

*TEN INSPIRING STORIES*



—SHIVANANDA

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From the lips of  
Sri Anandamayee Ma



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## FOREWORD

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Sri Anandamayee Ma, the *Purna Brahma Narayana*, appeared on this earth of ours a century ago in a mortal form, to spread the message of love and spiritualism. Her innumerable devotees had the good fortune of having a taste of that divine love and a vision of that celestial presence.

The stories told by Sri Ma, during the *Matri Satsangs*, are of the nature of parables. These were narrated by her in such a lucid language and in an inimitable style that the characters seem to be very much familiar and almost one amongst us and the teachings evolve out of the stories quite naturally.

With utmost humility, a small collection of these stories, rendered into English from the Bengali language, is being placed before the devotees and admirers of Ma by the writer. He also beseeches Sri Ma's infinite grace so that the lapses may be pardoned by her. Her everflowing *Kripa* may be showered on her devotees on this earth.

—SHIVANANDA



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**REAL CONCENTRATION IS  
UNIFICATION WITH THE LORD**

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" He is the fountain of Peace and the  
treasure - house of real Happiness."  
-- Sri Anandmayee Ma

A Guru had a disciple. He very often complained to his Guru that even after trying his utmost, he could not concentrate on his meditation. Guru also tried various ways and means for quite a long period, but all were in vain. Ultimately the Guru thought of another measure.

Next time when the disciple approached the Guru with the same complaint, the Guru asked him whom did he loved most.

The disciple replied, "Guruji, I love my calf most. It is most dear to me and is very beautiful to look at."

Said Guruji, "All right, henceforth, at the time of meditation, concentrate your mind on your beloved calf."

This was very easy for the disciple and he returned home very happy.

Returning home he made all arrangements for the calf and when the meditation hour arrived he bolted the door from inside and sat on his 'asan' to meditate.

Now, as you can understand, it was very easy for the disciple to concentrate on his calf and as the experience was very pleasing to him, he continued to do it for a fairly long time. He became so much absorbed in meditation, that he could not even realise how much time had elapsed.

Next day, the Guru came himself to the disciple to enquire about his meditation. He found that the door was bolted from inside. He repeatedly called the disciple by his name, knocked the door again and again but there was no reply from inside.

Ultimately after much shouting the disciple was shaken up from his meditation. At his response, the Guru shouted, "Open the door, what are you doing ?" The disciple replied, "Gurudev, I am running after my calf in the jungle, shall I come out ?"

Guru replied, "No, not now" and left. The next day Guru came again and asked the same question, "Dear child, what are you doing ?"

The reply came, "I am fondling my calf. Shall I come out?"

"No, not yet", replied the Guru and went back.

Another day passed, the Guru came again and shouted, "Do you hear me? What are you doing?"

In reply the disciple lowed—"Hamba".

This time the Guru said, "Dear child, open the door and come out."

The disciple left his seat and moved to the door to come out, and said, "Guruji, how can I come out, my horns will get stuck-up in the door."

The Guru caught hold of his hand and pulled him out of the room.

Coming out the disciple began to jump and move with two hands and two legs, just like an animal.

Guru immediately made him stand straight on his legs and said, "Here you are. Have you now followed how to concentrate your mind and meditate?"

Concluding the story Ma said—"This is how the concentration should be learnt and to attain the goal of human life."





## TWO

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### REFLECTION OF BLISS

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Through the crystal clear water of a lake a golden necklace was visible lying at the bottom of the lake. Some passers by beholding the beautiful necklace got tempted to have it, and they dived into the lake to collect. But strangely enough, when they reached the bottom, they could find no necklace there. Being disappointed they used to come up, but again when they looked down from the bank of the lake, it was visible. This made them extremely puzzled and they could not understand the mystery behind it.

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Being perplexed, they were looking at each other. They discovered that a necklace was hanging high up from the branch of an adjacent tree. It was evident that some bird must have picked it up from somewhere and left it there. Now it was clear to all the assembled persons there that the necklace visible at the bottom of the lake was only a reflection of the real necklace and nothing more.

Finishing the story, Ma commented, "Similarly the fountain head of all happiness is the Absolute Being. The pleasure that worldly people derive through their sense organs are merely an insignificant reflection of the 'Anandamaya Brahma'."

