



**Motherhood Has No Frames:  
Another Name of Self Love  
by Swami Nirgunananda  
July, 2005**

A western woman once came to Ma and asked for advice on spiritual practice. When Ma inquired about her religion she answered that she was a Catholic Christian. Immediately Ma in her Kheyal uttered, "I am a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian."

Apparently, this saying of Ma can be explained in so many ways to establish her greatness as well as her highest spiritual state. Let us try to examine her statement above with a different outlook keeping in mind the following facts from her life story.

She was born and brought up until her marriage in a Muslim neighborhood in a remote then East Bengal village. Her parental family was orthodox Brahmin and followers of Sanatan Dharma having not even a drop of Islamic influence in their life styles.

She was a pretty child and loved by all irrespective of any religious differentiation.

As a child (some 3 or 4 years of age), the Christian missionaries trying to spread Christian faith in rural East Bengal attracted her. Young Nirmala (Ma's Name) moved around the villages with them for the whole day unnoticed by her parents and relatives. The younger brother of her husband Rev. K.K.Chakraborty took up the Christian faith and Ma had a sweet relation with her brother-in-law all along. Unlike the conservative followers of Sanatan Dharma she had no antipathy towards other religious faiths.

While staying with her husband in Dhaka and when her spiritual manifestations started coming to light she once offered Namaz (Muslim Prayer) to a Mazar (tomb) of an Arabian Faqir (spiritual person) uttering correctly and precisely the prescribed Koranic text in Arabic, a language quite unknown to her.

During her lifetime, so many Muslim Moulvis (Orthodox and learned religious teachers) and Christian priests came for her Satsang (religious company). All of them were moved by her charm, love and wisdom.

In India the contemporary twentieth century saints irrespective of the lineages and paths (Yoga, Devotion, Knowledge, Tantra etc.) they followed, put Ma in the highest esteem and unequivocally considered her to be at the pinnacle of Sanatan Dharma.

Her parental family was following the path of devotion (Vaishnavite) whereas her husband's family was traditional Shaktas (Worshiper of Shakti) apparently in contradictions with the path of the Vaishnavite. But Ma had no difficulties in adjusting with the new tradition after her marriage. Just as she was taught by her father from childhood to recite the name of Hari, which penetrated in her inner being and became a normal habit, so she started reciting "Jai Siva Shankara." (A traditional Shakta recitation) immediately after being asked by her husband - without any reservations. Ma had a special definition for Shakta. Once she said, "Who is a Shakta? One who sees Ma alone."

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Orthodox followers of Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam felt free with Ma and frequently came and sought her spiritual advice. Ma treated them all equally.

**Religion is the framed mirror that reflects truth but truth has neither frames nor religions:**

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If a follower of Islam likewise declares, immediately the guardians of Islam will issue Fatwa (Religious ruling) against him and he will be termed as "Kafir". In the Christian world, such declaration will be decried as irreverence. Sequential conversions to different religions in the life of a person are both possible and admissible but it is not practicable to be a simultaneous follower of three religious faiths.

The referred declaration of Ma was not unknown to the guardians of all the three religions but there was not a single instance of protest or criticism from any corner of these religious societies. There was not an iota of diminution of reverence for Ma from any corners of the world of religions

till today. Now let us try to dive deep into the essence of this saying of Ma in the light of worldly human experiences without hiring any high philosophical wisdom from outside.

Suppose a young Christian mother of a child lost her husband in an accident. The lady was married again to a Muslim and took up Islamic faith. Of course, she kept the child with her and mothered another child from her Muslim husband. Will she love the first child in Christian way and second in Muslim way? Her religion changed but her love for the child underwent no change.

In Sanatan Indian traditions religious recognition is counted by birth whereas in all other religions adherence to faith is considered only after ceremonial initiation or baptism.

The icon of Madonna (neither Virgin Mary nor child Jesus was a Christian), has its place on the Christian altar next to the Holy Cross. It is the most revered icon in not only the Christian world but also the world over, because it is the icon of motherhood not restricted in the frame of a

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Yati (Sanyasi) by observing the disciplines all his life. But he never severed the tie of relation with his mother nor did he advocate for this to the Sanyasi order. In his life sketch it was mentioned that he kept up his promise to be present at the funeral rites of his mother.

