

Online Satsang with Swami Amritaswarupananda Puri for AYUDH Members - 3 May

Aum Amriteshwaryai Namah

My humble prostrations at Amma's lotus feet.

My *namaskarams*, love and greetings to all the youngsters, devotees, beloved children of Amma and others who are watching this web streaming.

First of all let us together pray for the peace and happiness for the world.

*om sarve bhavantu sukhinah
sarve santu nirāmayāḥ
sarve bhadraṇi paśyantū mā kaścidduḥ khabhāgbhaveta
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ*

The meaning of this prayer is: "May all be happy, may all be free from illness, may all see what is auspicious, may no one suffer, Om peace, peace, peace".

It is almost three months since COVID-19, the coronavirus, infectious disease has put mankind under house arrest. It looks like the end of the tunnel is coming closer. The entire humanity is watching, is waiting in anticipation. One great lesson humanity must have learned from this experience is the value of freedom. Unfortunately, we had to learn it the hard way, because it was as though we were staying behind bars for a quarter of a year. This period was precious for those who were longing to spend quality time with their family and renew and strengthen their relationships and feel the much-needed love, care, understanding and patience.

Nevertheless, the truth is it's not easy to feel happy when you're only with two or three people, for three long months, especially for the younger generation, addicts to various intoxicants, workaholics, travel mongers, etc. It must have been a struggle for such people. That section is bound to feel boredom and monotony. They must have very well understood the relativity theory, as simplified by Albert Einstein. Put your hand on a hot stove for a minute and it seems like an hour. Sit with a pretty girl for an hour and it seems like a minute. This is relativity.

Imagine this: a virus, 80 250 nanometers in diameter, which is equal to 1 billionth of a meter, creating intense fear, anxiety and devastation. With the lack of alertness, *shraddha*, this virus would have wiped out the entire humanity. This microscopic thing, the coronavirus, has taught the entire human race a great lesson in humility. A lesson that none of the leaders or rulers could teach us. Perhaps corona is a godsend emissary with an extremely powerful message: "beware my children, boys and girls, realize how powerful I am. You cannot even conceive of my *shakti*, my infinite power, if this is what an itsy-bitsy messenger of mine, just one of my lowest-ranking soldiers can do to you".

The thing is that the human body is a very powerful tool. Science cannot fathom its potency. It's a container of which the content is a mini universe, a small piece of God. The body houses God. It is a temple of God, pure consciousness. From this perspective, the whole world, every creature, every sentient and insentient being is a temple of God, the totality of life. We forgot this truth or we ignore it, either due to ignorance or arrogance, thereby turning the greatest blessing, this beautiful nature with all its abundance, into a curse.

Human beings by nature wish to earn the impossible. We wish for eternity of the body rather than focusing on the totality of life. We wish to be always successful rather than accepting our losses and failures. We wish to be more cunning rather than to be more active and selfless. We wish to run away from our responsibilities rather than discharging them with the right attitude. We wish to control the future rather than living in the present. We wish to change others without making the least effort to change ourselves. We wish to fulfill our immediate satisfactions without realizing the consequences of our actions and disregarding others totally. Aren't these attitudes more than enough to destroy our life, the life of others, and to destroy nature and everything beautiful and auspicious?

Never make the mistake of asking for the impossible. There are many stories in the Indian Puranas, epics, to exemplify a wrong prayer, a wrong desire. Most of the *rakshasas*, demons, in the Puranas, in the epics, do intense tapas, severe penance. God appears before them and asks: "what boons you seek?" This seems to be a standard format. The *asura*, the demon, would say: "there should not be any death for me". And the Lord would say: "that I cannot give you, ask for something else".

Listen to this story. One such demon by the name Bhasmasura did severe and difficult penance in order to propitiate Lord Shiva. Eventually the Lord was pleased and appeared before him and offered him a boon. The *asura*, the demon, asked Lord Shiva to give him the power, that whenever he places his right hand on somebody's head the person on whose head he has placed his hand will get burned instantaneously and turned into ashes. Lord Shiva grants him the boon. Bhasmasura, the demon, is ecstatic because with this newfound power his clan could triumph over the *devas*, the celestial beings, and establish their sway over the whole universe. But then Bhasmasura, just to test the power of the boon, tries to place his hand on Lord Shiva himself, who flees from the *asura* and hides in a cave.

