



The Mt. Tron Mail

SPECIAL EDITION No. 8

Week 33 * Mt. Tron University of Peace Foundation * 2021



Swami Paramananda, Banagram, Bengal, India 1984. Photo: Asgeir Arnesson.

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

MY EXPERIENCES WITH SWAMI PARAMANANDA

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI IN THE WEST

BJØRN PETTERSEN

© Copyright

Bjørn Pettersen

and

Mt.Tron University of Peace Foundation
2560 Alvdal
Norway

Bjørn Pettersen asserts his moral right to be identified as the author of this book.

All rights reserved.

No reproduction of this text, in full or part, on any kind of medium or in any media,
especially in social media,
without the prior written permission of the author or publisher.

This holds good also for translations into other languages.

However, writing and sharing reviews is encouraged,
including on social media, sharing
links pointing to the source:

www.tronuni.org

CONTENTS

Prologue

Induction

The Condor of Transformation
The Adder's Message
Ios in my Heart
The Ashram in Rishikesh
Cosmic Lotuses
An Indian Yogi on Mt.Tron

(1) Paramananda's Smile

Unexpected Visit from South India
Letter from Swami Paramananda Giri
Captivity in Rishikesh
First Meeting with Paramananda
Tripti Ma
Five Days in Ranchi
Mantra-Diksha
Ramakrishna Darshan
Problems in Alvdal

(2) The Art of Meditation

Adaptation to Banagram
Life in Paramananda Mission
Mental Communication
-The Journey to South India
-Mahashivaratri and Balyogi Darshan
-Malaria and Sannyasa
Omkaram
Banagram and Kathmandu
Malaria in Norway

(3) Transcendence

Sadhana at Shantibu
Hissing Kundalini
Within Paramananda's Aura
Guru Kripa
Visit by Friends from Norway
Asgeir's Passing Away
Turiya at Shantibu
"... how the Rishis breathe"
Baul in the Himalayas

(4) Life together with Paramananda

Arrival in Norway
Paramananda's Genesis and Life History
The Peace Plateau on Mt.Tron
The Truth about Anandacharya's Rebirth
Baul on Mt.Tron
"... we are almost the same ..."
Around Europe by Inter-Rail
Journey to North Norway
Lost Manuscript

(5) The University of Peace at Mt.Tron

Pilgrimage to Banagram
The Caves at Udayagiri
Tripti Ma goes to Norway
The Mt.Tron University of Peace Foundation
Paramananda comes again to Norway
Picnic on the Ganges
Paramananda Visits Norway a Third Time
Art of Life Course at Savalen
Difficulties and Plots

(6) Forever Paramananda

Last Appearance in Norway
Messages and Predictions
Paramananda Leaves His Physical Body
Great Sorrow in Banagram
Separation and Disintegration
Paramananda's Last Lesson
Essential Teaching
Who is Paramananda?
Paramananda's poem "I"

Deduction

Reincarnation and Rishis
East and West
Science and Spirituality
"Soul" and Mind
Guru and Sishya (Teacher and Pupil)
The Quest for Truth
The Purpose of Life

Epilogue

THE ART OF MEDITATION

The Journey to South India

On Saturday January 5th Paramananda, Devendranath, Dr Vidut Barua and I left on a southbound train from Calcutta to Rajamundry in the state of Andhra Pradesh in South India. At Howrah Station a huge crowd of people – disciples, devotees and other friends – had gathered to take leave of Paramananda. I said a special farewell to Glenn, who was going to spend his last five days in Calcutta before flying to Norway, and to Tripti Ma. We travelled the whole night and reached Rajamundry in the middle of the next day. There we resided in the home of Laxman Rao, who was an old fellow student of Devendranath's. Every day the house was crowded with visitors who came to listen to Paramananda and to seek his advice about various matters.

