There are so many possibilities. Is there an end to this subject?

*Pramatha*: I don't understand all these bickerings over knowledge and worlds after death. I just want to make sure that since you are here as our Mother, do we have to acquire all this knowledge to know you?

*Ma*: You are a practising lawyer, do you do your work without having studied law?

*Pramatha*: By what kind of studies have you yourself acquired all this wisdom?

*Ma*: Leave aside the question of this body!

*Abhaya*: You are so great that one cannot compare anyone with you.



*Ma* : I do not ask you to leave aside the question of this body because it is so great. You can ask this body "to go to hell". (Everybody bursts into loud laughter). Do you not frequently call someone an "idiot"? You can ignore this body as an idiot. (Again loud laughter).

*Pramatha* : This is not what I mean. I must repeat that I want to realize Ma. Now, do I have to acquire all this knowledge in order to realize Ma or will I automatically obtain all this knowledge by realizing who Ma is ?

*Ma* : By realizing Ma you will have gained everything. Did I not say only the other day that the mother wishes to give everything to her children. It is the mother's sole desire that whatever she possesses should belong to her children.

*Pramatha* : Indeed, this is very heartening news. I understand this quite well. But Ma, do you know what happens to me when I listen to all these people discussing abstruse knowledge ? I start suspecting my own feelings. I imagine these people have stolen away everything and I have been cheated. (Laughter)

*Ma* : ( Laughing ) Listen, even though the Goal is the same, the paths taken by different people are of great variety. Some choose the path of knowledge, discriminating : 'Not this, not this ! ( *neti, neti* ); others tread the path of devotion and yet others of dedicated action. But the objective is the same.

*Pramatha* : I do not relish all these questions.

*Ma* : When one starts studying and gains a little knowledge, questions are bound to arise. Questions multiply in proportion to the increase

of one's knowledge. On the other hand he who has never touched a book does not gain any knowledge nor do any questions occur to him. There is yet another category of individuals who have no problems and therefore no questions.

*Pramatha* : So it seems that I belong to this category. (Everybody laughs)

*Ma* : ( laughing ) This is quite obvious. ( Laughter again ) But they do not harbour any suspicion that they have been cheated.

*Pramatha* : So, in order to realize Ma, we cannot evade all this knowledge ?

*Ma* : See here, have I not pointed out a moment ago that it is the natural disposition of the human being to become aware of the treasure hidden within himself ? The true nature of man is to move in this direction. In this natural process he cannot avoid anything. You may have observed the natural flow of water : If water is poured out it starts flowing. Should there be a hole on the way, so long as the hole is not filled entirely, the water cannot flow any further ; but as soon as the hole is full, the water resumes its course. Similarly, the individual quite naturally moves towards peace and tranquillity. Along the way he cannot avoid anything that happens to be there, so nothing remains unknown to him. That is why I repeat : set to work. Effort is a necessity. Nevertheless attainment does not ensue due to one's own exertion. By His mercy alone everything becomes possible.

### How to Get Rid of Doubt.

*Pramatha* : Tell me, Ma, how can I get rid of my doubt ?

*Ma* : As soon as He is realized all doubts are resolved. Unless and until your spiritual power ( *chaitanya śakti* ) or your Guru are revealed, doubts will not cease.

*Pramatha* : This is no reply to my question. I repeat, please tell us what we have to do to resolve our doubts.

*Ma* : Start by putting into practice what you have gained from your Guru. By continuing to do so, His mercy will resolve all your doubts.

*Abhaya* : This is not correct. Even though you say it, we cannot believe it.

*Ma* : I never ask anybody to listen to my advice or to accept it. This body merely voices what you evoke from it. However, some people do receive from these words what they are seeking. On the other hand some derive no benefit, since they don't require anything. This is somewhat like this : suppose you have dropped something on the way. Someone coming behind you may notice this but goes on, while someone else picks it up carefully and makes use of it. My words are like this.

### How to Still the Mind.

*Pramatha* : Please tell us how to get rid of our doubts !

*Ma* : Have I not already told you to start your work with whatever your Guru has bestowed upon you. Quite often it is asked, how can the mind become still through japa ? Everyone is

anxious to have peace of mind, because without stilling the mind *ānanda* is not possible. Here is one way to set the mind at rest.