A mother as a person may be black or white, oriental or occidental, poor or rich, educated or illiterate, Christian or Muslim, young or old, ugly or most beautiful but the flow of inner essence of motherhood remains the same amongst all these variables.

Conversion from one religious faith to another is quite a common phenomenon in the spiritual domain. The history of religions stands witness to this. A seeker is free to choose and switch over from one faith to another. Nevertheless, these changes follow sequence. Simultaneous practices and adherence to two or more religious faiths for an ardent aspirant is neither possible nor permissible in any religious doctrine. Nevertheless, this saying of Ma bears the sense of simultaneity, which is a direct deviation from any religious ethics.

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Ma was a spiritual institution by herself but never belonged to any institution (Ashram). She used to say, "This body does not build any Ashram, the whole world is the Ashram of this body." This saying is indicative of her all encompassing conscious existence.

Many persons who interacted with Ma during her physical existence and came to her with spiritual quests were fortunate to receive mantras and guidance directly from her (the present writer is one of them). Ma neither termed this as Diksha nor did she claim herself as a Guru. Ma was instrumental in her husband's (Bholanath) initiation. As such, her role in the process of Diksha seemed as that of a Guru, whom she never acknowledged, on the contrary she considered Bholanath as her Guru. [According to Indian tradition, an ideal wife considers her husband as the ultimate Guru. Saying goes like that; "Pati param Guru", i.e. Pati or the husband is the ultimate (param) Guru for the wife]

Nowhere in her sayings, she had ever addressed or declared her so-called followers as disciples. Always she projected herself as "little daughter of yours" to the elderly people and "friend" to the young ones. She said, "In friend everything is there, mother, father and also brother." She further

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Now the questions are, what role did she play in the lives of thousands of spiritual aspirants, past and present who came to her for spiritual guidance? Why did she not directly acknowledge the Guru-disciple relationship with those who came and considered her as Guru from the inner core of their hearts?

She was known, called and established as Ma (mother) in the contemporary spiritual domain. Nevertheless, here also, we find that except Bhajji (Jyotish Chandra Roy who named her as Ma Anandamayee) whom she recognized as her Dharma Putra or spiritual son. Except a few others who could be counted on one's fingertips she never directly acknowledged the thousands of aspirants as her children. It is interesting to note that after a certain period in her life, probably, after she had been given the name Ma Anandamayee by Shree Jyotish Chandra Roy, she started projecting herself as a " little daughter of yours", "a little girl" and "a crazy little girl" etc.

In spite of her equation with different Godheads by people and their ardent devotion towards her Ma did not consider any one as her devotee. One can say that the relationships between Guru and disciples, Godhead and devotees and mother and children could not find direct recognition from Ma's end.

The world had witnessed that all her life Ma radiated love to everybody, far and near without any discrimination. She was the fountainhead of love and her love was not restricted to any frame of relations. As such, one cannot think of love without a frame of relation or object. The object may be of gross or subtle in nature, but in any case, this must have a name and form without which one cannot perceive love.

Now let us consider another practical aspect. The Vedas (in the Vrihadaranyak Upanishad) said, "It is not that (a father) loves his son to please him but for the pleasure

of his own self (Atma) the son is dear to him...." It is true that objectively there is transmission of love between lover and beloved. But it is truer that one loves an object not for the love of the object but because he loves to love the object. In the other way it can be said that the inner self-love gets its expression in outer objective love.

Ours is the comparative existence in the creation. We define our conscious existence in relation to other objects, which may be of gross or subtle in nature. Our understanding of the world processes is framed in temporal and spatial co-ordinates and is always oriented in relative way. Even what we term as absolute has a relative background. Is it not paradoxical to try to comprehend something absolute when our very existence is relatively/objectively oriented? We exist because the creation exists or conversely the creation exists because we exist. Our intelligence plays in either of these two parameters. Transcendence of these two can only define

our true and non-relational and independent existence. The secret of life, that is to say, our true existence thus poses before us as a big note of interrogation, not reachable even by the sharpest of intelligence oriented towards objects. Moved by the urge to convey the secrets of life and compassion for the aspiring world great souls by the way of their lives and teachings interpret the truth he/she experienced to the logical reason of man.

