

Mother Mahashakti

Om. A-sa-to ma sad ga-ma-ya. Ta-ma-so-ma jyo-tir ga-ma-ya. Mri-tyor ma-a-mri-tam ga-ma-ya. Avir avir ma e-dhi. Rudra yat te dak-shi-nam mukham. Tena mam pahi nityam. Tena mam pahi nityam. Tena mam pahi nityam.

Lead us from the unreal to the Real. Lead us from darkness unto Light. Lead us from death to Immortality. Reveal to us Thy Resplendent Truth and ever more protect us O Lord by Thy Sweet and Compassionate Face, by Thy Sweet and Compassionate Face, by Thy Sweet and Compassionate Face.

The subject of my lecture this morning is Mother... Mahashakti. Maha means great. Shakti means power. Mother the Great Power. The Divine Mother's worship is coming close on the first of October. And usually at this time we speak on any aspect of Mother worship.

Mother is not common mother, but Mother has a Great Power. There is an ancient proverb – Yiddish proverb. “God could not be everywhere, so he made mother.” That is true. To a child, mother is everything. Mother is all powerful. You know the mother is working as a maid servant in a rich man's house and the rich man's child wants, tries to quarrel with this little child of the maid servant. And the maid servant's [child] says, “Don't do that. I will tell my mother.” To the child, the mother can do everything. That is the attitude which great Mother worshippers cherished. Great Mother worshippers... Mother was power from all aspects.

In our spiritual life we need certain aspects of power which we do not need in our practical life. And for these we have to come to the Mother. The Mother is not an abstract principle. It is a Divine Principle. We can call it God-- that God from Whom everything is coming. God-- not from a material point of view. The idea of the Great, the idea of the Immense is ... easily understandable by many of us. We see the sky, we say great sky. We like to open our eyes to the sky. We see the rain falling, we enjoy it. We see a great mountain. We see the ocean. And for the time being our heart is drawn, drawn to a power that is aflame in these different forms. And the skies, the mountains, and the oceans, and the rivers also are like living beings. Human beings and subhuman beings. In all these, even in a tiny insect there is power. If you say, “No,” then wait until it gives a sting. [laughter from audience] Then you say, “This little tiny insect has so much power.

So these manifestations of power, in our practical life we have numerous examples. But in the spiritual background, when we say, “the Ma, Mahashakti. Mother the Great Mother from Whom all...” You know the spiritual man seeks spiritual manifestation – like compassion, like kindness, like faith, like purity. These are the spiritual attributes we seek in our spiritual life. If our mind is restless with passions we seek the Grace of the Mother. The Mother can manifest as this external nature in many ways, no doubt. The Mother can also manifest as inner spiritual power: the Power of Faith, the Power of Love, the Power of Kindness. All these are maternal attributes. The child seeks these things from the mother. And we as spiritual seekers, we seek from the Mother the same things on the spiritual level.

When we see a wonder in nature and we are thrilled with the wonder, and normally we can say, “Thank God!” Not very seriously. But a spiritual seeker does, experiences this wonder in a spiritual way. He thinks that beyond nature all these different expressions of wonder in nature, there must be a Great Power. And call that Power: Ma, Mother. Because that is the word, that is the simple word we learn first. The child... From our childhood, from our babyhood we say, “Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma, Ma.” Hmmm. In all languages the word for mother is something connected with Ma. We say Ma, Ma, Mama, Mama. And if we hear the child cry, we hear, “Maa, Maa, Maa, Maa, Maa.”

So it is the spiritual seeker calls God the Source of All Power, the Source of All Energy: Mother, Ma. And that is the principle, philosophical principle at the back of Mother worship. We don’t worship an image. If we have to use an image, that image represents a spiritual principle. In Hinduism Mother is worshipped with different forms: as Durga, as Kali, as Saraswati, as Lakshmi. All these are just expression of Power on this mind level. Shraddha. Shraddha means faith. The person who is doing spiritual practice, why is he doing spiritual practice? To... to realize joy. A joy that never ends. Not pleasure, but joy. We are seeking God for love. Not little love but a Great Love, that embraces everything. So in our spiritual life we are seeking God as Great. And that Great we call Mother.

