

**Swamini AmritaJyoti Prana Satsang in English**  
**22.04.20**

OM Amriteswaryai Namah

Dhyayamo

I bow down to our beloved Amma, our most precious Amma, as well as to all those listening to these words.

I am very happy to be connecting with you today, brothers and sisters around the world.

I hope and pray that everything is going well for you, that you are able to maintain a peaceful heart and that Amma's light stays with you, in this challenging and, maybe for some of you, difficult time.

I came in Amritapuri on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March, to receive sannyas diksha from Amma, with 50 of my brothers and sisters here, and more than 200 children of Amma received the initiation of brahmacharya.

What a timing! and what a ceremony!

Only that give us a glimpse of Amma's infinite wisdom

And... none of us, in charge of the different branches and ashrams, in India or abroad, could go back. We are all here since. I had planned to go back to France after one week, as of course I had programs, meetings... but I am still here.

All the plans, organization, has disappeared in the akasha. Like for you, confined. Life has taken an unforeseen and unexpected turn.

Amma is here in Amritapuri and, as always, She is doing everything possible to give, give, while scrupulously following the imposed instructions.

My personal sense, feeling is that Amma has taken that opportunity, to be in 'guru bhava', I would even say 'Kali bhava' – meaning that she is continuously insisting on discipline, obedience and on spiritual practices and teaching.

At the same time there is always as usual with Amma softness and humour following the stick, for example since one week She is leading us in a short exercise sequence, some gymnastic after bhajans, where she is just totally so cute and that brings joy to everyone.

Have you read Her three messages, which are available on your websites?

We all have also access to satsangs – either live or recorded, from the Swamis and swaminis who are here in Amritapuri. This is something new. And in non-english speaking countries all the messages and satsangs are translated in the respective national languages.

Many countries have also organized some activities like live bhajans, arcana, meditation, and also hotlines, making masks, not just for devotees, but for anyone who needs it.

All of this is so that each of us, in these unusual and challenging situation, so that we can maintain and nourish our link, our confidence, our inner strength – even our enthusiasm, and to stay in good spirits. Remember, we are children of the Divine Mother, of God, of Life, of the supreme power.

Amma tells us that confidence is like a car battery. Imagine a car which has been filled up with fuel, but has a flat battery – it won't work, it can't move forward.

Let us not let worry or negativity make our batteries go flat. On the contrary, let us charge our batteries – through our practices, our service to others, our positive attitude, our understanding of the teachings, our peace and inner light.

Amma said: “During this time, when the entire world is reeling in the darkness of the COVID-19 pandemic, let each of us come together to light the lamp of hope, compassion and unity. The virus is filling us internally and externally with the poison of fear and anxiety. To destroy it, we have to ignite our inner flame, our inner light. Let us light the lamp of new life, the light of goodness, the light of knowledge that dispels the darkness of ignorance. Let us eliminate this poison with the panacea of right action and right thinking at the right time.”

This confidence, that Amma compares to a car battery, is not confidence in the ego or from the ego, which believes itself to be the master. I think it would be a little comic from the ego to pretend that right now! The ego is totally undermined and has no option but to bow down.

But it is a confidence in Life, in the incredible intelligence and the love of life;

it is a trust that comes from our connection with 'that which is beyond' because that's where power and strength comes from. Our connection with Amma...

And this confidence is also a letting go, a surrender. It is a YES to what is, the YES that prevents any energy loss to conflict with the reality of what is.

It is a confidence that comes from humility, from simplicity – not from arrogance. It's a trust that comes from our bond – we are all links in the same chain, beads on the same thread... children of the Divine Mother – not confidence that comes from separation or the belief that 'I am strong, and I am the best'.

This confidence is also the humility of acceptance – not the humility of a victim: I submit, I have no choice, I have to admit, Acceptance is not the submission of a victim – NO, rather... it is a full embrace of the present moment, with the facts, what's real, what is, to not be in conflict, in conflict with reality.