Devendranath, Dr Barua and I slept in our own room in a separate building at another place, and one of the first nights there I had an intense wet-dream. In India it is common to sleep with your clothes on and change them the next morning after bathing. But in the building where we slept there were no bathing possibilities, so we had to go back to the main building to do that, and I felt quite worried and shy that anyone should discover what had happened to me, because the Indian cotton clothes are so thin and revealing. As soon as we stepped inside the door of the house Paramananda threw a quick look at my abdomen and asked me straight away: "Bjørn, do you feel some physical weakness?" "Yes", I replied almost simultaneously, and looked down, greatly embarrassed. "Go to the Godavari river and take a bath there," he said comfortingly, "and then you will feel better afterwards." The Godavari is one of India's greatest rivers and runs through Rajamundry, so with Devendranath I went there and took a refreshing bath at one of the city's bathing gaths, and then changed into fresh clothes. After this incident I never again experienced wet-dreams in India.

After nine days in Rajamundry we travelled farther by train to Vijayawada where we halted for two days at a devotee's house, before continuing by train for a whole night through dense jungle until we reached Nandyal in Kurnool District early in the morning of January 18th. There we were installed in the family house of Devendranath. Paramananda had many followers in Nandyal, so the days passed with visitors, but there were also many invitations to other homes in the town and in nearby areas. Dr Vidut Barua had come along to South India only for learning acupuncture from Dr Devnath in Nandyal, so he was kept busy with that and I didn't see him again for the rest of the stay. One day, in Devendranath's house, when I was about to go through an open door to move into another room where Paramananda was sitting facing the door, I felt as if something held me back

at the threshold and made me stop completely. Just then a heavy metal fitting with an electric light bulb situated on the wall above the door suddenly fell down on the floor with a loud crash, only centimetres away from my toes, shattering the light bulb into a thousand pieces. It was like a small shock to me, especially because I immediately realized that if it had hit my head with the bulb first, I would probably have been lying dead on the floor in a big pool of blood. All the others in the house rushed to the spot while I looked horrified at Paramananda and exclaimed: "One more step! – If I had taken only one more step!" I thought that I had been incredibly lucky but Paramananda looked at me very seriously and replied with emphasis: "God helps you." Then I became quite silent and thoughtful because I was not at all used to think that way – of an almighty God as a 'person' who even took an active part in my life.

Shortly after that I was compelled to go to Madras to renew my tourist visa for another three months. Before departure I again met with Venkata Reddy, who had been visiting me at Shantibu during Christmas 1982 and who had been an important middle man for contacting Paramananda. His private school, Vivekananda Gurukulavidyalayam, was situated in the neighbouring village of Mahanandi a few kilometres from Nandyal. He also had a house in Madras, where at the time his eldest son Rukmangada, who actually had been to Brønnøysund in North Norway in connection with his studies and therefore had been able to visit me for a few days in Alvdal in 1983, was residing as he was studying in Madras. So I was to stay with him during the few days that I had to spend in Madras for renewing my visa. I travelled alone by bus all night without a wink of sleep the whole way, and reached Madras in the middle of the day on January 22nd. It was a hearty reunion with "Rukku", who was studying engineering in the big city, and we spent nice days together there.

One day when I was visiting one of Madras' many fine beaches alone to go for a swim, I came very close to drowning. I was completely alone on the beach and there were no other people around to be seen. As long as I was swimming and diving a little bit out from the shore, where I could not stand on my feet, everything was fine, but when I was about to walk on land again my problems started. It was impossible to get a proper foothold because the strong undercurrent from the incessant waves always dragged me out to sea again – I simply could not get ashore. The bottom sloped only very gradually at some distance from the shore but it was just deep enough not to be able to gain a foothold. And thus I was tossed back and forth by the waves while I desperately tried to help myself with the swimming strokes of my arms every time I was thrown towards land, and by stretching downwards to try to find a foothold before the waves dragged me out again. After some time I became



The author sketched by Somasekar, Rukku's friend, Madras, January 1985.

completely exhausted, and in the very last attempt to find a foothold before I felt compelled to give up completely, one of my big toes suddenly touched the sandy bottom. Then I got some extra strength and almost miraculously managed to withstand the strong water current back towards the deep again – on one toe only. So on the next wave towards the shore I managed to reach shallow water. I staggered to the shore and collapsed on the dry beach completely exhausted. I don't know how long I was lying like that, catching my breath in the baking sunshine, but when I eventually felt strong enough to get up I sauntered further up the beach and discovered a monument that I had not noticed when I arrived. It was beautifully made of white marble and was inscribed in English. Of all things it told of a Norwegian who had drowned at the same beach in an attempt to save an Indian boy from drowning! The boy survived, but the Norwegian had sacrificed his life. Very touching!

