

LETTER No 11

(Ma's letter in Bhaji's handwriting)

*C/o Postmaster, Dehradun
9.11.34*

Ma,

Received your letter. Nothing happens before the time has come. Because, your letter came quite a few days ago, whereas the reply is going today.

You know that I don't do anything of my own will. I act as Bhaga (God) makes me act. Even if I want to see you, I cannot go. Why cannot I go, you will understand these words when you will be more mature. I know how much you love me, how anxious you are to see me and receive my letters. Please tell me whatever you want and understand can you make it happen every time? Please keep in mind, there is a greater force (maha-sakti) above will power (iccha sakti) everyone is under its control. As for me I am ever sitting with my face towards you. As for you, you see so many things while facing me. What you see with unperturbed devotion (nishta) and one pointedness then only you will get. It's not that you do not know it, but you are sitting, being angry with me, that is why you are denying all this.

You always tease me and I feel good over it. Because I see that you don't feel the attraction towards me, when you are not angry. This is the reason why, most of the time my eyes close automatically to see your state of mind (bhava). When we both meet everything will be settled. By quarrelling at a distance all other attachments will loosen. Then when we meet with a single attachment (i.e. focused on each other) that will be very sweet (madhu). What do you say? Maybe you will feel very angry but I am feeling very happy (anand). Because I do not get as much love from your happiness as I do from your anger. I see that at the time of your anger all your inner words aim at none but me. Write very long letters to me and your mind will become lighter as if it was diluted, then you will see that inside you there is none but you and me - as you want.

Whatever meditation, contemplation, japa and puja you are doing continue with it. Moreover counting the number every day you should repeat 3000 nama using a rudraksha rosary. That means on average, in a month, you should do a 100,000 repetition of nama. Bring a mala from Kalighat and get it knotted by a ritualistic Brahmin. You should try to keep the nama constantly in your mind.

Endeavour, patience and tolerance are the life force of sadhana. With all this, try to tread the path towards your goal. That is what I want.

Know that God's grace is always holding everyone just as a mother holds her child in her lap.

Ma

The Analysis:

This was the longest letter Ma sent to BG. This is important from other points of view also. It reveals a fresh understanding of the inner psychology of a seeker as well the special spiritual relationship between mentor and pupil.

It is astonishing to notice the way the letter is addressed, which is different from all other correspondence. BG was addressed as a mother (Ma).

Naturally one may expect the ending to be “your little daughter” or the like. But Ma’s finishing note was Ma only.

This was a letter from one mother to another. The change of relationship is quite sudden and abrupt. Was it intended to check BG’s behavior as an over-indulged child, or to give her an equal status to Ma so that BG’s defiant ego may not be challenged?

Both Bhairji and Sharda in their correspondence acknowledged the receipt of the letter from BG to Ma. Ma took quite some time to reply to this letter. In case BG took this as a sign of negligence or indifference Ma’s began her reply with an excuse for the delay. If we take a look at the overall pattern of Ma’s interactions with people who have the chance to meet Her, we find She seldom gave any explanations or excuse for any of Her so called worldly behavior. Unlike us Her actions are not prompted by individual will.

Very often Ma says, “Not even a single leaf in the tree does move without God’s will.”

His will and design for creation is not sequential but simultaneous; that too with a difference. Our concept of simultaneity is time-related. We find our own existence in time only. Our idea of transcendence of time, being within time, is a misnomer. Our will and its fulfillment is also bound by time. Ma said, “Nothing happens before the time has come.” It appears in this letter that Ma was giving an excuse for delay in replying to BG’s letter. She ascribed this to God’s will, not to her will as an individual. Here Ma called God Bhaga. This is an abbreviation of the word Bhagavan and may seem like slang but in fact it is not. It may also sound like a disrespectful use of a synonym for GOD, who should always be addressed properly with love and reverence. To call a person or mention him by his nick name or abbreviated name is not uncommon. Such a practice may not necessarily be taken as a sign of disrespect. In Her earlier days on several occasions Ma used the term Bhaga in place of Bhagavan. But such an utterance never came out of Her lips during the later years. Ma used to say, “All names are His name.”

The next paragraph of the letter starts, “.... **I do not do anything of my own will.**” We can say that unlike an ordinary person such an utterance was not the result any deliberate action on Ma’s side.

BG perhaps wanted Ma to go to Calcutta. Here also She attributed Her inability to go to Calcutta to God’s will.

In the next sentence also we are faced with another question. Ma said.

“Even if I want to see you, I cannot go.” Does this mean that Ma has any will of Her own?

