

TEN APHORISMS OF MA

AS UNDERSTOOD BY ME

Anil Ganguli

“Rain water flowing down from a terrace through spouts shaped grotesquely like tiger heads appears to come through the mouths of the animals, but in reality it descends from the sky ; so also the holy teachings that come out of the mouths of godly men seem to be uttered by them but in truth they come from God Himself.”

—**Ramakrishna Paramahansa**

The quintessence of Ma's message to mankind is epitomized in a nutshell in a number of aphorisms that have spontaneously welled out of Her in colloquial Bengali. Mostly enigmatic, these aphorisms cannot be easily understood even by Bengalis, because Ma does not bother herself about the dictionary or rules of logic, grammar or syntactic composition. They are not quotations but revelations enunciating important principles of supreme spiritual value. Invariably in conformity with the truths revealed to the seers of ancient India, Ma's sayings derive their authority from the inexhaustible fountain of Eternal Truth. These are conclusive. Ma's aphorisms have a completeness within the smallest compass, as if rubbed and polished to perfection. They are cut out in the mould of the mantras of the *Upanishads*.

Before attempting to explain the typical aphorisms of Ma, it is to be noted that not one of these sayings—seemingly jargon-like—can be grasped, far less explained, without *sādhana* and spiritual experience. Admittedly, I have little of the former and less of the latter. If I still venture to write on this difficult and delicate subject, it is because during the last thirty-four years I have, from time to time, been fortunate enough to hear a lot thereon in course of informal conversation with Ma in homely surroundings. What emanated from Her was, quite often, in answer to silly and superficial questions tolerated by Her with patience and sympathy bordering on indulgence. Fully aware of my limitations, I earnestly desire to communicate to the reader the conclusions arrived at by me, whatever their worth.

First Aphorism

“*Jā tā*” (Whatsoever—that)

Questions often arise as to What is Supreme Truth? Who is It or He? What is It? How is It? Ma’s short and simple answer is: “*Jā tā*”. This aphorism disposes of all these questions in one stroke. It is extremely enigmatic. Apparently it conveys no sense and sheds no light whatsoever. Curiously enough, the saying has neither any verb nor any noun. It just consists of two pronouns without any noun preceding—a distinct breach of the accepted rules of grammar and composition. Again, judged by the criterion of the dictionary, the saying is absurd and sacrilegious if applied to

God—its English equivalent being “worthless”, “good-for-nothing”. Obviously, such a meaning can be rejected straightaway in the present context. The literal meaning of *Jā* is “What” and of *tā* is “that”. The expression ‘*Jā tā*’, in telegraphic style, has been translated variously as “That is what it is”, “That’s that” and “Whatsoever—that”. The last rendering appears to me the best. But a tautological gibberish like *Jā tā* is of little assistance to a spiritual aspirant. It seeks to explain one unknown quantity by equating it with another quantity, equally unknown. Such a mode of explanation is contrary to the standard canons of logic. Patently *Jā tā*—if it is a sentence at all—is grammatically incomplete and logically untenable. Indeed, it is baffling for the beginner. But let us not despair. Let us try to understand *Jā tā* in the light of other aphorisms of Ma if we want to make something out of what appears to be nothing.

Second Aphorism

“*Āchche ; nāi. Āchcheo nā, nāi o nā ; Tār o āge’.*
Jā bolo tāi.”

“It is and it is not and neither is it nor is it not ; even beyond that. Whatever you say so is It”.

Like the first aphorism—*Jā tā*—, the second one, too lacks a noun but has the merit of containing a number of verbs which, however, only deepen the mystery—they are self-contradictory and utterly misleading. This aphorism, expressed in free English translation consists of six clauses as follows :

- (i) It or He is,
- (ii) It or He is not,
- (iii) Neither is It,
- (iv) Nor is It not,
- (v) Even beyond that,
- (vi) Whatever you say, so is It.

Let us first analyse and elucidate each of these six clauses. For the sake of convenience "It, or He" will now be referred to as "God".

Clause (i)

God is

The *prima facie* meaning of this clause is easy to understand. But it is not possible to prove the statement by any scientific method to the satisfaction of one determined not to believe.