At this moment Lord Vishnu appears in front of the *asura*, the demon, in the form of a bewitching beauty called Mohini. The *asura* becomes crazy and requests Mohini to become his wife. Mohini tells the *asura* that he has to defeat her in dance, only then will she accept his proposal. She also tells the *asura* that he should precisely follow and imitate her dance movements unfailingly. The demon agrees to this. Both started dancing. At one point during a certain move Mohini touches her head and the *asura* also follows suit. As soon as the *asura* touches his own head he turns into a handful of ashes.

This world is the dance of the totality, of energy, of pure consciousness. As she continues, the world continues, nature continues a dance of creation, sustenance and distraction. We, human beings, are supposed to fully support her. We are not supposed to make even a single wrong move, but only follow her, be in tune with her. When a person, who is not completely in control of its material senses, becomes powerful, he will invariably start abusing it. While doing so he harms the people around him too, in ways that he just can't fathom at that point, as he is intoxicated by his power. Are we becoming like this *asura*, this demon? Is our greed, cunningness and desire for success making us totally blind? Hope and pray, humanity will not face the same fate as this demon.

What is the reality of life and do we understand it? Oneness of this whole system known as the world is the reality of life. It is one single unit, like our body. Take the example of a simple act of eating. What happens when we put one morsel of rice into our mouth? Or take a bite of a small piece of bread. It is not as simple as we think; it is not a matter of just opening our mouths and tasting it on our tongue. The whole body is involved in that process. When a piece of food enters the body, all the internal organs such as the alimentary canal, the respiratory organs, the blood stream and every cell of the body are instantaneously alerted, they are immediately set into action. Absorption and digestion of the food is not possible without the synchronized working of all of these organs.

Thousands of years ago, the ancient seers of India declared to the world whether something is sentient or insentient, living or nonliving, the consciousness of everything is the same. It is universal. This means that there is no such thing as individual, independent or isolated functions. Just as the entire internal organs of the body are actively involved in digesting the food we eat, the whole world functions as a unit. Suppose we get a small cut or bruise on our hand; we think it is only a localized event. No, just in that very moment, our entire body becomes alert and active. In a similar manner, the entire universe becomes aware, when a bird flutters its wings, when a single leaf falls down and even the tiniest movement of the wind.

Modern science also agrees to this. And that's why Amma says "We are not isolated islands but links of a chain, the universal chain. Whether we know it or not, all of our actions impact others, therefore creating a change within ourselves is more important than trying to change others. Once we change, others will automatically change in our presence."

Amma continues, "The same life energy that gives us the power to speak and to sing, is the power behind the song of the bird and the roar of the lion. The same consciousness that flows in and through every human being lends its power to the movement of the wind, to the flow of the river and to the light of the Sun." We need to remember that even though we are citizens of a certain country or nationality we all come under the central system of the universe. Every one of us is participant of that government, the central constitution that governs us all. It is time for humanity to bow down and surrender to the will of that super intelligence manifested through nature.

Amma says “Nature is the manifested form of God”, or “Nature is God's visible form”. Nature keeps giving us clear directions through various indications; we should develop the necessary power to see them, rather feel them, decode them and act upon them.

Love is the beginning middle and end of this path. Love will show exactly what to do, when and with what attitude. And that's why Amma tells us that we need both love and reverence when we look for solutions to protect nature and the environment. Mere knowledge or information is not sufficient. Our ancestors loved and revered nature; we, the so called modernists and civilized people, interpreted it as primitive and rejected the great example set by them. It is time to be humble in all circumstances; it is time to avoid taking unnecessary claims; it is time to stop challenging others; it is time to let go of our superiority and inferiority complexes; it is time to develop some degree of equal vision; it is time to practice fairness in our dealings. On top of all, as Amma says, it is time to realize, “compassion is the one word solution for 90% of the problems in the world”.

You, my little brothers and sisters, you, the younger generation is the one and only hope of the human race, the generations to come. In you Amma trusts, our hopes rest in you, dear ones. My dear little sisters and brothers, it is difficult to change the behavioral patterns of the older generation. I fear they will go back to their bad habits. From this point onwards, we must be 100% convinced that we cannot continue the way we have been living, the way we have been treating nature. We must abandon our utter selfish ways; we must give up our habit of exploiting nature; we must consider others and be compassionate to each other; we must build stronger family relationships; we must consider the world as a family; we must constantly remind ourselves that we are part of the universe; that we don't have an existence on our own.