Ma said, “.....**you will understand these words when you will be more mature.**”

A saint uses the same language and grammar as we do when he speaks. But the inner meaning of what he says most of the time cannot be grasped by even the sharpest intelligence, unless he acquires basic spiritual maturity. As such BG was a highly intelligent and mature young lady. She came first in her Master’s Degree examination at the University of Calcutta and she was the Head Mistress of a renowned Girls’ school. But such maturity can only come through earnest and ardent spiritual practice. Here Ma was indirectly suggesting that BG should apply herself to intense spiritual practice.

In the next sentence Ma acknowledged BG’s love for Her. But that love was mixed with the expectation of reciprocation in spite of her knowing that Ma’s love for her was unconditional. Ma wanted BG to bring some rationale to her thinking about Her. This rationality can become grounded only when it is supported by experiencing life. Expectation and imagination do not always come to fruition. The individual will and sincerity in action do not always yield the expected result. There is one all-pervading governing force (Maha Sakti) which controls everything.

An aspirant should accept whatever may come and not expect that what he thinks should come to pass. The Ultimate Reality enjoys absolute freedom in doing, undoing and redoing. An individual is in fact the conditioned representation of Him only. As long as one is not established in oneness with Him he should try to merge his will with His Will. After this merger one gets convinced about the transience of the world of objective achievements, which causes life to oscillate randomly between joy and sorrow. For this merger what is needed is one-pointed devotion or right mindfulness. Ma cited a practical example from the life of a man-in-the-street generally and BG in particular. Ma said that when She and BG are face to face She sees none but BG; whereas BG’s mind wanders to so many other objects, gross or subtle, while before Ma. In some other context Ma once said, “A falling leaf from the tree is also leaving its impression on you...” (It will be recorded in the memory) One may not have registered it in his immediate consciousness.

But random appearances of such memories in the mind may replace the current mental impression. This means that even in spite of being with Ma in person BG would be incapable of enjoying Ma's company mentally and continually. It is not that BG does not know this as she is an intelligent lady. It appears that in her letter, BG might have expressed her anger as well as her love and anxiety for Ma.

Anger causes one to forget reason. As BG was angry with Ma She would refuse to acknowledge what Ma had said. From Ma's reply we can understand that BG was in an obstinate, quarreling mood trying to pester Ma also. Ma's reaction to that is quite remarkable. To be spiteful to the teacher over trivia without any real reason is not the way for a seeker. A seeker should try to restrain such an attitude. Here we find that Ma neither took exception to BG's attempts to tease her, nor did She ask BG to rectify her behavior. Ma was least annoyed. It was not because Ma overlooked it or forgave her, considering it to be a temporary aberration in BG's behavior. On the contrary Ma seemed to encourage BG to continue with this attitude, and said that it made Her feel good.

Such encouragement was quite unheard of in the recorded spiritual history of the world so far. Desire, anger, greed, delusion and egotism are considered to be the great inner enemies which are the cause of pain and sorrow. Even a so-called worldly person, let alone a spiritual seeker, should try to overcome these defects to have a peaceful life. One of the shlokas of Srimad Bhagavat Gita goes like that, "Duality gives birth to desire, from desire comes forth anger, from anger comes delusion, from delusion comes loss of memory, from loss of memory comes loss of intelligence and loss of intelligence leads to unfortunate consequences." An ardent seeker should always be alert not to fall for any of the frailties listed above. All the scriptures, the great masters and the prophets, irrespective of their religious adherence, asked their followers to guard against all those internal enemies. Here in this case we find in Ma's saying an apparently irreconcilable contradiction.

In the second paragraph of the letter Ma acknowledged BG's love for Her. Here Ma is implying that BG's love was mixed with the expectation that Ma would reciprocate, and Ma obliged her, yet BG was not satisfied. She might have expected to enjoy Ma's love exclusively or she might have been thinking that because of their physical distance apart she was ignored, not getting her due, that her share was taken by those who were accompanying Ma. Her frustration created anger. She was suffering from a love-hate complex which was her own creation. Ma could easily read BG's mental conflict. It is general with everyone that mental preoccupation becomes more intense when one hates an object rather than when one loves it. Anger

makes one irrational and one loses the capability for right judgment. This negative mental state is the cause of all sorrow and pain in life. Instead of discouraging this Ma pointed out a positive side to anger, which may be used as a tool in spiritual practice.

In anger the particular object of anger totally occupies the mind. In a normal state of mind all the senses randomly bring input to the mind making it restless. But fixation on an object occurs either in the state of intense love or in extreme anger.

To our astonishment we find that changes in the mental state of BG hundreds of mile away could easily be registered by Ma. A guide always remains watchful over his charge. Ma said, “.....**most of the time my eyes close automatically to see your state of mind.**” Ma also was doing the same. She was watchful, guiding BG in spite of BG’s unpredictable behavior. In the next sentence Ma said that all the points of disagreement will be settled when both of them meet in person.