The eternal urge in the life of a sentient being is rooted in the unidirectional vector to attain a state of perpetual happiness. And all actions are the objective manifestations of self-love. This Self-love, the basic platform of life, which is inherent in living beings, is always subjective in nature.

In the objective way transmission and reception of love need expressions to perceive. Transmission, reception and perception of relation between two objects are carried out through the sense organs like visual, audio, olfactory, taste and touch. For the time being ESP (Extra Sensory Perception) is not taken into consideration. Vocal expression plays a major role in transmission of love. But love for the self needs no organic media.

If we scrutinize Ma's sayings, we would find scanty or no reference of her being vocal in expressing her love. But no one had an iota of doubt about Ma's love for him.

In general one needs a name and a form to love. Someone else needs my name and my organic form to love me and he loves me because he loves himself. And for his self-love, his name, form and organic media of transmission are superfluous.

A relation is always established between objects having distinctively separate existences. With constant interactions and contemplations on the relation it gets deepened and gradually these two independent existences tend to coalesce and ultimately merge into 'undivided unity' of 'I' and

'This' or in one-ness.

Someone asked Ma, "Who are you?"

Ma said, "Verily, I am you. (Even) The void (space) between you and me is I only."

To her the world outside and inside are no different from her unique existence. Apparently what seemed to be her love for the world outside is actually the manifestation of her self-love which is non-relational changeless principle.

It is the common experience that even in the case of self-love an implied subject-object relationship persists. This is because we try to find our existence in the relative way of the world and particularize it in terms of "I" and "this".

The pronoun 'I' used in general is the workable and gross representation of my existence. It includes both the inert material compositions and active inner abstract components surfaced on the substratum of ultimate consciousness or ultimate reality called Chit (consciousness).

In this context it has to be remembered that the word consciousness in general use carries an objective sense and connotes an active subject-object relation and knower-known duality. But Chit is the non-relational subjective principle. It is the changeless principle of

all changing experiences. It can well be said that love, self-love, self, Ma and motherhood are synonymous in essence and is the very existence (Sat principle) of a sentient being.

Ma said, "There is only one all-pervading Ma, verily the self and Ma are the same, there is only one principle, the unique I".

Some one asked Ma, "Ma do you love us as much as we love you?" Ma replied, "You love me because I love you. You can not imagine of the love I have for you." In this saying Ma was very explicit in defining mother's love.

The subject-object relation is rooted in desire and its fulfillment requires mutual interactions between organs of sense of the subject and object. In other words it can be said that love always demands organic reciprocation. When a lover expresses, "I love you" at the back of his mind plays an expectation of vocal or other reciprocation. Absence of any such reciprocation brings about a sense of pain and doubt.

Before analyzing Ma's saying let us have a deep look into the question itself which carries the following underlying implications:-

(a) The questioner has the conviction about his love for Ma but not convinced about Ma's love for him. He is quite doubtful about Ma's love for him.

(b) He used the preposition 'Us' instead of 'I'.

(c) He wanted an authentic answer from the lips of Ma.

(d) A sense of supremacy on his part is evident.

(e) He believes in qualification and quantification of love.

Love is the ambrosia for all pains and sorrows. To be in love is another name of mental clarity, peace and composure, whereas, doubtfulness represents the state of restless mind. There can not be simultaneity of the two states. The moment one feels love doubt has no place in the mind at that point of time, in particular. The frequency of oscillations of the mind between doubt and love may be infinitesimally small. They may be so close that conscious registration of the states becomes impossible. The question itself may speak of an intelligent mind, but not necessarily a composed one.

Use of the preposition 'US' instead of 'I' also bears the significance in respect of the state of mind of the questioner. The person as an individual might have doubts and naturally, he wants those to be clarified. But here we find a self-styled representation for the mass and he tried to generalize

the doubt. His question is an expression of doubts about his doubt. It is quite understandable that a person having doubt will seek for some other authentic sources or references for its clarification. If he has doubt of Ma, how could he expect the clarification from its very source?

The ultimate goal of love is to be in a state of subject-object oneness. Individual psychological identities are so attuned that they are being sublimated and merge in unity. In love there is neither subordination nor dominance. Love plays on the same platform. In the above question there is an implied sense of supremacy or dominance on the part of the questioner.