I have already explained to you that Guru mantra and *Iṣṭa* are one. To contemplate the Guru or the *Iṣṭa* and to perform mantra japa amounts to the same because the Name and the Named are identical. So start by repeating the mantra received from your Guru. During this japa meditate on the image your Guru has indicated to you or on your Guru's photo. Where exactly should you concentrate during meditation? It is good to concentrate in the heart because this is the place where joy and sorrow arise. However, if your Guru has instructed you to concentrate on anyone of the six chakras, (along the meridian of the body as explained in the Yoga Śāstras) it is a different matter. You will concentrate in whatever spot that the Guru has indicated. You may have read about the chakras that are situated in different locations of the body, and how each chakra has a different shape and a special presiding deity. This body has not studied anything, but it speaks on this subject because it has actually and quite clearly seen all this. By meditating on these different chakras, various states or spiritual experiences may be the result. But let us leave all this now.

You will start your meditation by imagining your Guru or *Iṣṭa* enthroned in your heart. There is yet another reason for concentrating in the heart. If you want to grow a tree out of a seed, you bury the seed under the earth and go on watering it.

Due to your care and through the strength of the soil the tree grows out of the seed. Why do I stress the strength of the soil? Because in order to produce a tree out of a seed, good earth is necessary. Even though the tree grows upwards, its roots remain underground, and it is the roots that constitute the life of the tree. Because it is seen that however many branches and twigs may be chopped off, the tree does not wither since its roots are intact. To enable the tree to grow you water it regularly. This water you pour at its bottom surface, not directly into the roots. The water reaches the roots and helps the tree to grow. Similarly, the roots of this body-tree of ours lie in the head while the branches are down below. The heart is the foundation of this tree and any nourishment given here will reach the roots. For this reason one should meditate in the heart.

*A devotee :* Where exactly is the heart ?

*Ma :* The heart is everywhere in the hands, in the feet, in every part of the body. Yet, when we speak about the heart we normally understand this place (pointing to Her chest.) This is where one should concentrate while meditating.

Now, what should you do when sitting down for meditation? Whether it is the Guru or the Iṣṭa, whom you have placed on the pedestal in your heart, contemplate His form. But during this meditation you find that your mind cannot remain steady. You cannot keep your mind fixed in one place even for a minute. This is why I advised that after placing your Guru on His seat in your

heart, watch your breath moving in and out. It is this breathing that enables us to remain alive. However different human beings, animals, birds, etc., may be in species and also each creature from the other, in this respect, as far as *prāṇa* (life) is concerned, they are the same. Because they all remain alive by breathing. Hence, enthrone your Guru in your heart and contemplate Him as pervading the whole universe through *prāṇa*; the breath of life. The Guru is all-pervasive. So one should perform japa of the mantra received from the Guru and simultaneously watch one's breathing.

Everybody can do this. But the practice of japa in rhythm with one's breathing should be done on the advice of the Guru. If it is done merely because one has read about it in a book, there is the possibility of the brain becoming over-exerted. All the same, in many cases it is seen that by this practice the japa fits in naturally with the rhythm of the breath. In such cases there is no danger.

For performing pūjā you have seen how people mould an earthen image and then instil life into it by some special rites. Consciousness (*chaitanya satta*) exists everywhere. It is equally present in every creature (*jīva*) as well as in earth. But because we do not realize that living consciousness is also present in clay, we mould an earthen image and then instill life into it through some special ceremonies. Similarly, enthroning your Guru in your heart, think of Him as pervading everywhere as the life force (*prāṇa*) and then engage in your japa while watching your breath moving in and out.

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The benefit derived from watching the movement of one's breath while practising japa is that the mind becomes somewhat calm. Whether it is a picture or an image, the mind cannot concentrate on it for any length of time. But because breathing implies movement it is a little easier to tie the restless mind to it. In a similar fashion, to make a restless child remain quietly in a room, one has to provide the kid with a toy.

Now consider something else : the waves that arise in water are nothing but water. Yet, because of their movement they appear to be separate. The same substance is simultaneously quiet and in motion, broken into parts and unbroken. This constitutes the ceaseless *līlā* of the universe. Beyond that there is a state where there are neither water nor waves. This is the unmanifest (*avyakta*).

If you concentrate on the waves for sometime you will find that they are nothing but water. In the same way if you continue for some length of time to carry out your japa while concentrating your restive mind on your breathing or on your Guru in the guise of *prāṇa*, you will find that your mind has become calm, and the consciousness (*chaitanya satta*) that is always present within you becomes revealed of itself. Once this revelation has taken place, there is an end to doubts.

Another advantage of carrying out japa in rhythm with your breathing is that it can be performed everywhere, at all times. Inhaling and exhaling continues without a break ; so all you have to do is to perform your japa in rhythm with