And with all these forms which we... images which we worship in different pujas. Here we are seeing different pujas, different [missing word here – manifestations?] of Divine Mother: Kali, Divine Mother; Durga, the Divine Mother; Jagaddhatri, which is the day [of]our Foundation Day. Now these different forms are merely symbols. Symbolic. There are persons who can worship Mother, but they don’t like to worship through every symbol. That is also Mother. The Mother is formless, as Sri Ramakrishna said and

the Mother is also... may have form. Because when Mother is Great you can't limit this Greatness. You cannot say that you are worshipping an image. And if you are worshipping an image, why you are decorating the image with so many weapons and so many other accessories? I don't like that.

That is all right. As Sri Ramakrishna says, "If you do not like any forms, you simply close your eyes and think of the Great Power. That Great Power you cannot deny. It is from a Great Power-- that nature, the different manifestations of nature we perceive. Now call that Great Power, God, or simply Mother. Mother, the Source of All Energy, the Source of All Spiritual Attributes which we are aspiring to develop in our character. The spiritual man is not a simple man. A spiritual person is a person who tries to see the Divine, to feel the presence of God in nature and inside nature.

When he closes his eyes he feels the presence of the Mother... of the, the Great. And if, if you want to give a name to that Mother, the sweet name you can give to that Mother is Ma, Mother. So the Great Mother, a spiritual being can contemplate without form or without.. or with form. Sri Ramakrishna says to worship God or worship Mother with a form is no idolatory, because we cannot live without form. Even in our body. Even when we are closing our eyes and thinking of God as without any form. At that time we are... we are bound to be conscious of "my body." Body consciousness does never go. I am conscious of myself, of my "I," my ego. And by ego I mean a mixture of my organs. My eyes, my individuality.

Now this individuality. How this individuality comes? We do not know. It is better to say it is coming from God. It is coming from the Great Mother. And this individuality is the source of bondage. It is, in Vedanta, we call this sense of individuality as bondage. We are trying to go beyond forms. We are trying to go beyond our material expressions, but my sense of individuality does not go. Even when we are asleep, that individuality works inside. In sleep we do not care for any other thing. We care for something which is peace. That is why Upanishads say, "That Peace is God." "If you have deep sleep, you have really meditated.

Just a little difference is there, just a few "inches." That few inches is maya. If that few inches intervention was not there, you'd have completely realized God in sleep. And then your sadhana, your spiritual practice would be just sleeping, sleeping, sleeping. Deep sleeping! Not dreaming. Deep sleeping. In deep sleep, really everybody knows-- what kind of peace. Any values, any practical life values is absent there.

So Mother worship for a spiritual seeker is important. It is important in the way that we are seeking a transformation of our character. The little

“I” which is all the time identified with the ego says, “I...I...I...This is me... This is mine.” This is ignorance. This I, me and mine has to be given to the Great Mother. Like: is all Thine. Just as a little child depends on the mother. He knows that: my mother is great, my mother is everything. So a spiritual seeker should submit everything to the Mother, which is the Supreme God. And his problem is to develop his character. His mind has to be calm. His senses has to be controlled. And he must have a spiritual outlook on this material universe. For him there should not be anything material. What he calls material is also the Power of the Mother. It is by the Power of the Mother that we call this material.

For showing spiritual life the proposition is very simple. You forget your weaknesses. You forget your mistakes and surrender yourself completely to God the Mother, the Great Mother. And the Great Mother who can create this external world also manifests in our individuality. My little individuality --which is suffering from many misconceptions, from many temptations, from many sources of restlessness. This can be changed by the Grace of the Mother. For the spiritual seeker prays to Mother. Just as Ramakrishna would pray, “O Mother. Divine Mother. I am really worthless. I have no devotion. I have no faith. I have no spiritual strength. You have to show your grace. You have to grant your grace to me so that my character may be transformed, so what we read in the scriptures become true in my life.”

We read in the scriptures that this world is not a material world. It is all the Play of the Divine Mother, Who is Consciousness, Who is Infinite Deathless Existence. So I have to experience Your Majesty, Your Spiritual Majesty. So Sri Ramakrishna said, “We have to constantly pray to the Mother.” Mother’s Grace. Otherwise from whatever corner a cloud will come and overshadow everything. We do not know. Today I am a saint. But tomorrow I am a fallen man, a fallen saint. Hmm? You do not know. That is why Sri Ramakrishna’s caution on “always be submissive.”