Clause (ii)

God is not

This is the antithesis which directly contradicts clause (i)—it positively denies the existence of God. Popularly known as atheism, that is to say, disbelief in the existence of God, it goes a step further than even the Sankhya school of Hindu Philosophy which simply maintains that the existence of God remains unestablished in the absence of proof.

The extreme view expressed in clause (ii) is founded on Ma's teaching that there can be nothing which is not God, not even atheism; so God is comprehensive enough to bring within His all-embracing umbrella a votary of clause (ii) however

repelling his attitude may appear to one who believes in God.

The obvious contradiction between clause (i) and clause (ii) of the second aphorism is verily a melting pot. Naturally it appears to be fantastic to a critic who depends solely on his so-called intelligence. And Clauses (iii) and (iv) make the position worse—in fact, simply bewildering.

Clause (iii)

Neither does God exist :

This clause directly contradicts clause (i) and supports clause (ii).

Clause (iv)

Nor does God not exist :

Again, this clause directly contradicts clause (ii) and supports clause (i). Irreconcilable contradiction of this nature has been explained by Ma in a third aphorism which is based on the authority of the scriptures. Let us pause for a moment and consider this aphorism before taking up clauses (v) and (vi) of the second one.

Third Aphorism

“Āchche, nāi, Jār madhyeⁱ sambhava”

(‘Exists’ and ‘does not exist’ is possible only with reference to Him)

The position seems to be this : what appears to us to be a contradiction is due to our limited capacity to comprehend. We are bound by the concepts of time and space. God is not. God—

and God alone—is above contradictions. In Him are reconciled opposites such as existence and non-existence ; in Him are resolved all differences. The *Gītā* also says that the Supreme *Brahman* is neither existent nor non-existent.¹ And, according to the *Swetaswara Upanishad*, *Brahman* is :

“With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere” and again, “Without hands and feet he goes fast and grasps ; without eyes he sees ; without ears he hears”.²

A logically trained mind is apt to be confused by such contradictory statements. Ma’s priceless aphorisms only confirm and reiterate in Bengali the truths revealed to ancient seers.

Clause (v)

Beyond even that

This clause makes confusion worse confounded. It suggests that the first four clauses are not exhaustive and that one must go even beyond that. But then what is meant by ‘that’ ? In continuation of the line indicated by clauses (i) and (iv) or that by clauses (ii) and (iii) ? Alternatively, along each path, one after another, in succession ? In the further alternative, along some new path ahead, in supersession of those already specified ? Nothing is clear on these points. The mystery deepens. Then, what precisely is Ma’s message as to where such a path lies ? No where ? No, we need not be so cynical as all that. Clause (v) of the second

1 *Gita* XIII

2 *Swetaswara Upanishad* III/16, 19

aphorism, as I have understood it, is not to be construed to mean anything more than a stimulus to march onwards. Once the journey has been undertaken in right earnest, light would come from a source, hitherto unknown, to show the seeker the way in front and to warn him against obstacles to future progress. The source, asserts Ma, is within one's Self. And this is what seems to be embodied in clause (vi) of the second aphorism.

Clause (vi)

Whatever you say, so is God

Every seeker is bound by certain limitations. To him the limitless God is, according to this clause, as he considers Him to be. Let us take the example of the limitless sky. Even the immense ocean can reflect only a small portion of the sky. Necessarily it is limited to the dimensions of the ocean below. A tank is also the proud recipient of a comparatively smaller portion of the sky; so also a tiny cup of water. The ocean, the tank and the cup of water can see the sky, each in its own way and the experience helps realization of some truth about the sky, though not the whole truth.

Clause (vi) reminds us that we are born to have a glimpse of the sky and we should straightaway make a beginning with whatever experience of God is available to each of us—be our capacity comparable to that of the ocean or the tank or the tiny cup of water. In any event, let us not despair. This clause inspires the seeker, perhaps frustrated hitherto, to feel that he is justified—even in

'creating' his own God and need not accept a God prescribed for him by somebody else. Without feeling disturbed or condemned, he forges ahead with greater fervour and with buoyant optimism.

