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The author and Paramananda at Konarak, Orissa, India 1990. Photo: Kari Ada.

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

MY EXPERIENCES WITH SWAMI PARAMANANDA

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI IN THE WEST

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and

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DEDUCTION

Guru and Sishya (Teacher and Pupil)

The relationship between spiritual mentor and pupil is another area that is much misunderstood in the Western World. The Sanskrit word 'guru' is a combination of the two syllables *gu*, 'darkness', and *ru*, 'light', meaning literally that which leads 'from darkness to light'. Metaphorically it stands for 'enlightenment', i.e. 'the one who dispels ignorance and confers wisdom'. This is the traditional designation for a teacher in the East, and teachers have always been shown the greatest respect and veneration. Thus there is a variety of different types of guru, depending on the art, science or subject that is being taught, but most familiar to Westerners is the guru as a spiritual mentor, and among these one usually distinguishes between (ordinary) 'guru' and *sadguru*, or realized guru. But it is practically impossible to understand if a guru is actually realized or not, because only someone realized will understand and recognize another realized person! And self-declared titles like *sadguru* or *maharishi* or *mahavatar* and so on, usually mislead more than they are instructive in understanding anything about the person behind the title.

Anyway, it is the *relationship* between teacher and student – guru and *sishya* – which is interesting here, and my own experience is as *sishya* in relation to *sadguru*. As mentioned, this relation is held in high esteem and regard all over Asia, deemed holy and as something that lasts for life. As the realized guru has walked the spiritual path to its very end and become spiritually immortal, he or she is a living symbol of the Self (the inner reality) and of God (the outer reality), which in reality are the same. Therefore, "your own" Self, the Guru and God is an equal trinity which stands for the Absolute Truth. The significance of the realized guru in physical body, therefore, cannot be overestimated. First of all, it is extremely rare, and secondly, it is only the realized guru who can identify your ego, weed it out and show you the ultimate reality behind all the illusions, precisely because that is 'where' he is himself. He has walked the path before you, met with all the challenges, made all the mistakes and gathered all the experiences, so that he really knows the path and is actually able to guide you.

The guru is the perfect manifestation of "your own" Self. His mere physical presence is enough for your *sadhana* to be good and harmonious, and, in principle, he does not



White-throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 24.01.2019. Photo: BP.



Common Jezebel (*Delias eucharis*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 06.12.2013. Photo: BP.

need to utter a single word. Still, the guru gives freely of himself to the sincere seeker of truth who comes to him for advice and guidance. When the guru thus has accepted such a thoroughly honest and determined truth seeker, and initiated him or her into the spiritual life, there arises a relation of mutual exchange on all levels, physical, mental and spiritual: The guru provides for the spiritual food and the right guidance, while the *sishya* provides for the right mental attitude and concentration to receive the guru's spiritual food, and at the same time provides for the livelihood of his guru, for being a guru is absolutely not a profession or business. The relation between teacher and pupil must always be completely without any personal interest on any part, as both are concerned only with the Truth and only live for that. There must never be any lie, quarrel or bad behaviour between them.

The pupil should have made his or her conscious choice beforehand and be steadfast onwards, without later wavering. The relationship functions best when the pupil has a respectful and receiving attitude, with full attention for learning and an absolute will for self-improvement, without obstinacy, self-justification and argumentation. When the *sishya* is completely attuned to, and focused on, the guru, everything flows by itself and the relationship becomes very harmonious. And in this harmony the pupil develops immensely. The more the pupil can trust his or her guru, be preoccupied with or love and honour him or her, the better the result for the pupil.

For the rest, the *sishya* may view or relate to the guru just as he or she feels, i.e. the *sishya* may view the guru in the

traditional manner, or as father, mother, brother, friend or almost whatever he or she likes, because what the *sishya* wants the guru to be, the guru is that. The most important thing in the relationship is honesty and love, and the *sishya* must never try to hide anything or hold anything back from the guru. The pupil must always follow the teacher's advice and never doubt or argue even if he or she doesn't understand its meaning there and then. *Sadhana* is a continuous practice and exercise in the search for truth, which gradually gives more and more insight and understanding. The *sishya* must have full confidence that the guru knows what he or she is doing, even if the *sishya* does not understand it. This trust of the *sishya* towards the guru is essential and a minimum condition for the relationship to function. The pupil should also not demand any explanation from the teacher, but be patient and wait until the teacher possibly gives an answer. All in all, patience on the part of the *sishya* will be an important virtue, because only the guru knows when the right time has come or when the *sishya* is ready to receive.