So it's also a surrender to the constraints, accepting them – following the instructions as Amma tells us to, as painful as they are – for our safety and for that of others. **A mature and responsible attitude.**

Through this pandemic we are face to face with the very nature of human existence in a pretty intense way – as Amma so often tells us, even our next breath is not in our hands. For sure, this makes the ego very insecure.

But it's as if, after all the warnings that Nature gave us, since we remained deaf... Nature, Life is shouting at us now, and imposing on us – STOP.

It's not even anymore a question of compromise, of slowing down, of sustainable development, of new ways.... no, STOP. (HALT).

I think there were many of us who saw that 'things can't carry on like this'. But how to stop?

I'll share with you a text I recently received from a priest in Bordeaux (between all the texts, the videos that go around –emails, Facebook and WhatsApp!!)

Here's the beginning of the text:

“This world, thrown like a racing car in its mad rush, this world which all of us knew was racing towards its doom, but which no-one could find the emergency brake, this gigantic machine has been abruptly stopped. All because of a small bug, a tiny parasite invisible to the naked eye, a small nothing of a virus.... How ironic!

And now here we are, since more than one month unable to move, confined.

But what's going to happen after? When the world tries to start up again...”

In this satsang, I want to outline how we could maximise these days of confinement as they stretch out in front of us.

I see two key areas:

- Live each moment fully and consciously
- Understand our past mistakes and reflect on the changes we need to make

#### 1. Live each moment fully and consciously

Fully, and completely: what does it mean? – It means to welcome everything, the agreeable and the disagreeable, the pleasant and the unpleasant, without denying or choosing. What comes, is.

Normally we welcome what suits us, what we like – and we reject what doesn't suit us.

This is not a spiritual attitude, and I would even say – it is not an intelligent attitude. Why?

Since life is by its very nature made up of 'highs and lows', 'ups and downs' if we reject what doesn't suit us, we reject half of life itself. We don't take into account everything life has to offer us to discover the mysteries of life: inner peace, everlasting joy.

For example, if, when trying to solve a problem in physics or chemistry, we fail to take into consideration all the data of the pb, and the laws of physics, we will never find the solution to the problem. Or, worse still, if

we find a solution, it will be a wrong one (which might have some bad consequences).

So let us welcome, with the open mind of a seeker, of an explorer, everything that comes our way – the fears, the weariness, the fatigue, boredom, sadness, the difficulties, and of course the pleasures, the joys, softness and relaxation, the beauty... and so on

Yes, yes, life is giving me this; yes, yes, I take it, life is giving me that – yes, yes, I take that too.

Let us divert our greediness tendency to 'take', to have, to own, to accumulate... our greediness... towards an eagerness for what life has in store for us in each moment. Let us take what life is offering us. All of it. What life presents to *you* – and only you, specially for you. Not to anyone else, or to any others.

Be yourself, be established in yourself, have your personal relationship with life, take care of what's yours.

Be yourself, everyone else is already taken.

Welcome each moment, accept your lot with eagerness and enthusiasm.

Now the question is:

Who is welcoming? Who is accepting? Who is it who welcomes the highs and the lows with the same heart, with eagerness?

Not the wounded child within us, lost, desperately searching for love; not the insecure ego, who wants to control everything... they're not able to welcome everything... they reject what they don't like, what makes them suffer. They separate by Yes or No.

Who welcomes? Another level of consciousness that is there within each of us, which we call the witness, the disciple, the true devotee, the sage within us, the clarity (the 'buddhi' which sees what is, with an open heart, without judgement, without preference). A level of consciousness which as Amma says in Her meditation, is as vast as the universe.

So, for all of you listening, for each of you, it might be received or perceived in different ways:

- Either you are already familiar with this 'witness attitude', sakshi bhava, through your practices, the observer, the presence
- Or, you are not familiar with it, and this may be the moment to discover this deeper level – relaxed and confident, welcoming every situation,

all emotions, any conflict – without even first trying to resolve anything, without trying even to understand, just simply welcoming what is. This level of the witness is here right now, in every moment, it's already there within us.