Thus, the final clause of the second aphorism is unique, because it offers endless alternatives, one or the other of which is bound to be within the reach, and acceptable to every seeker, whatever be his spiritual status, intellectual capacity and emotional preference.

As a commentary of the first two aphorisms the following saying of Ma is worth quoting :

"He alone knows to whom He will reveal Himself under which form. By what path and in what manner He attracts any particular man to himself with great force is incomprehensible to the human intelligence. The path differs indeed for different pilgrims. To advance in the spirit means for everyone to tread his own path. One's own path is the path that leads to Self-realization, to the supreme, ultimate Goal itself.¹

This calls for deep meditation.

The main point of Ma's teaching is : There is only ONE and whatever exists or does not exist is of the ONE. Ma's first two aphorisms convey the inexpressible in a most perfect manner. 'Jā tā (Whatsoever—that), the shortest, seems to me to be the best. The second aphorism gives a comprehensive picture of 'Jā tā'.

Ma's message is all-embracing. It rules out the possible claim to monopoly on the part of any

1 *Matri Vani* Vol. II

particular school of thought to the exclusion of any other. It also allows every seeker to follow the track destined for him. Once a beginning is made along any path that appeals to him, Ma is always there to give guidance at the cross-roads so that he may reach the goal in due course in the fullness of time. The ultimate goal is common to all, however divergent the approach may be. It is not Ma's way to disturb any one's predilections or susceptibilities. At whatever point a particular aspirant may find himself, Ma sheds light on the path of his choice, enkindles more and more spiritual aspiration and encourages spontaneous flowering of the buds lying dormant in him.

Fourth Aphorism

"Jemon bajābe temoni sunbe"

(As you play, so you hear)

This aphorism is Ma's almost invariable answer to a common question as to Her identity and spiritual status. She compares Herself to a musical instrument and smilingly says :

"What you hear depends on how you play the instrument."

Thus, a violin gives out notes not of its own initiative but in response to strokes or vibrations received from outside and the music that is heard as a result depends on the skill of the player, the instrument remaining the same. Indeed, Ma is *Jā tā*.

Fifth Aphorism

“Jar Jemon bhāva tar temon lābha”

(As the approach, so the meed)

This aphorism is a supplement to the fourth. It is in line with the assurance of Lord Krishna : “As men approach me, so do I accept them”.¹

Ma adds that if the seeker comes one step towards God, God responds by coming ten steps towards the seeker.

It may not be out of place to give expression to some thoughts of mine arising out of the first five aphorisms as a whole in the light of Ma’s other sayings heard on different occasions.

Everything without exception is THAT, the ONE, who is also the MANY in different forms. God is generally believed to have created man. And man, observed a free-thinker, paid back the compliment by “creating” God. The God of an ant is, perhaps, a perfect ant and of an elephant a perfect elephant (assuming that the ant and elephant have the necessary power of imagination to “create” a God). Like some narrow-minded and sectarian human beings, the ant and the elephant may each claim that it and it alone is right and everybody else wrong. God Almighty, perhaps, smiles with indulgence. Ma’s teaching is : such a human being, such an ant and elephant —each is individually right from his particular point of view but wrong to the extent he dogmatically asserts that everybody holding a different opinion is wrong. All controversies of this nature

1 *Gita* IV/11

are totally dissolved by these aphorisms of Ma. The truth underlying them seems to be this : It is not possible to describe the Supreme Absolute Truth through the medium of language. The *Upanishad* also declares that speech, senses and the mind, in search of the Supreme Absolute Truth, come back without attaining It. Thus, words cannot give an objective description of *Brahman* ; but it is open to every aspirant to have some subjective experience or other and then he comes to know what *Brahman* is, so far as he is concerned. Such experience is not negotiable. One who is fortunate enough to have it is in a position to say to himself : "Oh ! this is what my God is like !" In other words, the indescribable Supreme Absolute Truth—call it God or *Brahman* or Ma or by any other name—cannot be equated with anything. A similar example is the sky which cannot be equated with, or compared to, anything else. It is in recognition of the principle explained above that the first aphorism seems to have emanated from Ma—*Jā tā* (Whatever—that). In other words, It is precisely what It is—nothing more, nothing less. Judged from this point of view, one can easily appreciate that *Jā tā* is really not so fantastic as it appears to be on the surface. Indeed, *Jā tā* has a message which travels beyond the boundary of words. This message is all-embracing—it is equally suitable for all, because it gives every individual aspirant full scope to be attuned to his goal—whatever or whoever It or He or She may be—through an appropriate wave-length peculiar

to him. The Guru gives guidance for adjustment of the wave-length.