All of this may perhaps sound too much, but remember that the guru never has any self interest in the *sishya*, but always only wants the very best for her, full of divine love. And for her part the *sishya* has come to the guru of her own accord, for help to be free from suffering or for finding the truth behind everything. The *sishya* must therefore also be willing always to give her very best, because what the *sishya* wants means everything to her. The guru sacrifices his health, peace and harmonious solitude for the *sishya*, so the *sishya* must also sacrifice herself for the guru; her ego and personal ambitions. As already mentioned it



Black-hooded Oriole (*Oriolus xanthornus*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 19.12.2013. Photo: BP.

is a mutual exchange in the relationship, and as it is without any ego or personal desire from either side, it is pure and holy. What I describe here denotes a realized guru – a *sadguru* – and not a guru who runs a “God-business”, in which all offers and consultations come with a monetary price attached, the sort who keeps himself aloof and above everybody else, and for most of the time is inaccessible. And the *sisya* I describe is a genuine truth-seeker, not a curious “spiritual island jumper”, one who continually goes from one guru to the next without any personal commitment and is therefore, of course, also never satisfied.

As already mentioned, the embodiment of the Absolute Truth, which is what the physical presence of a realized guru really is (all others are, in comparison, only like “moving dead bodies”), cannot at all be overrated. Man, or *manusha* in Sanskrit, suffers from a chronic identity crisis, which makes us always identify with our body and our mind, with our thoughts, feelings, understanding, etc., based on the impressions of the outer world. It goes without saying that only the *sadguru*, who has fully transcended his mind and ego, and who has realized his real identity, the Self or God, and thereby fulfilled his life, which is the natural state of being, is the only one who can really help another human being to do the same. Otherwise it will be like the blind leading the blind. And it is completely impossible for a human, who identifies with his mind and ego, to reveal his own illusion or transcend his own identity of his own accord.

In principle the guru doesn't give you anything, *because you already have everything* – you are full and complete, unbound and ever-free – so the guru cannot give you what you already have. The problem is only that you do not *know* that or do not *realize* it, and it is exactly here that the role of the guru comes in – he or she enlightens you

and guides you and gives you the right impulses so that you can know your potential and realize “your” Self. ¹⁾

Everything in this world is manifested and based on manifestation, and we have a physical body for the same reason. Because it is only through manifestation – through our body and mind – that we can realize the Self. Thus the importance of *the guide in physical body* becomes invaluable. We can only enter this world and this life through our parents, and as we grow up they are our gurus. According to nature it is never a business relation between parents and children, and if, exceptionally, contrary to nature, it is, everything in that relation will be inharmonious and perverted. A childhood and adolescence characterized by security and love creates harmonious and positive children. But even if we are physically grown-up after 21 years and enter adult life, mentally we are still just like children and, in any case, spiritual illiterates. And it is here that the role of the guru comes into action, because the guru can provide that dimension of life which the parents cannot and do not at all know. Literature and idols are usually of great help and inspiration, but can only take us so far. They can never replace the living, physically manifested influence. And just like the natural and harmonious relation between children and parents consists of love, trust and security, so should also be the relation to the guru, who is your spiritual mother and father, no more and no less.



Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 09.01.2015. Photo: BP.



Peacock Pansy (*Junonia almana*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 18.11.2008. Photo: BP.

The Quest for Truth

In discussing the quest for Truth we first have to define some of the most central concepts. But even before that we shall have to clearly distinguish between spirituality and fantasy.

Spirituality and fantasy

As an inevitable consequence of the confusion around spirituality and identity, discussed above, a “mental grey area” of all kinds of more or less supersensory phenomena has arisen, in which there is a lot of lively fantasy that most easily passes for great truths. In this “mental grey area” flourishes everything from healing and channelling (spiritism, automatic writing, etc.) to contact with guides, helpers, masters, angels, extraterrestrial humanoids and so on. Here is free rein for all who claim to sense something that the rest of us have no perception of. What for most mentally sane and stable people is known as *inspiration, intuition, impulse, idea*, “sudden thought” or even “gut feeling”, is for them something that comes from outside themselves through a variety of discarnate spirits or beings “on the other side” or anywhere in the vast universe, or even from other universes.