The Great Mother can grant you everything. Can bind you for ages. Birth after birth you may face this life as a bound man. A bound man is bound to his body, is bound to his temptation, is bound to his desires, is bound to his omniscience. He is totally bound. He has no sense of true freedom, true love. And this stage continues from life to life. This is called bondage, this called maya. Sri Ramakrishna says, “This is all the play of Mother. The Mother brings us bondage and the Mother can make us free if we are submissive.” If we pray to the Mother – “You give me these spiritual powers. By these spiritual powers I am not going to harm anybody. I am not going to show my wonders but I am humble.” Humbly I pray: “Love.

Love not for a single person, but love for the whole world.” For me there should be a world of Mother. And world of Mother, is a world of love. From the tiny insect or from the tiny flower, it is all Mother.

So in our spiritual life, Mother worship reveals to us more and more the spiritual grandeur of the Mother. After a deep meditation or after a very... powerful love you feel... you forget your body. The power that was manifesting through your eyes, the power that is manifesting through your ears, through your other senses... These powers are obstructing you when you try to go into the depth of the Mother’s Power. So for the spiritual seeker, constant remembrance of the Mother, constant prayer to the Mother is all that is necessary. And as a result of that, the spiritual seeker finds within – within himself or herself: in the depth of his heart there is light that is the Light of the Mother, Divine Mother.

We cannot see that Light normally. When we are worshipping, when we are praying with faith and submission we can see that Light within that is the Light of the Mother. The Light that is manifesting this vast universe, that is the material universe. But the same Light can manifest as the light of the spirit within our heart. We see within our heart that light has no comparison, that is not physical light that is not reflected [?] light, that is the light of consciousness. The spiritual man, by his prayer, by his submission, by his faith grows spiritually, and growing spiritually more and more to find the Presence of God as the divine in everything.

The world to us is a world of duality. Somebody is beautiful. Somebody is ugly. Somebody is red and somebody is blue. Somebody is black. Somebody is green. By this somebody I do not mean only human beings and look at the animal kingdom. So many different colors-- even the same animal! See... and changes color. That is Ma, Mother’s Power.

But the spiritual seeker wants to see that in a spiritual way. He wants to see this world as the world as the world of Mother. While there are dualities no doubt, but the spiritual person is not afraid of the dualities. The spiritual person says, “This is also Mother’s play.” If I am sick and if I am in the hospital and all my body is aching, I should not cry. A spiritual seeker should try to think that it is all Mother’s play. Nobody can claim that he will live forever. Death will come to everyone. So this is a prelude to death but I am not... I am as a devotee, as a seeker-- I am the spirit. I am the soul. So his thinking will be that way. All great men who showed their excellence in many ways: some were poets, some were philosophers, some were artists, some were fathers, some were mothers, some were divorced wives. Hmm. And there is no end to the varieties of experience.

And a spiritual man says, “This is all the play of the Mother.” So if in my body, if in my body consciousness I am very much troubled. The golden way is to think, to repeat the Name of the Divine, Name of the Divine Mother. Say, “Ma, Ma, Ma.” Ma. In the word, Ma, all power is there, the power of all worlds is in that simple word, Mother. You could give different names to God. Hmm? Different religions have different... different names to God. And when you say, the Great Mother, it’s not different from God, but simpler. Because our, from our babyhood, we learn this word, all-powerful word, Ma.

So the spiritual life should be, and must be a life of freedom, a life of faith, a life of surrender. And what is that surrender? Is an inner experience. Also an outer experience. Outer experience in the sense that he not only believes but he experiences that all these outward wonders are filled with God, filled with Mother, filled with Mother’s spirit. Just as a child is asleep in the mother’s lap, so we are asleep, spiritually asleep in the Mother’s lap. We have forgotten all our temptations, all our distractions and we... our heart is one with that Inner Light which is Mother.

So Mother and Mahashakti’s Great Power is constantly before us. We need not go to a temple. We need not go to a particular ritual to see the Power of God. The Power of God is everywhere. That I am sitting, that I am living, that I am eating, these are all happening through the Power of God. But if we become submissive, if we become prayerful, then Inner Light comes. And through that Inner Light we achieve what is God’s mukti. Mukti means freedom. Mukti from what? Mukti from these dualities of life.