Everywhere in the Bay of Bengal there are problems with powerful waves and undercurrents so that very often bathing is under the watch of local fishermen who have specialized as private guides for tourists. This is in contrast to the Western coast of India in the Arabian Sea where bathing is uncomplicated and very enjoyable. However, during my struggle in the water, it didn't occur to me that I could just have called on Paramananda in my mind for help, moreover it was not my nature to do so. After well

over a week I could collect my passport with a renewed visa from the Indian authorities, and after a day trip to the Vedanthangal bird sanctuary outside Madras, I travelled back to Nandyal by day, arriving there in the evening.

Ever since I had arrived in India this time I had felt an intense need for silence and solitude – a need that only grew stronger and stronger with every day that passed in the all too loud and noisy, seething life of Indian society. Prior to our journey to South India Paramananda had assured me that this would not be a problem once we reached Devendranath's house in Nandyal. Also from other brother disciples who had been there previously, I heard that Devendranath's place was really a lonely and very quiet place, and I was very much looking forward to coming there and imagined in my mind a very lonely house far away from other houses, roads and people. So the disappointment was enormous when I found that the house was situated in the middle of the town and that terrible noise was heard from all sides. On top of everything we arrived there in the middle of the marriage season when all betrothed couples are arranging marrying parties, and according to tradition, hired brass music bands are marching around in all the streets all day long and play the same noisy, extremely boring and monotonous 'music' incessantly.

I then realized that Indians don't have the faintest idea about quiet and silence, nor the prerequisites to be able to understand them, due to the enormous overpopulation and their extremely crowded and congested lifestyle – they have simply never experienced these things and therefore have no reference point. Not only that but by nature they seem to be a quite noisy people and actually seem to enjoy noise and high volume very much, something that becomes quite evident when two persons are standing beside each other and talking. For some incomprehensible reason they feel the necessity to turn up the volume of their voices to nearly maximum! At that time I was extremely sensitive to noise or any sound in general – on the brink of getting headache and nausea when I felt it the most. After the return from Madras, therefore, I was nearly desperate to experience something that at least to some extent would resemble the calm and quiet of the Norwegian nature in general, or the deep silence of the forests of Alvdal in particular.

While I had been away in Madras, Paramananda and a party had been on a day-trip to a lonely, very old Shiva temple situated on the outskirts of a vast jungle some miles away. Quite cheerfully he therefore announced to me that he had found a suitable place for me where I could stay and meditate. Full of optimism, therefore, the next day I went alone to Mahanandi from where Venkata Reddy would take me to that desolate temple. Venkata Reddy's house and school, and most of Mahanandi, was more like the lonely place I had imagined Devendranath's house in Nandyal to be, but now I was to go to a place which was really according to my wish and need. In the early morning two days later, with Reddy's youngest son,

Venkataram, as guide, I set out on foot in a semi desert-like landscape in the burning hot, scorching, sunshine, for many hours until we reached a temple complex, Omkaram, which was beautifully situated in the transition between a dense, hilly jungle and the dry, flat steppe and bush landscape.

The temple complex consisted of several buildings of various shapes surrounding two big open water pools with stagnant water where visiting Hindus would take a bath before entering the central temple. After many hours of sweating in the hot sunshine and with a limited ration of drinking water, I felt, like never before in my life, quite desperately thirsty. I therefore ran to the nearest water pool and jumped into the seemingly clear water with all my clothes on, and just drank and drank until my thirst was completely slaked. Of course I understood that this could, in a worst case scenario, damage my health and even be life threatening, but the desperation of the thirst wiped out all rules of caution and the water looked only too inviting. Anyway, right then it felt wonderful and refreshing, and I was happy finally to reach my long sought after destination. Venkatram told me that the temple was only in use for certain festivals by the villages some distance away, otherwise it was empty, and no priest or any other person used to stay there. We were totally alone there without seeing or hearing any other people, or hearing noise from people anywhere around – only wonderful nature!