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## **THREE**

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### **THE THORNY WAY TO PERFECTION**

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An earthen pitcher was bought from the market to perform puja on it. According to the ritual, before worshipping it, it was filled with Ganges water and life was instilled into it by the priest through appropriate Vedic rites and hymns.

When the rites were over, a saint appeared there and asked the pot to relate its life history. Being so requested, the pot narrated—

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"In the beginning I was a portion of this great mother earth and was proved to be a part of this beautiful planet.

One day a clay modeller came and started digging, separating me bit by bit from my mother with a spade. Oh ! it was so painful and horrible an experience that even now, when I think of, I tremble with fear. Then he put me in a basket and carried me to his hut. There in the hut I was kept in a corner. There I was pleased to think that I would be in peace, as I was under the roof of the hut, rains, wind and other unkind elements of nature would not trouble me.

But oh, what an ill luck ! The next day, the man came and began to crush me with a big hammer. You can easily imagine

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what inhuman torture I had to undergo then. But when he stopped crushing, I hoped that now I would be left alone. But contrary to my expectations, the man came after some time and mercilessly poured ice cold water on me and made me a lump of clay and went away. Again I was hopeful thinking that my misery was over. But I knew not how much sin I had accumulated in my previous births. Again the potter came and transfixed me on a wheel and turned the wheel in a tremendous speed till I took the shape of a pitcher. In spite of all the tortures I underwent, I shall admit, that I was pleased to see my beautiful pitcher form and thought that at last God had smiled on me.

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But no, my misfortune was not yet over. The next day I was put under the scorching sun and that went on continuously for several days only to end in a worse state. From the frying pan I was literally put into the fire. After three days I was baked in the burning fire and my body was charred and then pointed. Again I was pleased to look at my light red colour and the strength that the fire God bestowed on me.

Then I was sent to a market place, where many people came to purchase me. In the market I was subjected to a different kind of torture. Whoever came to purchase me, banged on me with a stick to be sure that there was no hole or crack on my body. And ultimately a *pujari* (Priest)

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purchased me, filled me with the Ganges water, and now I am happy to hear that I will be worshipped and people will bend their heads before me in obeisance.

After relating the story Ma commented : "Similarly, a guru moulds his disciple to perfection by various process and then awards him wisdom to attain the ultimate goal of human life, the *Moksha* (Salvation)."



## FOUR

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### OLD HABITS DIE HARD

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There was an old woman, who was a seller of oil by profession. In her ninety years of human existence she did nothing except selling oil. When her life was to end and she was about to die, all her relatives assembled around her. Looking at them the woman said, "You are all here, I entreat upon you all to look after my oil shop and see that it is not closed down. Remember what I say. Do not forget".

When she was saying all these, she was by degrees losing her consciousness and also power of hearing.

Her relations realising that the end was very close, urged her, "Grand Ma, repeat—'Krishna', 'Krishna'. Repeat 'Ram, Ram.'"

By then she became half-conscious and her power of hearing was impaired. So, shouting to her children and grand children she kept on saying, "No, No. not even a drop of oil shall I give you free. You beggars, run away, run away from here." With these words she breathed her last.

Ma related this story to illustrate the fact that at the moment of death one has no control over the mind. One is engrossed in thoughts which one treasures through-

out the life. Therefore, one must practise to remember the Creator at the time, when one is young and healthy, so that at the time of death God's name may spontaneously come to the mind. Ma makes it clear that God's worship should be practised all through the days of existence in this world and not left to be done only at the last stage.

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## FIVE

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### SHOW SPOILS SADHANA

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There was a queen, who was uncommonly religious. She spent most of her leisure time in meditation and worshipping her beloved deity. She was very generous and was compassionate too.

She had no grief except that her husband, the King, was an atheist. Neither he ever bowed down his head before any deity, nor ever he uttered the name of God. So people thought him to be a non-believer.

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Once it so happened, that while he was in sleep he muttered the word 'Ram'. The Queen who was lying by his side heard it and was highly surprised.

The next day being overwhelmed with joy the Queen ordered celebrations throughout her state and herself started distributing sweets all around.

Seeing all these the King became surprised and asked the reason. The Queen explained to him the incident of the previous night and said that all her grief had totally vanished.

No sooner the King heard it he became morose and said, 'Alas, has my Ram escaped through my lips when I was asleep ? Oh, how cautiously I guarded my treasured name and now it is gone. My life

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is not worth living any more." Saying so the King left the world.