In the actual situation, the ego is not in control. It is constrained, confined, it is no longer 'free', it has lost its bearings, lost its foothold.

Observe, take a step back, listen to what is inside you, become aware, but without getting caught up in it.

That which listens, without fear or preference, that's the witness.

If it helps, imagine that everything that's happening to you and what you're going through is happening to your best friend. And you listen to him or her with empathy. With kindness. This gives you a bit of distance, it allows you to have clarity, because there is interest but not identification.

There's a short story that illustrates this identification.

In a village there's a house on fire. Panicked, a man races to put it out and he calls out 'help please help' to the neighbours. One neighbour says to him, 'No need to panic – your son sold the house yesterday, it's no big deal'.

'Oh', replies the man, 'he sold it...', and he relaxes. He carries on helping to put out the flames, but from a distance.

The son arrives, sees his dad, relaxed, and shouts 'Dad, can't you see it's burning down – get going!'

'Yes, but we sold it'

'No, in the end the sale fell through at the last minute'

And the father panics again, starting to rush with fear and worry.

This little story is just to show how identification works. To something external, and the dependency that comes with it.

We can imagine another attitude than the two in the story: we can imagine a detached yet responsible attitude, of someone who sees the fire starting, and who responds in the appropriate way - doing everything to put it out. Without panicking (because it's his house), or without indifference (not caring because it's not his house).

Detached – and responsible;

In order to welcome everything that comes our way with the same level of interest, the only way is to go beyond the duality of 'I like, I don't like', 'the likes and dislikes'

Let's forget this duality which can be a real poison, or rather than forgetting, put it in the background, because forgetting isn't so easy and also requires some understanding and training, and skills. So let us not give prime importance to the job of sorting between 'I like, I don't like', and instead stand back with a wider perspective, less ego-centered and limited, stand first at the level of what simply is, the facts, before qualifying it.

'To be separated from what I like is suffering, to be associated with what I don't like is suffering.' Said the Buddha.

As long as we are identified at that level, as long as we live busy preoccupied with our likes and dislikes, we will only live with tension, with fear (I will lose what I like), conflict (I'm having what I don't like forced on me), effort (to struggle against what I don't like, or to obtain what I do like), waiting and hoping that things become how I want them, hoping that this confinement ends, that this pandemic is defeated in one month, provided that.... And what if it doesn't turn out that way?

To live like this, in a permanent struggle, in a permanent emotional yes and no, is exhausting.

Let's try, let's practice, not expect anything other than what life offers us, nor concern ourselves with anything other than what life presents us with... from one moment to the next, so we can be fully in the moment, second by second – unified. From unity comes peace. It's the title of one of Amma's speeches.

What is life offering me – right now, that is unique, and that will never look the same again. So I should not miss it ! Can I live it to the fullest? Simply welcome it, since it is there, it's mine to live.

what is : sat, there is nothing else : asat –

Asato ma sat gamaya : from what is not there, lead me to what is there.

To welcome, eagerly, with love the present moment. To embrace the present moment, to give darshan to the present moment or receive the present moment like we receive Amma's darshan, a full embrace.

You might be thinking: It's easy for Swamini to say, she's with Amma, in Amritapuri...

Yes, in a completely unexpected way life has put me here. But is it that easy?

I left everything in France thinking I'll just come back in a few days. I left my 94 years old mother, paralyzed, totally dependent, at home (fortunately), but alone three quarters of the time and at night; my sister and brother-in-law who go back and forth as much as they can and who have to deal with the mental burden of the caregivers, who are sometimes exhausted and overwhelmed.

Many of you, I am sure, have a loved one who is vulnerable, separated from you, who is asking for you... it is heart breaking. Let us have trust, pray, phone of course, and let go. What else can I do? Yes, I'm letting go of what's not in my power. I don't let my mind and thoughts overcome me with sadness, rebellion, fear, guilt... I open my heart to reality, not negativity. OM. YES.