In addition to this sudden thought or impulse, which most of us experience every day, anyway, without feeling the slightest need to give it even a second thought because it feels quite natural, they themselves create a huge, fantastic, world around it of fancy names and suggestive places (ancient Egypt and Atlantis are perennial favourites) and importance and validity. All the offers in this enormous market (a lot of it is big business), which we may call a ‘spiritual circus’, is sheer *imagination, self-suggestion* and *self-hypnosis*, and in any case it is limited to the understanding and the stock of concepts of the person who is passing on the contacts and messages. What benefit would we possibly draw from various messages deriving from self-declared mediums, with whom we necessarily would have to share their immature mind? These phenomena often correspond to so-called ‘hyperactivity’ and ‘hypersensitivity’ and arise from a kind of mental disorder, and its activity can only create more disorder, bordering on schizophrenia.

So what is **spiritual** - in the *adhyatmic* sense (see a previous chapter) – has to do with **identity**, i.e. with that in our existence which is original, eternal and unchanging. Everything else is either mental or physical, i.e. changeable and transitory.

The human being consists of three aspects or dimensions: **spiritual, mental** and **material**. In the same manner we



Spangle (*Papilio protenor*), Gettatapi ashram, Baijnath, Himachal Pradesh, India, 28.05.2017. Photo: BP.

also say that we have three different bodies: **causal body**, **subtle body** and **physical body**, respectively. These are two ways of talking about the same thing, and these three bodies or dimensions correspond with our three levels of consciousness and three states of mind which everybody experiences daily: **deep**, **dreamless sleep** (*unconscious*), **dream** (*subconscious*) and **waking** (*conscious*), respectively. So to talk about these three dimensions in man, or three different types of bodies, is therefore not strange or unfamiliar to us – it belongs to everybody’s everyday life.

The human problem is that the spiritual aspect or the spiritual dimension in us is unconscious: We have no memory or active experience of the two to two and a half hours of deep, dreamless sleep every night. The mind is then inactive, in contrast to the two other mental states. It is well known that man cannot survive more than three to four days and nights without this deep sleep. And everybody knows that we may go to bed at night, totally exhausted both physically and mentally, but still wake up next morning fully “fresh and bright”. We can therefore say that this deep sleep is the source of new life – hence the name “causal body” – which is also the domain of our identity. Spiritual life, therefore, is about making conscious this unconscious part of us, for the purpose of fulfilling our lives and to make us whole and complete human beings – which also corresponds to the overall purpose of evolution, which is to induce more and more consciousness into the manifested, into matter and life.

All this, then, is about what we may call **noumenal truths**, while everything else is about **phenomenal truths** or whatever has to do with mind and the physical body. The mind of man or his subtle (astral) body is, just like space, infinite! There is nothing out there which is not also in our mind – man is a microcosm in a macrocosm. There is no end to forms of life and phenomena, but everything is relative – relative in relation to something absolute – and this absolute is reflected in our causal body or spiritual dimension. All the real problems of man are solved there only – not in space or by the intervention of something that erroneously seems to be outside ourselves. Neither are our actual problems as human beings solved by psychotherapy or other mental means or methods of healing, or by medication or other physical means. Such physical or psychological medical remedies will always only be means to make up for inharmonious conditions in our lives. They will never be able to replace the lack of consciousness about identity.

Enlightenment and Self-Realization

Today the word “enlightenment” has become a very fashionable, misused and worn-out word among those with spiritual interest or inclination, whose wish for enlightenment, of a degree no less than that of the Buddha, seems to be the main driving force for their spiritual search. But what does ‘enlightenment’ really mean? Will it not always be degrees of enlightenment so that it appears as a relative phenomenon, almost as a dim-

mer switch increases the brightness of an electric light? And what is it that is being enlightened? Does not the expression ‘enlightened’ or ‘enlightenment’ indicate that a source of light is shedding light on an object so that it is being enlightened? In humans is there anything other than the mind that can be enlightened? Atman cannot be enlightened, because it is in any case the source of ‘light’ itself. However, it just might perhaps be the appropriate expression for all those who, on their own accord, experience something within their minds but thinking that it is beyond mind, and afterwards are very eager to explain it and teach it to others.

So there is a huge variety of misunderstandings, contradictions and confusions out there when it comes to conceptions about the Ultimate Reality of being. Therefore “enlightenment” is not a good conception if one thinks about the spiritual reality of the avatars and part-avatars, like Buddha, Jesus, Shankaracharya, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Shirdi Sai Baba and Prabhu Jagadbandhu, or rishis like Vivekananda, Brahmananda, Anandacharya, Ramana Maharshi, Osho and many others. Rather, we say that they are Self-Realized or God-Realized. They have realized the Self or Atman or Brahman – their true identity, which is Entity – through their individual body and mind. There are no degrees of this – if you have realized your Self, you know ‘who’ you are or ‘what’ you are, once and for all, and there will never be any more confusion about it.²⁾ Thank God, Paramananda never used to talk about ‘enlightenment’, but always used the word ‘realization’!