Ma says, "One should spend his life in constant communion with God very secretly, otherwise pride of being Godly may give him a great jolt and ruin the life-long *sadhana*."

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## SIX

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### EVEN ONE GOOD ACT HELPS IN ATTAINING SALVATION

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A thief while returning home was caught in a torrential downpour. Finding no other alternative, he took shelter in a temple of Lord Vishnu. The rain did not subside and so the thief was compelled to spend the night there. Now, the floor of the temple was full of water. So there was no dry place on which to lie down. Therefore, the thief carefully swept all the water of the floor and cleaned it and slept

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there. After a little while the last moment of his life arrived and he died.

Immediately after his death a messenger from the Lord of Death came there to take away the soul of the thief. Simultaneously, a messenger also appeared there from Lord Vishnu and claimed the thief's soul as he had cleaned the floor of the temple before breathing his last.

Both the messengers quarrelled and ultimately Lord Vishnu himself appeared there and took away the soul with him.

Ma said, "Cleaning a shrine is a holy act of great value. It can wash away even all the sins of a life-time."

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## SEVEN

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### NO ARMOUR AGAINST DESTINY

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There was a learned brahmin. One night while he and all his family members were fast asleep a poisonous snake entered their room and bit his wife, daughter and son one after another. Just then all of a sudden the brahmin woke up and saw the snake crawling out of the room. Immediately he looked towards his wife and children and found all of them dead due to snake bite. Finding all his near and dear ones dead the brahmin was

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shocked and puzzled and could not make out what to do. Being utterly grieved the brahmin ran after the snake with a stick to kill it.

After covering a short distance while chasing the snake the brahmin reached near a stream. All of a sudden he found the snake changed into two bulls which began to fight with each other. Very soon both the bulls died and immediately the brahmin saw a very beautiful young lady appearing on the spot. Simultaneously two persons emerged there and began to fight on the question of ownership of the lady. Both of them fought for some time and ultimately they stabbed each other and were dead.

When both of them died the young lady proceeded on her way. The brahmin was struck dumb to see all these happening so quickly and began to follow the lady. As soon as he approached her, the lady turned towards him and said, "What do you want ? Do not follow me."

The brahmin said, "I won't leave you till you explain to me how is it that first of all you were a snake, then changed into two fighting bulls and now you are a pretty girl. Tell me what is your real identity."

The girl first of all tried to evade the question, but the brahmin was not to give up. Then finding him adamant, she said, "I am the destiny".

The brahmin exclaimed, "You are destiny ! What are all these ? Why are you in a killing spree ?"

The lady replied, "I do nothing myself. Do know, none can either harm nor do any good to another. It is all one's own past action that determines the manner in which one has to live or meet one's end."

The brahmin said, "If so, can you tell me how shall I die ?"

The lady said, "Of course, you will die by getting drowned." Saying this the lady disappeared.

The brahmin at first was very nervous, but soon he made up his mind to battle the destiny. He decided to spend the rest of his life high up in the mountain where there is little water and no chance of his

drowning at all. Thinking so he left for the mountains.

One day when the brahmin was roaming about in the mountain he saw a palace like building and went towards it to find a shelter there if possible.

The owner of the building was standing near the gate at that time. Seeing the brahmin coming that way he welcomed the brahmin and began to talk to him. After some conversation the owner finding him to be a learned man entreated him to stay in his house and be a tutor to his sons. The sons also, especially the youngest, felt very much attracted to the new-comer and since then the brahmin stayed there as one of the family members.

Days passed on. The younger boy, by and by, became so much attached to the brahmin that he could not stay away from him even for a day.

After some months it so happened that all the family members decided to go to Varanasi to take a holy dip in the Ganges on a very auspicious day. The owner of the house requested the brahmin also to accompany them. But the brahmin refused to go and related all the incidents that happened to him. In spite of it the owner tried to persuade the brahmin saying, "Oh, if this is the matter, don't be afraid. You need not take any dip, just accompany us, because the youngest boy won't go without you."

The brahmin had to give assent. On the auspicious day the boy insisted that the brahmin should also take the dip along with him.

The head of the family made special arrangement. The rich man made an enclosure on the shallow bank of the Ganges and it was decided that the brahmin, along with the youngest son, will take only one dip inside the enclosure and immediately come out of the river.