My guide showed me into the temple's holiest of holies where an old, worn *shivalingam* was placed, missing a large piece which had broken off but otherwise intact. Tradition would have it that Rishi Valmiki himself had placed this lingam there many thousand years before. After a while we made a fire and Venkatram made *upma*, semolina cooked dry in water with salt, which we ate with great appetite. We were going to stay overnight there as it was too far to come and return in a day and as it was too dangerous to go back at night. The danger was that we could be attacked both by people and by wild animals, Venkatram told me. He also told me that an American had been robbed and killed in that area just two weeks earlier. And wild animals used to come to the temple at night to drink water from the pools. Therefore we lay down for the night in the portico just outside the holiest of holies, which in his understanding would provide the maximum protection to us. Thus we had a roof over our heads but in reality we were fully exposed on the open stone floor with views to the big central court with the two pools.

The night was beautiful with the soft, silvery light of a full moon and I was quite curious and on the look-out for thirsty animals. It was rather exciting, really, because I had heard that there would be tigers in that jungle, of which I had seen proof outside a temple at Mahanandi the day before. A lying *nandi* – a life size sculpture of a zebu bull in white marble – wore the distinct bite marks of a tiger in its neck. Some years before a tiger had attacked it at night in the belief that it was a real bull. Neither did my excitement decrease from all the

various cries and sounds that were heard from the jungle in the bright moonlight, but I was not able to spot any shadows or movements near the water pools, and as I was really very tired from a long day's rigours, I lay down to sleep after a while. But that was not easy as there were lots of mosquitos there and we hadn't brought any mosquito net. Venkatram wrapped himself in a shawl leaving only a little pocket for breathing. But for me that was impossible because the Indian shawl was too small for my big body and also it became too warm to wear in the heat. Neither could I breathe that way, but Venkatram was used to it so for him there was no problem. Thus, for me, it became a rather sleepless night with countless mosquito bites. But early next morning, to my utter delight, we found fresh footprints of both leopard and sloth bear in the sand just outside the temple walls, so it was evident that they had been there at night.

After that we walked back the same way to Mahanandi and reached there about noon. When I again met Paramananda in Nandyal two days later, he was very pleased that I liked Omkaram, and with regard to our further travel programme he freed me to choose to go back to Mahanandi and stay there for about a week, as conditions there were so much more suitable for me, before we should meet again in Rajamundry on February 16th. He was going on to Hyderabad three days later. In Rajamundry we were going to stay for a few days together before he would return to Banagram and I to Omkaram for solitude and meditation. I chose to go back to Mahanandi to spend the few days there with the family of Venkata Reddy.

Mahashivaratri and Balyogi Darsan

As agreed we met in Rajamundry after one week, and in the night we went with a party by car to Mummidivaram to have the *darshan* of the great Balyogi, because that night – the night to February 18th 1985 – was *Shivaratri* and even *Mahashivaratri*, and it was the only night in the whole year that it was possible to see Balyogi. I had never before heard anything about this Balyogi, but Devendranath told me his story:

He was born to poor parents in Mummidivaram village and used to spend the whole day tending his family's cattle. While he did so he always thought about Krishna, and deeply wished to see him. One day, when he was 14 years of age, as he was out tending his cattle as usual he sat down for meditation underneath a coconut tree and made a strong *samkalpa* or resolution that he would not open his eyes again until he had had the vision of his beloved Krishna. When the herd found their way back home in the evening by themselves without the boy, his parents went searching for him and found him underneath the tree meditating.