It is well known that no language exists that can express Truth. The first two aphorisms convey the inexpressible in a manner which appears to me a most perfect one. The third aphorism reconciles the contradictions that appear on superficial reading of the first two. The fourth and the fifth inspire an earnest seeker to turn within and proceed on and on.

(To be continued)

NOTHING DIES

“Then death, so call’d, is but old matter dress’d
 In some new figure, and a varied vest ;
 Thus all things are but alter’d, nothing dies ;
 And here and there the unbodied spirit flies...
 From tenement to tenement though toss’d,
 The soul is still the same, the figure only lost :
 And, as the soften’d wax new seals receives,
 This face assumes, and that impression leaves ;
 Now call’d by one, now by another name,
 The form is only changed, the wax is still the same.
 So death, so call’d, can but the form deface ;
 The immortal soul flies out in empty space,
 To seek her fortune in some other place.”

—Ovid (5th century), in *“Metamorphoses”*

TEN APHORISMS OF MA AS UNDERSTOOD BY ME

Anil Ganguli

(*Continued from the last issue*)

Let me now place before the reader some other aphorisms of Ma for the guidance of the common man preoccupied with worldly duties and lacking the time and opportunity necessary for spiritual pursuits.

Sixth Aphorism

“*Ulat jāo*” (Take an about turn)

Ma’s teaching is : Turn yourself from things worldly towards a target which is beyond the world. We are suffering from a chronic malady of a serious type called *bhava roga*, a dangerous symptom of which comprises clinging to things of the world. Indeed, the world is too much with us. *Ulat jāo* is Ma’s radical prescription for complete cure of that fell disease. She lays emphasis on a drastic revolution in our views and attitude from worldliness to inwardness, from material prosperity to spiritual attainment, from man-centredness to God-centredness. In short, *Ulat jāo* is Ma’s positive directive for complete transformation of the spiritual aspirant from pleasure of the flesh to *Ānandam* of Being.

What is it that stands in the way of our tasting such *ānanda*? Ma’s answer is : “*Do mé dukh*” (In duality lies the root of sorrow). “To perceive

duality means pain, conflict, struggle and death.” She has also observed : “Where the *Brahman* is, the One-without-a-second, nothing else can possibly exist. You separate duality from non-duality, because you are identified with the body, which means you are in a condition of constant wanting”.

The question naturally arises : How to find the One ? Ma’s answer is : “It is by crying and pining for Him that the One is found. In times of adversity and distress as well as in times of well-being and good fortune, try to seek refuge in the One alone. Keep in mind : whatever He—the All-beneficent, the fountain of Goodness—does, is for the best”.

Seventh Aphorism

“*Hāte kāma mukhé nāma*”

(Work with your hands and repeat the name
of God with your mouth)

Ma does not necessarily ask the spiritual aspirant to turn away from his worldly commitments or to renounce the world. In fact, action cannot and need not, be avoided. This aphorism only recognizes the principle laid down in the *Gita* that we cannot live for a moment without work. “Verily, no one can remain, even for a moment, without doing work... everyone is made to work, by the impulses of nature, in spite of himself”¹ and “Even the bare maintenance of your physical life will not be possible if you remain inactive”.² In

1. *Gita* III/5

2. *Gita* III/8

its concluding chapter The *Gita* emphatically declares : "It is indeed impossible for an embodied being to abstain from work altogether."¹

So work we must. But work usually leads to bondage. Hence the antidote prescribed by Ma—work with the hand should be invariably accompanied by repetition of God's name with one's mouth. God's name says Ma, is God Himself. His *Nāma* acts both as a curative and preventive of the disease known as bondage, usually a concomitant of action, as stated above. Constant remembrance of God, through repetition of His Name, turns work into worship and ensures deliverance from attachment to things of the world.