Now, when the auspicious moment arrived thousands of men and women began to take the holy dip. The brahmin also entered the enclosure with the youngest son. No sooner they stepped down into the water the youngest son changed himself into a crocodile and in

the twinkle of an eye dragged the brahmin by his legs into the deep water saying, "Brahmin, I am destiny. I work in this way. It is not possible for any one to counteract what is destined for him, as the fruits of his action. Your past actions have brought you here to meet this inevitable death by drowning."

Ma told this story to her devotees to illustrate that there is no armour against destiny.



## **EIGHT**

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### **GOD'S SEAT IS IN MAN'S HEART**

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A wealthy man was lying on his death bed. One day he called his son and said, "Look son, I shall be leaving you very soon. Do not open the almirah which I have kept on the corner of my room unless you get into a very bad state and become utterly helpless and miserable. Saying this the man closed his eyes for ever.

Now, the son was extremely extravagant and within a very short period exhausted all the money he had and

became penniless, so much so, that he could not even provide for the barest necessities of life for his family.

At this juncture he remembered the words of his dying father about the almirah and opened it. But to his utter disappointment, he found the almirah contained nothing except some worn out scraps of cloth. So out of dejection he threw those outside the room and started to dig the place with the hope of finding some hidden treasure. But it was all in vain.

At that moment a sadhu was passing by that place. Seeing the sadhu, the son ran upto him and solicited his help. The sadhu agreed to come to his rescue and came in along with him.

Going near the almirah he looked at it for a while and said, "I want to examine the almirah, so please give me a seat near it."

Sitting near the almirah, first of all he threw away the rags out of it and then began to scrap off the black varnish painted on it and in no time he exclaimed, "What a wonder. Behold, this almirah is made of gold."

Hearing him all the inmates of the house assembled there and looking at the almirah their joy knew no bounds and they fell at the feet of the sadhu.

Again they became very rich and spent their days happily making good use of their wealth.

Narrating the story Ma commented—  
"Every one's heart is a gold almirah,  
which is God's seat. One has to remove  
simply the outer paint over it and to make  
it empty and God will be found adorning  
the heart."

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## NINE

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### GOD IS WITHIN OURSELVES

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In a big city there lived a very rich and  
clever merchant. Once he decided to go to a  
distant country to do business. He started  
preparation for the journey.

In that very city there lived a thief  
also. He somehow got the news and  
thought of accompanying the merchant  
and ultimately robbing him.

Just the day before the commencement  
of the journey the thief dressed up like a  
business man and came to the merchant.

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He said, "Brother, I have come to know that you are going on a business tour. Is it so ? I am also a small trader and want to go out for the same purpose. But as you know, it is not at all safe now-a-days to go alone with so much money, so may I accompany you and make the journey together ?"

The merchant agreed and accordingly next morning they started together for their destination.

On the very first evening when they halted in an inn for the night, the merchant before going to sleep took out all his money and counted them and put them back in the bag. This he did openly before the thief without any concealment. The thief was exceedingly pleased to see all

these and planned to steal the bag when the merchant would fall asleep.

After their night meal both of them lay down side by side to sleep. Due to the long journey the merchant fell fast asleep very soon. But the thief kept himself awake. When the merchant started snoring the thief got up and started searching carefully for the money bag. He searched all the baggages and other belongings of the merchant but could not find the bag anywhere. He searched throughout the night but all in vain.

This went on night after night. Every evening the merchant used to take out his money bag and count the money in the presence of the thief, but the thief could not trace the bag when he looked for it in the night.



In this way a number of days and nights passed by and ultimately one day the thief out of despair began to think, 'Alas, all the troubles that I have undertaken have proved futile. It is a mystery where could he conceal the money bag. How to solve this mystery ? Thinking thus he said to the merchant, "Brother, I must confess today that I accompanied you to steal your money. Every night when you slept I searched all your belongings to get hold of your money, but most astonishingly, I could not find it anywhere. Please do tell me where you used to keep it."

Hearing this the merchant first of all laughed heartily for some time and then said, "Brother, I could make out your evil

intention from the very beginning and therefore, I thought of such a hiding place, which you could never even imagine. Do you want to know where I used to keep it ? I used to keep the bag under your pillow. Have you ever searched there ?"