They called his name and shook him several times, but without any response. So they thought that he would come home only as soon as he felt hungry enough, and left him to himself and went home. But the boy didn't come, and when they went to look for him the next day, he was still sitting in the same position as the night before. Again there was no response, and again they let him sit there undisturbed. And so he sat immobile for days and nights without taking any food or drink. Then people really understood that they witnessed a very extraordinary phenomenon, and full of respect as they are for these things all over India, they started to build walls around him and a roof over his head to protect him from the sun and rain and weather conditions.

And thus weeks and months, even years, went by, and as the years passed the local people built more and more around him until eventually a great temple complex had been built. By that time the Indian Government had long since taken over the responsibility for him and posted members of the National Guard there to stand guard outside his room, because he was by then regarded as a great national treasure – a living Shiva (even though it must also have been kept a well guarded secret in India, perhaps not to disturb him). He sat locked up inside his little room alone in the big temple complex all the year round, surrounded only by uniformed, armed guards, and without food or drink or communication with anyone, and only at *shivaratri* – the night of Shiva – every year, was the door to his room opened so that only on that night people could have his *darshan*. And people in their thousands came on pilgrimage to have the vision of Balyogi that particular night.

When we arrived at the temple at about midnight, we saw a big queue at least a kilometre long, but luckily there was also a much shorter V.I.P. queue, which we somehow managed to join. Devendranath also managed to buy a small booklet which showed all the photographs taken of Balyogi, once nearly every year at *shivaratri*, from his young age to his 54th year. This was his 58th year. All these photos showed a very powerful man, and they were full of light, especially the early ones, and then it was very interesting to watch the physical development from boy to man over the years.

After waiting in the queue for a couple of hours we finally reached the front of the room where Balyogi was sitting. Outside there were several guards who controlled the flow of the queue, so that each person got no more than a couple of seconds in front of Balyogi. Just before me in the queue was Devendranath, while Paramananda was just behind me. As soon as Devendranath stood in front of Balyogi with his palms together in a respectful greeting, the guards grabbed him by his shoulders and sent him away, which they did to everyone in the queue. But when it was my turn nobody dared to touch me, perhaps because I

was probably the only white person there. Instead I got a friendly offer to take one step to the side so that I could stand there together with the guards and look at Balyogi for as long as I wished. But immediately before that it was a most peculiar sight that I met. In front of me was a most strange being – something that I had never seen before and most certainly never would see again. A man was sitting there cross legged (*virasan*), wearing only a loincloth, with his eyes closed. His skin clearly bore the evidence of not having received sunshine for a very, very, long time, because it was nearly transparent, and one got the feeling of being close to a kind of living mummy. The man was big and fat, and was breathing heavily. And he didn't sit quite still but was rocking his upper body a little, as if he was tired of sitting. The thin beard was not very long, but his hair was enormous. It was placed all over the floor and had been measured at eight metres long. The nails on both fingers and toes were very long and had curved in several rounds. I was standing there right in front of him at a distance of only about 150 cm, and I could really sense him with all of my senses. Mentally, it was a bit disappointing to me compared to the pictures I had already seen of him, and it seemed to me that he showed signs of being tired.

As already mentioned, Paramananda followed just behind me in the queue, and as I was curious to witness the meeting of him with Balyogi, I accepted the invitation from the guards to stand there beside them, aside from the queue. Then Paramananda came in front of Balyogi, and as soon as I fixed my gaze on Paramananda, I saw him as I had never ever seen him. He almost glided in slowly in front of Balyogi, completely bent forward with his arms stretched out and palms together in greeting, while his gaze was focused intensely on Balyogi. He radiated a respect and almost awe that I never witnessed with him before or later, as if he surrendered completely, and he seemed absorbed in the meeting of Balyogi. It was really beautiful to behold. I was so occupied with watching Paramananda that I didn't notice too much what happened to Balyogi, but something happened, because from the corner of my eye I noticed that, strangely enough, the whole of his upper body suddenly fell forward before he immediately straightened it up again. Throughout this incident none of the guards had dared to touch Paramananda. They only made a short sign to him with their hands after a while to continue passing Balyogi. And when he did I quickly slipped back into the queue after him, and together we went further through many rooms and halls until we reached the exit near the car park where the cars of our party were.*