We must contribute towards creating a balance between health, wealth and knowledge. We must have more faith in the mystery of the universe, rather than being analytical about anything and everything. Along this line, Amma gives us a strong reminder, Nature is not going to be forgiving anymore, the pandemic is a powerful warning, perhaps the final one. We cannot fool around anymore; do not think that we can get away with our stupidities. If we don't change, Nature will force us to change. We human beings have a habit of forgetting the lessons that Nature has been teaching us, but not anymore. No more excuses, the time has come for humanity to work on certain important aspects of life, and practice them. No more excuses.

Let me share with you a few points that you may want to remember and practice:

1. **Be a servant of Nature**

There's a Sanskrit word “*dasa*”. *Dasa* means servant. Be a servant. In one of Amma's recent messages Amma says: “in our world we see that when the workers stop working the company incurs losses and eventually shuts down. But from a spiritual perspective or according to the law of Nature, Nature is the boss and man is the employee. Here the boss is much stronger, possessing super strength. In this case if the boss stops working the world itself will have to shut down”. And this lockdown is a sample. Everyone should remember this truth. Man should set aside his egoism and recognize that natural forces are the ultimate master other than

God. We have to develop the attitude that we are nothing but Nature's servants, *dasa*, not masters, servants. Not masters as we pretend to be.

2. **Reduce speed**

There are clear signs of Nature asking us to slow down. We see road signs: "speed kills". It is not just a rule that needs to be observed on the road but also in life. What does slowing down in life mean? It means meditation. It is time to find a balance between action and meditation. Only when the mind slows down will we be able to watch our thoughts. Watch your thoughts, watch your emotions, keep an eye on the negativities. We are ordinary human beings so the thoughts will be there, negativities will be there. However, let us use our discernment and try our best to prevent them from getting expressed as actions. When the mind slows down through meditation, we get the much needed space to see our weaknesses and limitations and work on them. This will also help us work on our relationships with our kith and kin, near and dear ones, our immediate family, society, Nature, the world, our common home and most importantly, with God.

3. **Don't get stuck in over-analysis**

Technology without love is dangerous. This is one of the biggest dangers we are facing. Love is the balancing act, both internally and externally. Currently most people dwell in their head. This is one of the main reasons for our downfalls. We keep falling down, meeting with failures in our efforts to find harmony with Nature. If at all you want to fall, let us learn how to fall from the head to the heart, from collecting information to collective intelligence.

4. **Cultivate and develop the quality of giving**

The entire world exists on giving. Amma's darshan is the best example of giving. Absolutely no discrimination. Giving love with equal vision without any difference whatsoever. The world functions on the law of diminishing marginal utility as in economics. For example, the enjoyment you get from the second slice of orange will be lesser than the first slice and it keeps diminishing with each slice. The last one will be least enjoyable. But in the case of Amma's love, the enjoyment level remains the same. Suppose there is a scale to weigh love. It will show the level of love received by the first person and the last person, who may be the 5,000th the person, will be exactly the same. Here the giver, who is Amma, is perfectly happy, full with brimming and boundless love until the end. There is no feeling of any burden. Work transforms itself into worship and it's an act of selfless giving without expecting anything back. So it is time for Humanity to become more action-oriented than result-oriented. A shift in our attitude from the future, that's a result, to the present, that's action, has come inevitable. Any action will become burdensome when our focus is more on the result. It will be like a chore. Whatever be the area of your work it will weigh you down, if you consider it is a chore. You will lose your enthusiasm and vigor. You will be easily irritable, angry, so learn to love your work whatever it is. Most of us spend five days a week at work and the remaining two are filled with work thoughts, worries and frustrations. Learn to love your job or find one you can love and you will find it easier to live in the present moment.