Here in this book Self-Realization (*Atma-Jñana*), God-Realization (*Brahma-Jñana*), *nirvikalpa samadhi* and *turiya* are used almost synonymously. *Turiya* is not like the ‘empty space’ or ‘the silence between two thoughts’, which you can dwell in and believe you have become Enlightened, which seems to be the belief these days – it is something so very, very completely different from everything known and experienced that there are absolutely no direct



Oriental White-eye (*Zosterops palpebrosus*), Sehal, Baijnath, Himachal Pradesh, India, 30.05.2016. Photo: BP.



Russet Sparrow (*Passer rutilans*), Gettatapi ashram, Baijnath, Himachal Pradesh, India, 03.05.2017. Photo: BP.

words and no understanding or reference for it. *Turiya* is beyond life (*jiva*), i.e. the gross body (*sthula sarira*), the subtle body (*sukshma sarira*) and the causal body (*karan sarira*); and is called the “fourth stage of consciousness”, i.e. beyond the deep sleep (*sushupti*), the dream sleep (*swapna*) and the waking (*jagrata*) stages of consciousness. It is something so “extreme” because your entire life – your body, mind and ego – which, during all of your life-time, until now will have been fully dynamic, all of a sudden becomes completely static. Therefore you realize the static aspect of *Brahman*, which is also called Self-Realization.

Savikalpa samadhi, however, happens within the three bodies and the three stages of consciousness, i.e. within the individual identity, but it is a complete unity of being and a singularity of mind, which does not feel individual any more but has actually become universal and is therefore called “universal mind” or “super mind”. If you are only passively observing your mind without any involvement in it, and you are not keeping any object of focus there, this will be the result. So the mind is still very, very subtly present and active, and it is not a shift of consciousness and nothing permanent. Many of those who do not have gurus mistake this kind of experience for Self-Realization, The Absolute, Full Enlightenment or whatever they choose to call it, because it is Perfect Silence and Peace and Emptiness – no disturbance of any kind – only Pure Awareness. However, “silence”, “peace”, “emptiness”, “awareness” are all qualities we can understand using the mind and they refer to our daily, physical life – they say absolutely nothing about the fully *attributeless*, static aspect of the Absolute.

This mistake occurs when one does not have any proper, i.e. realized, guru, but is only searching and trying by oneself. There are plenty of these self-styled people out there who are self-declared teachers for others. Through the Internet they are teaching deeply existential matters to people who they don’t know and have never met, which is a completely irresponsible thing to do and which accounts for there being so much confusion about these things worldwide. They all want ‘Enlightenment’, but who wants the Truth?



Oriental Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 02.02.2015. Photo: BP.

Ego, mind, meditation and sadhana

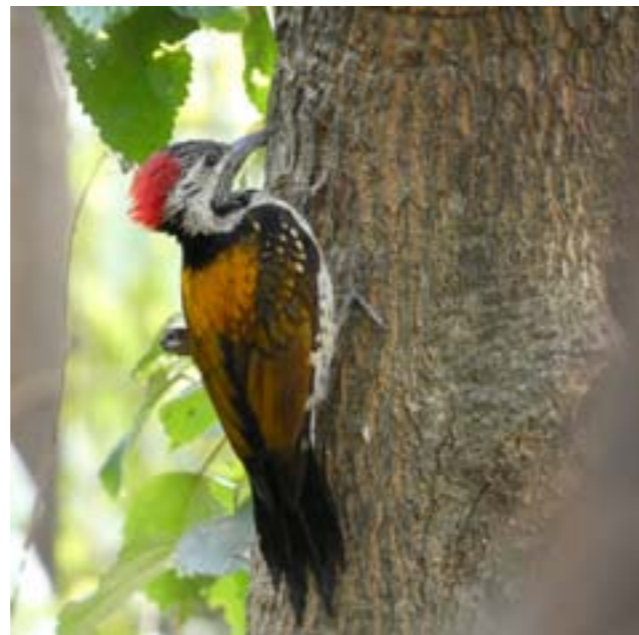
Many people believe that if only they will obtain a purest possible physical body, spirituality will follow automatically, so to speak. Therefore these people usually become quite fanatical about their food habits and develop lots of purity complexes. Such attitudes and behaviour are very physical and primitive, and such persons never understand the superior importance of the mind. I have met many “perfect yogis” in the West who have trained their physical bodies to perfection through *asanas* and various physical *kriyas*, and who are pure vegetarians or vegans, but who have very restless minds and do not know at all how to meditate. They have never understood that the first five steps of *ashtanga yoga* or Classical Yoga are there only to prepare for mastering the mind. It is always the mind that is the Alpha and Omega of spiritual development. Of course the physical body and food habits and lifestyle are important, but they must never be the goal.