On the way out we entered a room where, to my big surprise, two other yogis were sitting in the same way. They were said to be the cousins of Balyogi and very young, barely more than twenty years old. I almost felt a little sorry for them because they seemed to strive to keep awake. When we were outside, also Paramananda was saying that Balyogi now was very tired of sitting. I asked him how it

was possible that he could be so fat when he was not eating anything. Paramananda then replied that he was living on air and he demonstrated how Balyogi actually could eat air. One in the party asked if Balyogi had seen Krishna in accordance with his original wish but Paramananda only replied that Balyogi was realized long ago and that he was working mentally in the world. Only many years later, after Paramananda had come to Norway for the first time and we could talk together uninterrupted about all things that previously had been left untold, he brought the subject up one evening when we were alone in Shantibu:

“Bjørn, do you know what actually happened that time with Balyogi?” I must have appeared surprised on account of the sudden and unexpected question, so he immediately continued: “Balyogi was only waiting for me. When I came up right in front of him, he opened his eyes just for a short moment and looked straight at me, while his body fell a bit forward. He saw me, and shortly afterwards he left his body.”

I was speechless, because I knew that that mahashivaratri night when we were present was the last time anyone got the darshan of Balyogi, because the next year when they opened his room, they found only his dead body. So finally he got to see what he so intensely wanted to see, even physically, and it was not possible earlier because of his *samkalpa!* Surely, God doesn't disappoint anyone who surrenders completely! And I was the only witness to this most wondrous happening! God is great! A phenomena such as Balyogi is typically Indian and can only happen in India. India has at all times been famous for similar, extreme human phenomena. Only in India is it possible to find such a living Shiva, and only in India will you find a Government that actually takes the responsibility to protect such a person. It is unique in the whole world. India is great!



The first picture of Balyogi, 1947.



Balyogi two years later, in 1949. Notice that in both these early photos he supports himself on his elbows.



Balyogi in 1956. Notice the huge hair.



Top left: Balyogi in 1972. His enormous hair is seen by his side to the left (his right side).

Left: Balyogi in 1978.

Above: Balyogi in 1981, looking somewhat similar to when the author saw him. None of the pictures can in any way resemble the special atmosphere near Balyogi or his near transparent skin. Moreover, his nails seem to have been cut.

All photos from a local Telugu booklet published 1976.

Malaria and Sannyasa

In the evening, later the same day, after our return to Rajamundry, I fell sick with high fever, exactly two weeks after the mosquito bites in the full moon night at Omkaram near Mahanandi. Its intensity came and went in the first days, and nobody seemed to have any idea what the cause could be. After four days, however, on Friday, February 22nd, I felt quite well in the evening. Paramananda called me to his room and asked me to shut the door behind me. Then he asked me to sit beside him on his bed and we had a particularly close and nice conversation for about half an hour, whereupon he gave me a beautiful skin from the chital deer (which in South India is called *zinka*) to be used as a seat for meditation, together with one of his own

saffron coloured *dhotis*, with these simple words: “You can use it if you like.” That was all. In reality Paramananda was giving me *sannyasa* quite simply and naturally, completely devoid of any rituals or ceremonies, and even without mentioning the word ‘*sannyasa*’.

It could not have happened more in accordance with my heart. But the truth was that it came as a complete surprise to me without any warning or preparation, and without me having uttered or even felt any wish about formally becoming a sannyasin. Of course, Paramananda knew that, and he also knew that for me as a foreigner, it was not at all necessary, neither in India nor in Norway. *Sannyasa* comes naturally into fruition in a person when his mind takes the colour of saffron, regardless of the colour of his clothes. The sannyasa ritual is a symbolic act which is practical and important in the Hindu society, and represents the very last

and final ritual in a long series of rituals in the life of a Hindu. But naturally there will always be only a few that choose to become a sannyasin, or who obtain the right prerequisites for becoming one. In spite of the fact that Paramananda well knew about my lack of interest in rituals, he came to me in dream on my 30th birthday in December later that year and initiated me ritually into *sannyasa*. Obviously, the formalities should be in order on the mental and spiritual planes, and that was okay with me.