Let me quote some of Ma's sayings for elucidation of the aphorism "*Hāte kāma mukhē nāma*" :

"By whatever Name you may invoke Him, your effort will be crowned with success. The main thing is to cling to the Name with constancy."²

"Whenever you possibly can, sustain the flow of a sacred Name. To repeat His Name is to be in His presence. If you associate with the Supreme Friend, He will reveal His true being to you."³

"The Name and the Named are identical ; for He Himself appears as Name. If the Name that appeals most to a person is constantly repeated,

1. *Gita* XVIII/II

2. *Matri Vani*, Vol. II, page 184, No. 246

3. *Matri Vani*, Vol. II, page 188, No. 251

one arrives at the realization that all names are His Names, all forms His Forms. Furthermore, that He is without name and form will also by and by come to light.”¹

“Endeavour at all times, to remain merged, plunged in the Name. Solely for the sake of God must His Name be repeated.”²

Eighth Aphorism

“*Ek niswāsar viswās néi*”

(One can't be sure of the next breath)

This aphorism is supplementary to the preceding one. It pointedly reminds us that in the midst of life we are in death and, therefore, we must not allow a single moment to be wasted. Breath is the symbol of life which is so transitory ; indeed, one cannot be too sure that the present breath would not be the last one.

It has been laid down that practice of religion must be based on the conviction that death has caught the spiritual aspirant by the forelock. The consequence of departing from this world without preparing one's self for the next has been mentioned in the *Isopanishad* as follows :

“Whosoever slay the Self, departing hence, goes to demoniac worlds, enveloped in blinding darkness.”³

1. *Matri Vani*, Vol. II, page 192, No. 256

2. *Matri Vani*, Vol. II, page 196, No. 263

3. *Isopanishad* 3

Here is Ma's word of caution and sage counsel :
 "The day that is gone returns not. To be a human being means to be Self-aware. Do not squander invaluable time. Beware of becoming a 'Self-murderer' ; realize that you are none other than the immortal Self."¹

The seventh aphorism ("Work with your hands and repeat the name of God with your mouth") and the eighth aphorism ("One can't be sure of the next breath"), if steadfastly observed, give priceless reward. Thus, Lord Krishna has given this assurance to Arjuna :

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः
 तस्याहं सुलभ पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः

"He who constantly thinketh upon Me, not thinking ever of another, of him I am easily reached...."

Ninth Aphorism

"Tapasyā māne tāpa sahā"

"*Tapasyā*" is austerity. "*Tāpa*" meaning "heat", is a symbol of suffering. Let me try to explain the metaphorical meaning of "*tāpa*" as I have understood it—it seems to stand for the trials and tribulations inevitable in the storm-tossed sea of life. For every individual there are in store some spells of distressing rain, some dreary days of

1. *Matri Vani*, Vol. II, pages 61-62, No. 80

unbearable heat. “*Tapasyā*” consists in facing these eventualities with patience and fortitude and with one’s heart fixed on the goal.

Let me quote one of Ma’s sayings on “*tapasyā*” :
 “The kingdom of God is a whole, and unless you are admitted to the whole of it you cannot remain content. He grants you just a little, only to keep your discontent alive, for without discontent there can be no progress. You, as a scion of the Immortal, can never become reconciled to the realm of death, neither does God allow you to remain in it. He Himself kindles the sense of want in you by granting you a small thing, only to whet your appetite for a greater one. This is His method by which He urges you on. The traveller on this path finds it difficult and feels troubled, but one who has eyes to see can clearly perceive that the pilgrim is advancing. The distress that is experienced burns to ashes all pleasures derived from worldly things. This is what is called *tapasyā*. What obstructs one on the spiritual path bears within itself seeds of future suffering. Yet the heart ache, the anguish over the effects of these obstructions, are the beginning of an awakening to Consciousness.”¹

To a weak *sādhaka* suffering is usually a stumbling block ; to a strong one it may be a veritable stepping stone leading to a higher level. Most people are overwhelmed by suffering, some face

1. *Words of Sri Anandamayi Ma*, p. 15

it with fortitude, only a fortunate few can turn it into an asset.