Next Ma gave a most scientific explanation of the psychology of the behavior of an average human being. Any dispute between two people has its root in a small point of contention. Gradually other points (both relevant and irrelevant) arise in quick succession. During the course of argument and counter argument an insignificant issue becomes unduly inflated.

Ma said, “**By quarrelling at a distance all other attachments will loosen.**” BG’s love for Ma was accompanied by other expectations whereas Ma’s love was unconditional. When love becomes alloyed with and dominated by conditions and when these are not fulfilled, anger overtakes love. Conditions are always based on attachment towards objects other than the object of love. Time, distance and physical absence have their influence on the mental state of the subject. The anger comes out and gradually the other attachments loosen their grip on the mind. Moreover when one of the quarreling parties retreats and does not react the confrontation automatically subsides. Ma said of the **single attachment**; love for any object manifests first in the form of attachment.

As we interact with the objects of the world more and more, the exclusive love for an object gets diluted. The mind randomly roams to various objects of attachment. These may not be related to the main object of love. Other objects change with time and circumstances. In reciprocation the subject becomes the object and vice versa. The subject also undergoes change with time. Constancy amongst two random variables is unlikely. To have constancy one of the two variables should be permanent. In the relationship between Ma and BG the changes in BG both as subject and object are quite natural and her manifestations of love vary as the factors making up her life in the world change. Ma's existence is absolute freedom, unaffected by

variations in space and time. She used to say, “This body is the same as it was and as it will be.” To the ordinary intelligence this statement may appear contradictory. Here the phrase “this body” should not be taken to refer either to the gross or the subtle body. We identify ourselves with our gross or subtle body. Ma’s utterance of **this body**, unlike in our case, represents just her unqualified existence.

Ours is a relation of conditional, qualified love. This changes with time and circumstances. We can say that from Ma’s end her love for BG is constant whereas that from BG’s end is very variable. If one of the two variables remains constant it then becomes possible to taste the essence of love.

Ma said that when they will meet the union would **“be very sweet”**.

The next sentence from Ma was a question.

Ma wanted to know BG's reaction to or comment on what Ma had said. She knew perfectly well that BG’s present mental condition would make her unreceptive to whatever Ma would say. Indeed it might incite or trigger further anger in her.

Anger is like an infectious virus or fire. It first infects/catches the subject alight and then makes the object sick/ burn. Both the subject and object become unhappy. Here we observe the opposite. Ma said, **“I do not get as much love from your happiness as I do from your anger.”** The question arises, is anger a manifestation of love? The answer is not of any objective love, but surely it is love for the self, or subjective love. This could be said of when one becomes angry because at that instant he loves to be angry.

As such it may seem puzzling that Ma was encouraging BG to get angry with her. Ma provides the answer in the very next sentence. Ma said, **“I see that at the time of your anger all your inner words aim at none but me.”**

Anger always needs to express itself. Deliberate suppression may make a person unpredictable, like a sleeping volcano. This may lead to a violent eruption having a devastating effect on both the subject and the object. One should release anger in a controlled way. Ma here prescribed an effective antidote to anger. She asked BG to write long letters to her. While writing one expresses the anger in written form rather than in open aggression. The object of the anger totally occupies the mind. That means BG will have her mind on Ma only. Unknowingly she will mentally be keeping constant company with Ma.

In some of our mythological texts we come across some of the greatest devotees, who attained their salvation through constant hostility to God. In this letter we find Ma in the role of a spiritual guide, a professional psycho-analyst and an efficient psycho-therapist.

Next like the ideal teacher, Ma was giving instructions to BG on spiritual practice in minute detail. BG was asked to continue with worship and japa as

usual. In addition to that BG should do 3000 or more nama japa every day on a rosary made of rudraksha beads, keeping a count (a rosary has 108 beads), so that on average she could complete 100 000 repetitions per month. A rosary should be ritualistically knotted - there should be a special knot on the thread in between two beads; the two ends of the thread should be joined by passing them through the 109th bead called the Maru - and sanctified by a Brahmin before being used. Ma was meticulous in giving spiritual instructions. Lest BG should make the excuse that the rosary was not available in Calcutta, Ma mentioned the place where she could get it. She was also asked to remember and count the nama even while engaged in other work.

At the end She says **“That is what I want.”** Here again there is another controversial statement as Ma also said “This body has no wish or non-wish.” We will discuss this in our concluding comment.

In the last sentence Ma made a very important remark. She said, **“God’s grace is always holding everyone just as a mother holds her child in her lap.”**

Here she refers to a worldly mother. Ma equates God with a subtle form of mother.

Jo Palmer

Delmadu

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