5. Consider love, forgiveness and patience as your main deities, images of worship

Love, forgiveness and patience. Love is the catalyst that has the power to settle any conflict, inner or outer. Once love enters, light automatically follows. The word light has two meanings: one is radiance or luminosity, the other is light weight. Love, light and weightlessness are connected. When you are full of love, you become full of light and can soar to great heights, because you don't feel the weight of the ego. Love and light are not two. Light is inherent in love. Ammas says: "life and love are not two; they are one of the same". In reality, light and life are synonyms of love. Lack of love is darkness. That is one explanation for the current experience humanity is going through. We lost the love in our hearts. Light cannot exist without love so darkness stepped in, the darkness of selfishness, greed, jealousy, hatred, exploitation of others for political gains and so on. Thus, when love disappeared from within and without, this world, that heaven on earth, disappeared and hell appeared. COVID-19 is just a small experience of hell. If there is a bridge that connects earth and heaven, it is love. It is the bridge that connects man and nature and man and God. When your heart is lighted up with love, two more flowerings happen within you: the flowering of forgiveness and the flowering of patience. Remember that forgiving someone does not excuse their behavior. By forgiving, you are accepting the reality of what happened and finding a way to live in a state of resolution with it. This doesn't have to include the person you are forgiving. Forgiveness isn't something you do for the person who wronged you, it is something you do for you.

6. Remember that the world is our extended family

If we dig deep into our past, we realize that we are all related by blood. If we dig sideways in space we find that we are related to the surrounding nature, with environmental forces. And if we dig deep inside ourselves we find that we are related to each other by consciousness and, knowing this one, we can proclaim and say "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" meaning "the world, the whole world is one family". This scriptural declaration is not only about peace and harmonious coexistence of various cultures and societies but also indicates an ultimate truth, a law said by the universe about an unknowable or mysterious source. It's an instruction to humanity that we should abide by that law and strive to live as one family. This universal law is known as *Dharma*, the central constitutional law that binds us all. The supreme authority of this law is known as God. Always remember that we are answerable to that power. Figure out what you, as an individual, need but thereafter, become a philanthropist, improve not only the home in which your children live but also the world in which they live. Look beyond your own family to the world family.

7. Cultivate *ṭṛpti* or contentment

Desires can generally be classified into two: anabolic or legitimate, and catabolic or illegitimate. Desires that are harmless to others, healthful and uplifting, creative, constructive and are necessary for maintaining good health and peace of mind are known as anabolic desires. On the other hand, desires that are destructive to one and others are catabolic. They dissipate our energy. Basically any desire that helps conserve our energy is anabolic and any desire that drains our energy and makes us weak is catabolic. Fulfill your legitimate desires and try to transcend the illegitimate ones by counteracting them with *ṭṛpti* or contentment. Sever the false

connection between money and happiness and find contentment in what you have, what you possess.

8. Use technology only when it is necessary

While using electronic gadgets, such as a cell phone, laptop, and tablet... you are not living in the moment. You may say that you are reading an article, posting something on your FB, Twitter or tik-tok, chatting with your friend on whatsapp or watching a video. It's okay to use them when it is necessary, but letting them use you is dangerous. Why? Because, Amma says, "the reality of your existence lies with your surroundings not with these gadgets". You become alive and live life only when you establish contact with people, family, surroundings, nature and above all, God. Fundamentally, you have to connect with yourself and from that connection arises all other connections. Be aware and never allow yourself to be an addict to technology.

9. Try to create a shift in your attitude.

There is a Hindu spiritual text by the name *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. It depicts Lord Krishna's life and teachings. The 12th chapter, canto 3 of the text, is known as *Bhumi-Gita*. *Bhumi* means earth and *Gita* means speech or sermon. Basically it's a speech given by Earth, Mother Earth. And what does Earth say? She laughingly says, "Just to see how these Kings are actually playthings in the hands of death, are desiring to conquer me. Kings and politicians think that they will gradually conquer the entire Earth. Because the hearts of these leaders are bound by great expectations they failed to see death waiting nearby. The Earth continues, although in the past great men and their descendants have left me, departing from this world in the same helpless way they came in into it. Even today foolish men are trying to conquer me. For the sake of conquering me materialistic persons fight one another. Fathers oppose their sons and brothers fight one another because their hearts are bound to possessing political power. Political leaders change one another. All this land, Mother Earth says, all this land is mine, it's not yours, you fool! Thus they attacked one another and die."