The philosophy of suffering, as understood by me in the light of Ma's sayings and the Scriptures seems to be a panacea for all ills if we can live up to it. The starting point of such a philosophy is that our so-called suffering is the creation, not of God, but of man. For a *sādhaka* who can lift his mind above all things worldly, suffering ceases to have its pinch. One who cannot, has to remember that what he feels as suffering is due to his *prārabdha karma* (results of past actions which cannot be averted). What cannot be cured must be endured. This is a poor consolation for the *sādhaka* who has not seen the light. In most cases he helplessly suffers misery but with bitterness in his sub-conscious mind. Ma teaches that suffering, however unbearable, is nothing but God's gift. She goes a step further—suffering is not only a gift of God but God Himself in this particular guise, because there is nothing—there can be nothing—which is apart from God. This philosophy may be too high for ordinary men for whom Ma has a sweet message, put in an interrogatory form, which soothes all who are heavy-laden and grief-stricken. “Why do you,” She asks, “unnecessarily choose to bear the burden which He bears on your behalf?” This challenge from Ma puts the *sādhaka* to enquiry. If he is alert, he starts self-searching; if he is introspective, he realizes that the root of his suffering is his ignorance of the fact that God is always there to relieve

him of all his burdens. Then he discovers that all his life he has behaved like a foolish passenger in a moving train who carried his luggage on his head because he feared that the railway might carry him to his destination minus his luggage. The upshot is this : suffering proves to be a burden only if we lack faith in God.

Tenth Aphorism

Jā hoye jay (Let what happens happen)

Apart from the literal meaning of "*Jā hoye jay*" mentioned above, it appears from Anandamayi literature that the implication of this aphorism has been variously expressed in English as :

- (1) "Events take their own course"
- (2) "Come what may" and
- (3) "Whatever happens is equally welcome."

Each of these three versions brings out some aspect of the Bengali text which has a profound message, covering all those aspects and conveying something more.

First version : "Events take their own course" means that what is destined to happen cannot but take place, and the pronoun 'their course' implies that events occur according to some course or plan which cannot be stopped nor altered by us. It is God's will that always prevails ; not ours. To quote Ma : "God is not your order-supplier."

Jā hoye jay in the sense that events are controlled not by man but by God is supported by the *Gita* :

“The Lord,” observed Lord Krishna, “dwells in the hearts of all beings, causing all beings, by His *māyā* to revolve, (as if) mounted on a machine”¹ Radha Krishnan’s commentary on this saying in the *Gita* is quoted below. It sheds light on Ma’s aphorism under discussion.

“The power that determines events is not a blind, unfeeling, unthinking will to which we give the name ‘Fate’, ‘Destiny’ or ‘Chance.’” The Spirit that rules the cosmos, the Lord who presides over the evolution of the cosmic plan, is seated also in the heart of every being and will not let him rest. The Supreme is the inmost Self of our existence. All life is a movement of the rhythm of His life and our powers and acts are all derived from Him. If, in our ignorance, we forget this deepest truth, the truth does not alter. If we live consciously in His truth, we will resign all actions to God and escape our ego. If we do not, even then the truth will prevail. Sooner or later we shall yield to the purpose of God but in the meanwhile there is no compulsion. The Supreme desires our free co-operation when beauty and goodness are born without travail and effortlessly. When we become transparent media for the light of God He uses us for Work.”²

Thus, it is our ego that makes us blind to the fact that events take their course according to God’s plan at His pleasure. It misleads us to

1. *Gita*, XVIII/61.

2. *Bhagavad Gita*, edited by S. Radha Krishnan, P. 374.

believe that actions are done by us. Lord Krishna gave Arjuna a warning : "He whose soul is bewildered by the self-sense, thinks 'I am the doer'."¹

Second version : "come what may." With reference to events that happen, the first version of *Jā hoye jay* mentioned above seems to lay emphasis on their inevitability at the instance of God ; the second on the attitude prescribed for the *sādhaka*, that is to say, it enjoins the *sādhaka* to remain unperturbed by the course of events, whatever these happen to be.