Concluding the story, Ma said, "Similarly, God is within every body's reach, enshrined in every body's heart. But man goes out to look for him far and wide, without caring to look within himself."



## TEN

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### SATSANG - THE SOURCE OF ALL WISDOM

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Once there lived a King. One day it occurred to his mind people very often say it is all God's doings, but where does God live ? What does He eat ? When does He laugh ? And what does He do ? Since then these four questions pestered him.

After much deliberation the King decided to call an assembly of learned people (*Pandits*) and ask them to answer his questions. He also declared a reward for answer which would satisfy him.

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Accordingly, announcements were made throughout his state and he also declared the date for the assembly.

Pandits began to arrive from far and near and tried to answer the question of the King, but no body's reply could please him. Days passed on, the crowd also went on increasing. Every day innumerable people passed through the lanes of the city to reach the King's court.

Now, there was a farmer who while working in the field daily marked many people coming and going to the city. Seeing them he wondered what was the matter going on in the city.

One day he asked some people about it. Being told that a big assembly of pandits was going on in the King's palace the farmer also expressed his desire to join

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the assembly. "What will you do there ? The assembly is for learned people to solve very difficult questions of the King," said the people. The farmer out of curiosity asked, "May I know what the questions are ?"

The people began to taunt and laugh at him saying, "Do you think yourself to be a pandit ? The King has asked four questions. They are, where does God live ? What does He eat ? When does He laugh ? And what does He do ? Oh, Panditji, have you even followed the questions ?" saying this the people again started ridiculing him.

But the farmer paying no heed to their taunting remarks said, "So simple questions and so many Pandits to answer them. Any one can reply them easily."

The people exclaimed, "You too !" The farmer replied, "Of course".

"Then, come along with us," said the people and took him to the court where the assembly was going on.

The assembly hall was packed to its capacity. The people led the farmer straight to the King and told all about the farmer . The King immediately agreed to hear the farmer.

The King said, "Can you answer my questions ?" The farmer nodded his head in assent.

Without losing any time the King said, "I hope you already know my questions. Reply them one by one, My first question is, Where does God live ?"

The farmer unhesitatingly said, "O King, where does he not ? He is all pervading. He is every where."

Hearing the reply the King thought, "Oh, how beautiful the answer is and also how simple. God is every where, He is in everything, wonderful."

Being highly pleased the King put the second question, "What does He eat?"

The farmer replied, "He eats up man's ego. Until the ego is eaten up by God He cannot be known by man. O King, how can God appear and manifest Himself in a mind which is already filled up with ego? Can two things remain in the same place at a time?"

"Very well", said the King, "Now tell me when does God laugh?"

The farmer said, "Thousands of people are born and die daily in this world. Not a single one of them lives for ever. It is a known fact to each one of us. Even then

every body behaves in such a way as if they are going to live for ever and they will never die. When the Omniscient God sees this mental state of human being He laughs."

Hearing this logical explanation the King was very much delighted. "Excellent", said the King and threw up the last question, "What does God do?"

Hearing this question the farmer first of all remained quiet for a while and then calmly said, "O King, before I can answer this question, you shall have to accept some condition."

As the King was very eager to hear the reply, so he said, "Tell me what is that condition. I shall definitely fulfil it."

The farmer said, "Then, O King, please come down and stand in my place for a short while and let me sit on your throne."

The King readily agreed to the request of the farmer. He came down and stood in the farmer's place. The farmer also quickly went up and sat on the throne.

After a few minutes the farmer came down and requested the King to again occupy his throne. When this was done, the farmer again remained quiet without uttering a word.

The King and all the persons present there were very eagerly waiting for the reply. Seeing this the farmer still remained silent. The King no longer could keep patience and called out, "What is the matter ? Why are you keeping mum ? Answer my last question."

"O King", replied the farmer, "Have I not answered your question ? Have you not yet got the reply ? God turns the poor into a

King and makes the King a destitute at His sweet will. Have you not seen that I was on the throne and you were in my place ? This is what God does."

The King was so much delighted to hear this beautiful answer that he called the farmer near his throne and most cordially enquired how could he give such befitting and most convincing answer to the questions.

The farmer said, "O King, whenever I hear about any *satsang* I regularly go and attend. Whatever reply I have given to your queries are due to the grace of God, who is the presiding Diety of our hearts, and whatever I have gathered from the *satsang*.