The next day I took leave of Paramananda and Devendranath who travelled back to Bengal and Banagram ashram, while I was again attacked by powerful bouts of fever in the home of Laxman Rao in Rajamundry. By the next day the temperature was already up to 105 degrees Fahrenheit (40.5° Celcius), and I felt close to collapse. It was only concentration and meditation on Paramananda that retained my normal waking consciousness. The same day a homeopathic doctor came and diagnosed malaria, and the next day the same pattern of fever repeated itself, rising now to 105.6°F (40.8°C), and again it was brought down by the help of meditation. But the next day the fever reached its absolute peak of 106.2°F (41.2°C), and I felt that I had reached the absolute limit before coma. Then luckily the Rao family helped me with packets of ice cubes from the fridge which were laid on my forehead and my abdomen, together with a big lemon to eat as a medicine against malaria. After a long time with ice on both of my pole-points and a constant struggle to retain my normal waking consciousness, the fever gradually receded to an acceptable level.

As the days passed the occurrence of fever showed a distinct 24 hour pattern: before noon it would be at full strength and last the whole day and evening until near midnight; throughout the whole night and the morning I was entirely free of fever. During these hours my body temperature was actually below normal at around 36°C. Every attack of fever came after about an hour of an extreme and most horrible feeling of cold in which my entire body trembled and shook, and my teeth were chattering. Wrapping myself inside a huge pile of duvets and woolen blankets was of no help, nor was an ambient air temperature of about 40°C. Actually, this one hour of intense fits of cold felt much worse than the many hours of hot fever afterwards. When the fever would appear after these cold fits it felt like a big relief, really. Later I was thinking that the old Norwegian name for malaria, “cold-fever”, is a very accurate description of the feeling.

After peaking the fever varied between 104°F and 105.5°F for the rest of the week. For the whole of this period it was impossible for me to consume any food, only a little water. So with all the sweating during the fits of fever in addition, my weight dropped quickly and drastically, and after a while I became physically very weak. As usual I would never accept any allopathic medicines – only natural medicines and homeopathic medicines. It is possible that the

homeopathic medicines that I took helped a little but they took too long to have any effect. So when Sunday came and I had been seriously ill for nearly two weeks, I felt that I had no more strength left and had reached my absolute physical limit. Out of respect my good hosts had let me manage my own illness as I found fit, so out of respect for them I said, “STOP!” to myself that day and decided that I should see an allopathic doctor the next day. Laxmi, the housewife, who was just as beautiful as the goddess she was named after, and all the neighbouring mothers and female friends, who had visited me almost daily during this period, were all clearly relieved and united in expressing that this was also their wish. But even if I was seriously ill and physically extremely reduced, I had all along felt mentally strong and was able to receive visitors sitting in my bed in the traditional Indian manner for yogis and sannyasins, and answer their many questions.

On Monday morning Laxman Rao drove me to the local hospital on his moped. In my condition, outdoors in the extreme heat and through the incredible Indian city streets on a moped, the trip was nothing less than a nightmare, to put it mildly. On top of that we had the closest of shaves with a water buffalo which had run wild and was galloping down the street at full pelt. But just then I felt far too weak and listless to care much about it – I just had to depend on my chauffeur, on whose back I was leaning. In the hospital I was examined by Dr Suryanarayan. His very name gave me hope because I understood it as the very symbol of all health. When he took my history he first looked at me with surprise and then scrutinized me carefully, before saying that it was quite a wonder with my illness that I was still alive. Normally no one would survive the particularly strong type of malaria I suffered from. He gave me an injection and some tablets, and asked me to come back in the evening for another injection, and thereafter one injection on each of the following three days.