Jā hoye jay, understood in the second sense, may be treated as a commentary in a nutshell, on *Sthita prajña* and *karma yoga*. Thus, it is the quintessence of the following principles elaborated by Lord Krishna in the second chapter of the *Gita*.

(a) He whose mind is untroubled in the midst of sorrow and is free from eager desire amid pleasures, he from whom passion, fear and anger have passed away, he is called a *sthita prajña* (of settled intelligence).

(b) He who is without attachment of any side, who does neither rejoice nor feel dejected at good or evil, is well poised in wisdom.

(c) Fruits of action should not be desired, nor should you be attached to inaction.

(d) Fixed in Yoga, do thy work, abandoning attachment with an even mind in success and failure.

A *sādhaka* relying on the first version of *Jā hoye jay* knows that there is no escape from undesirable

1. *Bhagavad Gita*, III/27.

events and helplessly puts up with them. His surrender to Divine Dispensation seems to be passive. It has every chance of being accompanied by bitterness. After all, he has a negative attitude which gives him light but not necessarily joy. Ma's aphorisms invariably combine light with delight. Judged by this standard, the third version of *Jā hoye jay* most effectively brings out the spirit of the Bengali aphorism welling out of Ma's mouth.

Third version : "Whatever happens is equally welcome." Why should we welcome everything that happens ? Because whatever happens in life or in the world has the sanction of God's Will and secondly, God's Will is strictly in accordance with the demands of justice, and truly auspicious.

Let me quote Ma on this subject :

"Perfect resignation gives the deepest joy of all. Accept it as your sole resource. Whatever God does at any time is wholly benign. If you can bear this in mind you will be at peace."¹

"In everything and in everybody is but the One Himself. Try to be constantly aware of the fact that whatever is perceived at any time, in whatever way, are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being."²

Questioner : It is said that God is all-knowing, all-loving and all-powerful. Why then does He allow so much sorrow and grief to continue in the world that is His creation ? If He were all-

1. *Matri Vani*, Vol. I, No. 21.

2. *Matri Vani*, Vol. I, No. 121.

knowing and all-loving, but not all-powerful, one could understand, or if He were all-loving and all-powerful but not all-knowing ; or even if He were all-knowing and all-powerful but not all-loving. How can He be endowed with all these three attributes and inspite of it let the misery of the world run its course ?

Ma : Everyone has to reap the fruit of his actions. The suffering is for your own best. A mother occasionally gives a slap to her beloved child for his own good, in order to keep him on the right path. God cleanses you by what you call suffering from the effects of your actions committed life after life. When a fond mother gives her baby a bath, the child may scream desperately, but the mother will not let the baby go until she has thoroughly washed and scrubbed him. Then she will carefully wipe the child, dry his tears and take him on her lap. Likewise, when you have been cleansed, God will comfort you and take you into His arms. Whatever happens in this world is His *Līlā*, His pleasure.

Questioner : Pleasure at our misery ? Where then is love ?

Ma : Who is it that loves and who that suffers ? He alone stages a play with Himself ; who exists save Him ? The individual suffers because he perceives duality. *Duniya* means *du-niya* (based on duality) and it is duality which causes all sorrow and grief. Find the one everywhere and in everything and there will be an end to pain and suffering.

The enigmatic aphorism, *Jā hoye jay*, appears to be the most wonderful among those often repeated by Ma. It is constantly illustrated in Her outer manifestation from day to day. Thus, the truth underlying *Jā hoye jay* is taught by Ma not only by precept but also by example. She has formulated the principle in Her characteristic telegraphic style and has given practical demonstration thereof in all spheres. The aphorism applies equally to all matters big and small. Incidentally, to Ma nothing is too big and nothing too small.

Jā hoye jay, faithfully followed, bridges the gulf between God and man and gives the latter a taste of other-worldliness in the midst of his worldly life.

“The whole essence of the spiritual life consists in recognizing the designs of God for us at the present moment. All reading that is chosen by us apart from God’s designs is harmful to us ; the designs and will of God are the grace which works in the depths of our hearts through the books we read as through everything else we do.

Apart from God, books are merely useless externals, and being devoid for us of the life-giving power of God’s plan they succeed only in emptying the heart by the very satisfaction which they give to the mind.”

—Jean Pierre de Caussade