The dualities of life are constantly troubling us so life to life we see the same old things. And in one life perhaps, like Buddha we become, we seek something better. Buddha was a prince and he was accustomed to think deeply and one day he saw some person being carried. He’s shivering with fever. And he asked his attendant, “You... why he is shivering?” “Well he is, has fever, illness.” “Well shall I too have fever?” “Yes, someday...in November.” (laughter)

Then he saw one day a dead man. “Well, why this man is being carried by four persons and flowers. and why is he carried?” “Well, this person is dead.” “Shall I too become dead?” “Well, yes. When your time comes you’re dead and one day you will be [blessed?] by death. “ So Buddha learned these from the common experiences of life. These common experiences cannot be... cannot be... We cannot escape. We cannot escape this play, this play of maya.

For the same Mother, the benign Mother is Mother ever ready. The Mother is ever ready to give us Mukti, to give us freedom, to give us that longing, that love that enables us to see the Glory of the Mother in everything, not only in outward nature, but also within ourselves, that Light of the Mother. So we should, we as spiritual seekers should spend some time to this Great of the will. Man is not small. Man is really -- the Vedantic works say, man is one with God. Man is one with Mother. But that needs that development, development of the mind. As Christ said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Seeing God means experiencing the Supreme Glories of the Mother. That is possible for man and that is the great spiritual goal of man. The spiritual goal of man is to become free – free from this play of the Mother.

We want Mother's play as spiritual wisdom, spiritual illumination, spiritual freedom. And the Mother who binds us can free us. And when a person wants freedom, the Mother is very happy. The Mother says, "Thousands of people are seeking little things, little things. And this man, this person is seeking My Inner Glory, My Inner Light. He expects that I shall fulfill his desire." You go to our bookshop and you see many books and you call this which is the thickest book. There are many toys, big and small. They are clay toys and big toys and you see a big toy... Shiva Nataraj Shiva. "So what is the price?" "Oh, three hundred dollars." Then in a moment he says, "All right, I will buy this." He can spend three hundred dollars. Eh?

And all, there are also clay toys. Shiva is the [largest?] one of that toy; there are other toys. And he goes to that toy section. Then he says, "It will be good if we buy five too: items to give to my five children." You can buy whatever you like. So this great creation of the Mother, of God. You can buy Divine Life. You can buy Freedom. You can buy Universal Love. You can find not a tinge of hate in your heart. Your heart has become pure. All people. Man, then you get rid of your idea of sex. Man. Woman. Hmm? There is no difference between because both are spirit. Both are Mother's Glory. Mother's Power. Black and white. Both are Mother's Power.

So your world becomes filled with joy, filled with freedom. Even when death comes you are not perplexed. This is also Mother's play. These are the possibilities of spiritual life. And to work out this possibility is a great adventure. Just as climbing a mountain is adventure. So climbing God is an adventure. Climbing God through the many distractions, the many temptations is a wonderful adventure. A person who has experienced the Light of God within the heart, knows that. And he's, he's constantly he

says, “Ma, Ma.” It may be Ma, Ma or any other name. It may be Rama Rama. Or Christ and Christ. But it is all that same Great Power and we call: the Great Mother.

So there have been people. There was Mahatma Gandhi, the national leader of India. He was hated by certain sections of people because he was very partial to the Muslims. For him, he was a saintly man, he had really experienced in his life that unity between man and man. So he loved the Muslims as he loved the Hindus. So there were sections of people who did not like that. So he was shot one day as he was going to a prayer meeting. He was shot there. And he fell on the ground with the name, Rama. “Hai Rama.” Because for him the sweet name of God was Rama. As we say, “Ma,” so he said “Rama”-- not different. So with his “Hai Rama,” he fell on the ground. So like that a spiritual seeker should depend and have a firm faith that my Mother, my God, would never betray me. I am trying to get. receive Her Grace, and She cannot betray me. That faith, that faith as he passes his life. And life, his or her life it is a wonderful life. Hmm? We call them saints. Whatever name you gave, you call them man- man, or man-woman or whatever you. That does not matter. He has fulfilled his mission of life. His mission of life as Ramakrishna says is to see God, and you have seen the Mother.

[Sanskrit]

Sweet blow the winds and the very oceans give forth blessedness. May the herbs and plants give us health and happiness. Sweet unto us the nights and dawns. May every particle of mother earth be charged with blessing. And may the heavens shower us with benedictions. Sweet unto be the noble forest trees. Sweet unto us be the shining sun. Sweet unto us be all living creation. Om. Sweetness. Harmony. Peace.