An individual in his objective thinking always try to think in particular and to particularize a thing name, form, quality and quantity are necessary. Here in the question we also find that the questioner has quantified his love for Ma and used the words "as much as". In expressions of love I love most, I love you very much or like usages are in vogue. We know that to quantify anything a unit is required. By definition a unit is the smallest factor of the same thing. But how can the abstract conception as love, which has no unit, be quantified? If in response to the saying "I love you very much" the beloved asks "How much?" what would be an honest answer? What is the quantum of love?

It is true that love manifests in organic expression and these manifestations might possibly be quantified and qualified. Since our concept of love is objectively oriented we perceive it only in terms of name, form, quality and quantity.

The questioner in his mind carries the underlying expectation of equal (if not more) reciprocation from Ma's end, lest he becomes a loser. It is nothing but trading in love. In trades a sense of insecurity or fear of loss always plays at the back of one's mind. If love be the ultimate domain of

security and fearlessness one aspires for, then the approach to this domain should be free from factors like these that jeopardize the very essence of love. Love is the beckoning light to the domain of freedom without any conditionality. It should not have any coordinate of specification. It has to be remembered that on the surface he believes Ma to be the all-pervading love incarnate in human form.

Everyone who has one-to-one interactions with Ma directly or indirectly bears the experience of Ma's unconditional love. He lives in the conviction that Ma loves him most. It is also interesting to note that there are scanty or no references of any vocal expressions like, "I love you" from the lips of Ma. Unlike us, never did she have any query and demand of love from anyone.

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Love is the ambrosia for all pains and sorrows. To be in love is another name of mental clarity, peace and composure, whereas, doubtfulness represents the state of restless mind. There can not be simultaneity of the two states. The moment one feels love doubt has no place in the mind at that point of time, in particular. The frequency of oscillations of the mind between doubt and love may be infinitesimally small. They may be so close that conscious registration of the states becomes impossible. The question itself may speak of an intelligent mind, but not necessarily a composed one.

Use of the preposition 'US' instead of 'I' also bears the significance in respect of the state of mind of the questioner. The person as an individual might have doubts and naturally, he wants those to be clarified. But here we find a self-styled representation for the mass and he tried to generalize

the doubt. His question is an expression of doubts about his doubt. It is quite understandable that a person having doubt will seek for some other authentic sources or references for its clarification. If he has doubt of Ma, how could he expect the clarification from its very source?

The ultimate goal of love is to be in a state of subject-object oneness. Individual psychological identities are so attuned that they are being sublimated and merge in unity. In love there is neither subordination nor dominance. Love plays on the same platform. In the above question there is an implied sense of supremacy or dominance on the part of the questioner.

An individual in his objective thinking always try to think in particular and to particularize a thing name, form, quality and quantity are necessary. Here in the question we also find that the questioner has quantified his love for Ma and used the words "as much as". In expressions of love I love most, I love you very much or like usages are in vogue. We know that to quantify anything a unit is required. By definition a unit is the smallest factor of the same thing. But how can the abstract conception as love, which has no unit, be quantified? If in response to the saying "I love you very much" the beloved asks "How much?" what would be an honest answer? What is the quantum of love?

It is true that love manifests in organic expression and these manifestations might possibly be quantified and qualified. Since our concept of love is objectively oriented we perceive it only in terms of name, form, quality and quantity.

The questioner in his mind carries the underlying expectation of equal (if not more) reciprocation from Ma's end, lest he becomes a loser. It is nothing but trading in love. In trades a sense of insecurity or fear of loss always plays at the back of one's mind. If love be the ultimate domain of

security and fearlessness one aspires for, then the approach to this domain should be free from factors like these that jeopardize the very essence of love. Love is the beckoning light to the domain of freedom without any conditionality. It should not have any coordinate of specification. It has to be remembered that on the surface he believes Ma to be the all-pervading love incarnate in human form.

Everyone who has one-to-one interactions with Ma directly or indirectly bears the experience of Ma's unconditional love. He lives in the conviction that Ma loves him most. It is also interesting to note that there are scanty or no references of any vocal expressions like, "I love you" from the lips of Ma. Unlike us, never did she have any query and demand of love from anyone.