The impact of these medicines was unbelievably effective but the feeling was most horrible. The first two days I felt sicker than ever before, and vomited green bile all over the floor as soon as I tried to consume any food. As my stomach had been completely empty for so many days and the only “nourishment” I could give it was the strong allopathic ‘poison medicines’ that I was forced to take to survive, it became absolutely essential for me to eat something that could neutralize all of that, at least for the sake of the digestive system. My hosts therefore served me rice boiled in buttermilk, but it was all thrown up again. I was not even able to drink water because suddenly it tasted so incredibly bitter and horrible. So I was not able to take in anything at all and for a while my condition was really critical. Thus I felt weaker and more miserable than any time before. But then somebody gave me a special looking bottle with carbonated water, which I was able to drink and which helped me get over this. And I drank incessant-

ly – litres and litres of that water, I was insatiable, never feeling that I had had enough – I felt as if all the water in the whole world would not be enough to slake my thirst. After a good many litres of this carbonated water I was also able to eat the typical South Indian dish of *idly* (rice cakes), and then little by little also other things.

Early Wednesday morning I heard a young and an old *brahmachari* singing Sanskrit verses outside the window of my room. It was wonderfully beautiful and inspiring. I could not understand what they sang, but I felt as if I got a new life. And for the first time since Paramananda left I had a good day, and the fever had definitely left me. The next day was a full moon day and I got my last injection at the hospital. I felt that I could start to function normally again that day and also the next, so therefore I was eager to go

FOOTNOTE

* After this darshan Balyogi left his body, Paramananda has since left his body, Devendranath has left his body and the undersigned will soon be coming to the end of the road. But Sirisha Yeditha was a small girl that time and she was with us the whole night there with Balyogi in Mummdivaram. Now, in her adulthood, she has contacted me. She lives with her family in Hyderabad and she is a living witness to this incident.

GLOSSARY (simplified)

Balyogi (1927-1985) – ‘child-yogi’, name of former “living Shiva” at Mummdivaram, Andhra Pradesh.

darshan(a) – vision, view; also the term for ‘philosophy’ in India.

dhoti – garment worn by men (equivalent of women’s *sari*).

idly – cake made from rice and lentils in the South Indian cuisine.

lingam – phallus. See *shivalingam*.

mahashivaratri – the shivaratri (‘the night of Shiva’) that occurs every twelfth year. See *shivaratri*.

nandi – the name of Shiva’s holy bull; the term for any such sculpture outside a Shiva-temple.

rishi – ‘seer’; Self-Realized sage; the highest level attained by humans through evolution, who manifests love and wisdom; (in plural) ‘the seven (original) rishis’ did not come through evolution, but by divine incarnation, and are the mind-born sons of *Brahma*, who were created for the protection of all living beings, including gods and men, and who are always living among the people on earth (through continuous rebirth) to fulfill this task.

samkalpa – determination.

sannyasa – a free and loosely organized age-old order of spiritual world teachers, who spread culture and spiritual science to all parts of the world; the last of four stages in a Hindu’s life, in which one dedicates oneself fully and completely to the search for truth; a three day ritual which frees the individual from all social bonds and duties of society to become a sannyasin or sannyasini. See *sannyasin*.

sannyasin – a dedicated truth-seeker who wears saffron coloured robes (*gerrhua*), usually with the title *swami* and *ananda* as suffix in the name, who has renounced family happiness and personal career to help people wake up spiritually. See *sannyasa*.

sanskrit – ‘the perfect language’; that language which is nearest to the root of all the languages in the Indo-European group of languages, including the majority of the European languages together with the languages of North India, Iran, Armenia, etc.

satsanga – ‘gathering for truth’; a popular type of company with questions and answers, between guru and disciples or spiritual head and audience.

shivalingam – a phallus in the form of a (usually) black, cylindrical stone which is erect and rounded at the top, and which symbolizes Shiva and is an object of worship. See *lingam*.

shivaratri – ‘Shiva’s night’; the new moon of February when Shiva is worshipped and celebrated, traditionally accompanied by fasting and meditation, the sannyasa ritual is most usually performed on this date.

Valmiki – a Rishi of old who was the author of the epic Ramayana.

Continuation follows in the next number next week.