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*Just as there is a veil of ignorance for the individual,
So there is also a door to Knowledge.*

Mātri Vāni

Birth as a human being is hard to obtain. Having received this rare boon, if you do not give time to the contemplation of the Beloved, you will have to reproach yourself: "What have I been doing? Should my whole life continue in this manner?" To reflect thus is beneficial. Failing to do so means moving towards death.

* * *

Who is called a friend? He who makes you turn towards the One Beloved, he, verily, is a real and true friend. But he who lures you away from this direction and induces you to take the road to death is an enemy, not a friend. Try to reform yourself. Not to make an attempt to correct oneself is as good as committing suicide.

* * *

Sense enjoyment acts like slow poison. And by this slow poison you are driven towards death. Therefore it is man's duty as a human being to get into the current that leads to immortality.

* * *

The world (*sang-sāra*) is the abode of conflict. He who mistakes the comedy for reality, is just decorating for the various disguises. This is why it is called *sangsāra*,* the place where play-acting is the main thing.

* * *

* A play upon words that cannot be translated. *Sangsāra* means world, also the round of births and deaths. *Sang* clown, *sāra* essence.

Lord, Thou Thyself art in this form—regard that particular *kriyā* in this light. See in all *kriyās* an expression of THAT. Realization of Reality will come through all *kriyās* combined. Do not look upon them as separate one from the other. Who is the *kriyā śakti*? Thou Thyself. And who is the *Sakti*? He, the One.

* * *

What does *Ātmā darsana*, the direct perception of the Self signify? The seer, the seen and the act of seeing—where these three are one, there the Brahman is realized. When the question of action or inaction does not arise, this is called Self-realization (*Ātmā sthiti*).

* * *

To know the Mother means to find the Mother, to become the Mother. *Mā* means *Ātmā*, *Mā* means *mayi* (all-pervading). Self-pervading, reposing in the Atma, Knowledge, the Self, Siva. "To become" actually means: it ever is so.

* * *

There is nothing in this world, yet every single person is madly pursuing this nothing—some more and some less. What a comedy God's play is! What a lunatic asylum He has created! He Himself sporting with Himself.

'MA'

D. S. NAKRA

It is more than a privilege and an honour to be called upon to say a few words about Ma—it is a blessing. Blessed are those that utter Her Hallowed Name, and twice blessed are those that hear the Holy Word in silence and contemplate Her Living Presence in their hearts. May She be with us now and for ever.

In his "Hymn to Bhagwan Ramakrishna", Swami Vivekananda says : "He that has passed by Thee has found peace; he that has taken Thy name has received Bliss and he that has surrendered himself at Thy Lotus Feet has got Freedom".

The same is true of Ma. Fortunate are we who are gathered here. Let us think of her. Let us utter her Name and let us surrender ourselves at her Lotus Feet in thought and in deed.

I do not know why I have been chosen for the talk today. I heard of Ma many times but I was not called into Her Holy Presence till about a year or so ago.

I had the good fortune of being in her presence for just a couple of minutes when I asked for and received her blessings. She said to me : "Cling lovingly to the Lotus Feet of the Lord and your mind shall loosen its grip on worldly desires. Have faith in His Name and persevere and you shall make progress."

These are common words of advice but they assumed a special meaning and significance. Coming from her, they were a promise and a blessing.

* The following is a talk delivered at the Ranchi Ashram on the occasion of Mataji's 72nd birthday, May 1968.

This is all that I can say about Ma from personal knowledge—that she is a Living Blessing. I am waiting till her Grace vouchsafes to me another glimpse of her. I take it as a sign from her that I have been asked to speak today. This has given me an opportunity to read about her. One has first to hear the Name, think over It and absorb It before the meaning dawns and Its living presence is felt. It is in this spirit of dedication that I join you all in offering these few words at her Lotus Feet.