In her speech given in the Vatican, Amma said, "Humanity has built many divisions, partitions in the form of religion, caste, language and international borders. We should gather together above all these divisions and create a bridge of all-encompassing pure love to cross this divide. Any hardened heart will soften in love. Love can spread light through even the densest darkness. Selfless love will transform the demons within humans into their own saviors. Without any selfish motives, the religious leaders should formulate an action plan based on selfless service, which is the essence of all true faiths."

We used the word "touched". I was touched by that person or I was touched by that incident. Do you know what it really means? We may not have said a single word to that person. Someone just passed by or you just watch, you would witness an event an incident, and he or she may have just looked at you once; that person, he or she may have just looked once at your eyes and you feel touched by that person, right? And this word "touched" is not just a word. It actually happens. You become touched and then those rays go on spreading to the people, to animals, to trees, to rocks. And one day you will see you are touching the whole universe from within. Try this: sit next

to a person who is fast asleep, don't do anything, just gaze deeply on his face, you will be surprised to see that person opening his or her eyes, waking up. And that person may even ask: "what?" You haven't touched him physically, you haven't called him but he woke up. How? Because you touched him, not physically, but with your heart.

Amma, through Her darshan, Her presence, Her touch, Her loving embrace wakes people up, invokes their dormant potential and helps them express it. We are all touched by Amma. Our heart is open because Amma touches us. The entire humanity has to create a new womb, a womb to conceive Love, a womb to conceive the deeper feeling of motherhood. Every single human being, man or woman, has to become a mother, a loving, compassionate, affectionate, caring, patient mother. And that's the way towards light, that's the way to live life, and that indeed is the way to survive. And that alone is the way to future. Amma will help us in this process and She will awaken the love dormant in us and lead us to light. The future is in your hands, my dear little sisters and brothers. The future is in your hands.

The first question is from Pranav from India.

This current situation of COVID-19 is affecting life personally which can be taken care of by following distancing rules, but at a professional level there is a lot of loss in terms of losing jobs, pay cuts, creating mental stress. Can you please put light on this and explain how can we take positive out of this and keep ourselves motivated for better tomorrow?

This is my response to Pranav. The coronavirus infectious disease has turned the whole world into almost like a war zone, a battlefield. Those who are affected by the disease are fighting. People who are suspected to have the disease are quarantined and isolated, they are also fighting. Those who are forced to confine in their houses are also fighting. A fight is going on within everyone. It is a fight between past, present and future, within you. Your own present is fighting with the future and past. Every one of us is a soldier in this war, every single one of us. We are all soldiers, irrespective of culture, nationality, language, caste, creed, religion. We are all in the war friend. And what is the most important thing to do during a war? To save your life, right? Your life is most important. So what you have to do is: lay low, be patient, take necessary steps to save yours and your family's life and the life of others. Prioritize for that. So focus on the present, be aware, protect yourself and others, be secure and safe, be well and cheerful, that is of primary importance. Your job, pay cuts, and mental stress are secondary. Only if you are alive and healthy will you have a job, correct? Only if you are alive and healthy will you be able to search for a new job in case you lose the current one. Thinking of pay cuts, etc, comes later. So basically it is not a question of being positive. Rather it is a more of a question about accepting the so-called negative situation. The disease and the lockdown that followed were preparing you to face any challenge. In this situation, positivity means acceptance. Okay Pranav? I think I have answered your question.

The second question is from AYUDH Europe. I don't know if I am pronouncing his name correctly, it's Leonie from Belgium.

Thank you for taking the time to answer our questions. I can still go to work during the lockdown and I'm grateful for that. I also experience more calmness and more time for myself spiritually, and other things I wanted to do for a long time during the time I'm not working. There is no pressure now from activities, parties and dinners with family and friends. I love my family and friends and of course I want to see them soon, because I have missed them. But it was some time I could do seva, AYUDH activities and working. My concern is that after the corona virus it will all be again like it was before, with everybody being busy, rushing from one place to another, and the calmness will be gone. I feel that I have been rushing a lot too, but I don't want to hurt someone else's feelings. Do you have any advice on this topic? Does Amma say something about it?