Here, we can't get near Amma. No public darshan of course. Amma comes for meditation and bhajans. Yes, it's wonderful. The rest of the time we're confined to our rooms. I live about 18 hours a day in 6m squared room, in the heat. For me the nights at 30 degrees are really not my cup of tea! Forbidden to go to the ocean. We have to eat in our rooms... Ah, if I was in the French ashram... open space, the fields, the Spring season, the flowers and birds. 20°... I could make myself suffer, tear myself apart, create a division, a conflict. But no, I let go of what isn't. I don't harbor thoughts of what is not.

Here, we can do *pradakshina* of the Kali temple in the mornings – I say yes to this. I take what is possible, what is given to me, I don't ask for what isn't available, here and now. And it is a beautiful experience. I make the most of what is possible. Is this OK with you? You can apply this in your own situation?

Let's be smart. Have a little common sense. Let's be ONE WITH what IS. Let's not waste our energy making impossible demands. We make an impossible request, then we complain, and we get depressed. What a mechanism!

On the contrary, let's use this energy to make the most of the situation.

Be creative, open, adaptable. Enthusiastic even! Smile says Amma... Remember the serenity prayer that Swami Shubamritananda talked also about. This is a mantra, a powerful prayer, containing the whole of the path.



“God, give me...

The Serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The Courage to change the things I can,  
And the Wisdom to know the difference.”

To summarise this part of the talk:

Practice: practice ‘yes’, welcoming, being open to what life has to offer  
Practice hunting down negative thoughts it **should** be  
We become good at what we practice, practice makes us competent,  
skillful, an expert, and so it gets easier and easier.

Be careful not to practice worrying – otherwise you will become very good  
at worrying yourself and those around you.

Be careful not to practice grumbling – otherwise you’ll become an expert.

Practice welcoming any situation life is offering you.

Remember: Full life, not half life.

And so now for the second part:

Understand past mistakes, past errors and reflect on necessary changes.

To draw the lessons from this current drama, I would like to address the  
concept of dharma that is so important in Hinduism, also called Sanatana  
Dharma. (universal harmony)

Dharma is ‘That which supports’ – from the root *Dhr.*, to support.

Dharma is what allows this mysterious, marvelous world, this incredible  
universe, to exist.

It is the laws of physics, of astrophysics, quantum mechanics, laws such  
as gravity – which were not invented by humans, but discovered – these  
laws existed before humans came into existence.

for a seed to grow, you need the rain, the sun, the fertility of the earth ...  
Dharma is also about harmony, balance, invisible and subtle forces... so  
that all that exists, works, there is stable, there is harmonious unfoldment

The eternal laws, laws of the universe were not made by human beings.  
They are intrinsic to Nature, to the beauty and the balance of Nature.  
The role of human beings is to respect them, to protect them.

*“Destroyed, Dharma destroys; protected, it protects”*, according to [Manu](#) (VII, 15)

Let's look at Nature:

The rain gives us water, without taking any for itself

The tree gives us its fruit, without taking any for itself

The earth is overflowing with abundance, with wild edible plants, medicinal herbs, for us – not to take care of itself

The diversity of the animal kingdom is rich, miraculously intelligent and in perfect balance with the laws of nature.

Our planet gives us the air we need to breathe 24/24 7/7

Everything is given, given, given (Amma – Abdul Kalam) with pure altruism, and we take, take, take, as if it is due to us, without the slightest gratitude, even with violence with a pathological greed for more and more.

The ego never stops wanting to transform Nature, manipulate her, exploit her, to be the master, wanting wanting without seeing the wonders that are offered to us.

And this greed (which in fact is a kind of thirst for the Absolute), is blind, with a total ignorance of the laws of giving and receiving, of balance, of harmony.