It is usual to start with a very brief historical life-sketch. Ma was born in May 1896 in a small village in the Tippera (Tripura) District of East Bengal; the population of this village was predominantly Muslim, mostly illiterate. Her own formal education consisted of two years' attendance at a primary Pathshala. She was married at the age of 13 to Ramani Mohan Chakravarti, later known as Bhola Nath, who was employed as a keeper of Shah Bagh, a garden of the Nawab family of Dacca. Her spiritual life began to manifest itself even before she was old enough to enter worldly life as we know it. In fact she never entered worldly life.

The story of her life is a series of events of spiritual significance with which her devotees are familiar. I will mention only a few : her performance of nimaz (recitation of Qurana ayaat)" near the grave of a Muslim saint in Shah Bagh, her spells of absent-mindedness and the recitation of hymns and mantras, her spontaneous experiencing of yogic and other spiritual states; the coming of Jyotish Chandra Roy and Dr. Sasanka Mukherjee and his daughter (later renamed by Ma, 'Guru Priya' and lovingly called 'Didi' by everybody) her ministry and long tours including pilgrimages to Kailash and Mansarovar and of course the many miracles of which some only have been told by her devotees.

The narration of the experiences of her devotees would be an elevating *Katha* and *Kirtan* by itself, but unfortunately we do not have the time for it this evening. It is

enough to understand that her life story, as such, has significance only as something concrete to which our mind can cling; it serves as a vehicle of our thought, as a focus of our embodied love. What she really is her own grace will reveal to us according to our capacity. She herself has said: "I am for you what you think me to be."

"For the great majority of us", says Dr. Weintrob (Vijayananda), "she is a Mother, full of love and tenderness; to others, a friend, an elder sister or even a child. For others yet, who are spiritually more advanced, she is the Guru or an aspect of God, Durga, Krishna etc. And it is not only in the imagination of the bhakta that she represents these aspects. Her physical appearance, her behaviour and her voice are actually transformed and adapted to the part she wishes to play. I have often seen her features assuming entirely different aspects within a single hour."

I cannot, therefore, do better than relate what she is to some of her devotees. In this way, I will be able to present to you a few aspects of her many-sided personality. There is no better way of knowing Her than reading or hearing an account of the experiences of her devotees and her impact on them. Her totality is beyond understanding.

First came Hara Kumar who called her 'Ma' for the first time. Next Jotish Chandra Roy who saw Mother as 'Anandamayi' and gave her the name which seems the most fitting, more than even the name she got from her parents—'Nirmala' (the Taintless). If words can encompass her Self, it is these two words 'Anandamayi Ma.'

Mahamahopadyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj has spoken of "the wonderful poise and bliss of her sweet personality which, strong as it is, blends into the impersonal and is utterly undifferentiated from it."

Another devotee declares that: "She is harder than thunder and softer than a flower". Still another says: "She is like the Ganges—her very touch purifies. In her

presence, one feels oneself getting better all the time. She does not seem to notice or want to notice the dark side of an individual ; she only sees our luminous aspects enhanced considerably by her divine mercy”.

Another devotee declares :

“Seeing the radiant face of Ma Anandamayi and hearing her laughter, you guess that she is an incarnation of joy. Touched by the caress of her glance, you know that her heart is overflowing with love for all beings. Listening to her teaching, so simple and clear, you understand that she is in possession of all Wisdom. But one cannot say whether it is Joy, Love or Wisdom that is the source of all this : for with her, all three are inextricably and indissolubly mingled-one cannot exist without the other.”

Parmahansa Yoganandaji says : “I had found many men of God-realization in India ; but never before had I met with such an exalted woman saint. Her gentle face was burnished with the ineffable joy that had given her the name of Blissful Mother.” He adds : “She made one feel the closest of friends, yet an aura of remoteness was ever around her-the paradoxical isolation of Omnipresence.”

So much about her personality. Let us now see what the devotees have to say about her teaching. Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj says : “Mother has no line of her own : No particular teaching or doctrine ; she declares that the genuine teachings of all true teachers sincerely followed can lead us to the one Truth.” “What is wanted is unfailing patience, grim resolution, persistent endeavour, unflinching faith and unconditional surrender.” As the first commandment enjoins : “Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength.”

“There are many mansions in my father’s house”, says Jesus. Yes, there are infinite mansions and infinite ways but we have to remember that the house is One.