Leonie, my answer to your question is: I don't think people with even a little common sense will continue to remain obsessed with their behavioral patterns after going through such an intense experience. The world must change. It is not others' opinions that should guide you, but your own convictions. You must try to have your own convictions about this experience of COVID-19. What are the lessons you have learned from this? How do you want to act upon them? How do you want to change your outlook after this? Do you want to create a positive impact? If yes, how do you want to correct your views and create the inner transformation? Correction is only possible in the present moment. Do you wish to contribute to a harmonious living with nature? These are the questions you should be asking. I mean, it's not enough to ask, contemplate on them, and meditate on them. If you really wish to create a change in your life and in the life of others then don't worry about the hot feelings you might create in others. Because once you transform yourself, once your heart is full of light, then you cannot hurt others. What do you want? Understanding, or less understanding, or no understanding at all? You decide and move forward. Thank you.

The third question is from Srikuti USA.

Our beloved Amma often states that self-confidence is like a booster rocket that helps us free break free from the bondage and impurities of the mind and allows us to rise to the heights of spirituality. Amma also states that failure comes from losing self-confidence. From my limited perspective I understand self-confidence as trusting one's abilities to face any situation that arises. In the day-to-day world, most people build self-confidence from repeated instances of success. For example, a student who has passed all of his practice exams in high school will be confident walking into the real exam. A student, who failed all of his practice exams despite his best efforts, will lack self-confidence which will lead to further failures. It is a vicious circle. How do you cultivate self-confidence when facing periods of failure? How do you cultivate enough self-confidence to be competent in what you're doing, while not taking ownership of your actions, and maintaining the attitude that Rama is the doer and you are a servant?

Srikuti, I think your concept about self-confidence is wrong. Self-confidence is not something that you need only during times of success. During periods of victory there is no need to work on your self-confidence, because it is already there. Because when you win, when you are victorious in something, or when you succeed in something you are excited, you are elated, you are filled with zeal of confidence and enthusiasm. Whereas, failures kill your excitement and confidence, and that's when you have to have self-confidence. When you are healthy you don't need any medicine,

do you? No. But you certainly need to take medicines when you fall sick. Likewise lack of self confidence is a kind of illness. And what is the medicine? Self-confidence is the medicine. And that alone will uplift you. That alone will help you rise above the challenge. So, take the medicine of self-confidence and take it during challenging times. Offering your work or the result of your action to the Almighty, that will come slowly. It's not something that will happen one fine morning. You just have to work on it; you have to keep on reminding your mind, because the mind, the ego always wants results. So that shift from the result to the present moment, which is the selfless moment, the moment of selflessness, happens slowly. It is a slow and gradual process. But it is there within us. We do that on certain occasions. For example, we are walking on a lonely street, there's no one else, but there is one person walking just ahead of you. And at that moment, his wallet falls down and he is not aware. He keeps walking, and you see the wallet. There is no one else there, and what do you do at that time? You pick up the wallet, hand it over to that person, and leave the place without even expecting a thanks from him. This is spontaneous action. That spontaneity is within us. You don't make sure that there are photographers there or, you know, the local media reporters are there to take a photograph and give the news in today's mainstream newspapers and TV channels. You don't care about anything. And that's there, because that happiness you feel once you perform an action selflessly, there is a tremendous amount of happiness, there's a tremendous amount of contentment. And that contentment you feel, that happiness you feel itself is the reward. There's no other reward and there's no bigger reward than that happiness. If you can slowly expand that space, that's the space of happiness you feel, the space of love you feel, the space of gratitude you feel, that space of spontaneity. You experience that for a moment. You have to expand that and make it bigger and bigger and bigger and that's why we need to do spiritual practices.

Observation, if you really observe things, you look around, you see, feel the suffering of the people, you feel the pain, you feel the longing to help others. It has to become a longing to help others, that's observation. Observing the pain, and that observation, spontaneously culminates into meditation. What did Amma do? She just observed. There's so much suffering. Why some people are happy whereas some others are unhappy? Why some people have nothing to eat whereas others are enjoying life? Why there is so much sorrow? Yes, it was an observation. But it wasn't a superficial observation, it was a deep inquiry, it penetrated deep into Her, into the core of Her being. From that meditation She got the right answer: Serve, serve humanity selflessly. That's the need of the hour.

I hope and pray that you will be able to spend this lockdown period, when you stay back in your house, when you're all alone, away from your family members, your friends. You would be able to spend this time in a productive manner by developing your inner potential, your talents.

May Amma's Grace be always with every one of you.

Thank you for participation.

Om Amriteshwaryai Namah