We have stopped respecting Dharma, the harmonious balance of the laws of this world.

We have created a dreadful imbalance.

We have polluted the water offered, polluted the land offered, polluted the air offered, polluted the food offered, martyred animals with unimaginable cruelty. And what can we say about our Dharma as human beings, towards our brothers and sisters, towards our fellow human beings?

Here's where we were at. That was the situation at the beginning of 2020

As the threat of coronavirus shakes the world, researchers are drawing our attention to another curse. A curse that they consider to have more impact than wars, malaria, AIDS or smoking. This curse is air pollution. It shortens life expectancy by an average of 3 years around the world... Pollution causes 9 million premature deaths every year!

The air that's supposed to keep us alive is killing us. In the same way, water is making us sick, the food that is supposed to feed us is poisoning us. You know one of the ironies of the famous ecologist Pierre Rabhi... 'before having food, instead of saying "Enjoy your meal" – say "good luck!"

We have destroyed Dharma. Dharma has been destroyed.

*"Destroyed, Dharma destroys; protected, it protects", according to Manu (VII, 15)*

SO : Wasn't it necessary for something drastic to happen, as quickly as possible, to wake us up?

The planet was suffocating, dying, bled dry – we didn't protect it. The one who gives us everything, like a perfect mother, we have plundered her, we have exhausted her, tortured and made her sick, left her in a pitiful state.

So here's her answer. To prevent herself from dying, and dragging us down with her, she had to act. From the point of view of Nature, the COVID19 is a radical way for recovery, for healing. From the point of view of Nature it is a blessing.

The current situation from human point of view is terrible. It is a curse. But who knows? Maybe it is avoiding a worse situation, the one we were heading towards, because of the :

- powerlessness of those who wanted to stop,
- and the greed and blindness of those who wanted to continue.

As I said, the planet being sick, we humans are affected, and if the planet is dying, we would also be dying.

"There are no healthy people on a sick planet" was the WWF's cry of alarm over coronavirus.

So let's take some time to reflect. To see and acknowledge how we got here. What mechanisms worked and lead us to this dangerous unbalanced situation.

Let us introspected during this time of confinement, to avoid making the same mistakes - after.

And for those of us who have the great fortune to know Amma, let us listen to Her messages. Amma has no ego. No likes and dislikes. No fear. Her words are not opinions but pure truth. LISTEN! Let's try to deepen them, to understand them better. ALL Her words, not just the ones we like, but also and especially the ones that bother us, that make us react... What luck! Let's not waste our time discussing opinions, going from fake news to fake news, from partial and biased information, from speeches left and right.. from Facebook to WhatsApp.

Let us also stop this bulimia of external connections to fill our inner emptiness, or to distract us from our discomfort. No, Amma tells us this is the worst kind of pollution. The pollution of our minds. Instead, let us dive within. All the answers are there.

Let us rediscover the vast and rich meaning of Dharma, let us regain our dignity as human beings (not the dignity of the ego!), regain our nobility of heart, our strength, our integrity, our values... our connection to nature, to what is beyond.

**Let us regain and live our humanity, regain and live our divinity.**

That is what we can and must do during this period of confinement.

I'll stop here.

I have only touched on this second part, but each of us must first reflect to go further,

We must give ourselves time to revisit the meaning and purpose we have given to our lives.

We have and will have a lot to do, to change, to reorganize ourselves...maybe to survive.

In her message Amma tells us: courage is the main quality. If you have courage, you can overcome anything. Therefore, abandon fear and gather your courage. The antivirus that can kill this virus is courage. Courage is the antivirus of our mind.

So be brave, let's face reality, with the attitude of a witness.

I wish you serenity and wisdom. AND, Amma's grace is there, we all bathe in it, it envelopes us. Amma is with you and you are in Her heart. She told us this again recently.

Thank you for your attention, I hope you can find something that helps and supports you in this sharing.  
Keep well and take care of everyone around you.

OM Amriteswaryai namaha