It is impossible to skip the mind, precisely because it is our mind that we use to identify with. We identify with our thoughts and feelings, with our ideas and our understanding at any time, or name, title, family and social status, and so many other things – everything that is part of our mental world. The mind is always in a state of duality because there is always an object in mind. All impressions that we receive from our surroundings through our physical senses are stored in the mind and form us as humans. Many of these impressions are ventilated during sleep in our nightly dream-sleep to help maintain

our mental balance. But as this happens sub-consciously the amount of help we can get from our dreams for our spiritual development is very limited. But when we concentrate the mind, and when we meditate or observe the mind, this happens on the awake, conscious, level, so the effect is enormous in comparison. Meditation is just like ‘conscious sleep’, in which we receive the best from both sleep and awake states at the same time. ‘Sleep’ because the physical body and the mind act just like in sleep, i.e. our body is totally relaxed and at rest, and after a while we will not feel it – just like in sleep; and our mind is active and dreaming, just like in the dream state of sleep. The only difference is that *we know that we are not sleeping – we know that we are perfectly awake!*

Thus we only observe the mind and everything which is going on there, without being involved in it, just like a *passive witness*. The objects in mind are being observed by an observer who is the subject – that is You, your Self! By continuous ventilation through conscious sleep or meditation, our mind will gradually become more and more ‘clean’ of impressions (*samskaras*), tendencies (*vasanas*) and modifications (*vrittis*), which will lead to what has been called “super consciousness” or *samadhi*. Without a pure mind it is impossible to realize the Self – only a pure mind can be passive and thus be transcended.

Of course, everything is possible for “God”, and there are so many ways in which this can happen – it is not only by meditation. Also there are no hard and fast rules in spiritual life and development, and no time perspective. But everything depends on your state or condition of mind. And then it is important not to underestimate the significance of *sadhana* – of an ongoing, self-disciplining practice in which one always sincerely gives one’s very best, and to have



Black-rumped Flameback (*Dinopium benghalense*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 28.01.2019. Photo: BP.



Grey Pansy (*Junonia atlites*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 18.11.2008. Photo: BP.

a completely devoted or surrendering or self-sacrificing attitude towards the goal or ideal. Paramananda used to say that there are two things which are crucial for spiritual life: *sincerity* and *intensity*. Without sincerity nothing is possible, but if that is in place, then the whole thing is decided by your intensity. Of my own accord, I like to add a third factor, namely *patience*. Because everything lies in the “Hands of God” – no one can make for themselves any personal career in spiritual development or unfoldment – so patience and endurance (*titiksha*) become the greatest virtues. Another thing which Paramananda said, which it is important to know as regards the Path of Love, is that “if you can love one person completely, you will be realized!” However, to really love you have to weed out and sacrifice your ego.

What happens to mind and ego after Self-Realization? The mind will function just like before, but you will never again be deluded by its duality. Just like when we look into a mirror, we know that it is only the reflection of our own physical body, whereas an animal will most likely think that it is another animal which it is seeing. After realization we know that mind is mind, and that it is our medium to be able to experience ourselves in the manifested world. The identity with the mind and anything of what it implies or contains, is over for ever.

Paramananda most elegantly called the ego the “shadow of consciousness” (i.e. ‘individual consciousness’). If we think of consciousness as light in the manifested world, then as a matter of course that light will make a shadow, and that ‘shadow’ is like our ego. Light is bright, formless and expanding, shadow is dark and defines forms, and, most importantly, does not have a life of its own. It is up to us to choose to focus on the bright, expanding light, or to decide we want to concentrate on the narrowing shadow of our lives.

This is the overall picture, but how does it come about?

The feeling of being a separate individual, apart from the whole, causes the feeling of insecurity and fear, which then develops the ego. The ego is a false feeling of security on the basis of individuality. The need for individual security, or to secure individuality, of any kind, like physical strength, beauty, wealth, material objects, status, dominance, etc., etc. develops the ego. When we are children it is kind of a natural need, and if that need is not met with love and care, the child is most likely to build up the ego. And if we still cling to it as adults and even perhaps cultivate it, it will develop into serious perversions, always nourished by, and emitting, insecurity and fear. Tyrants, despots, dictators, mafia members, terrorists and the like are always ruled by this. When it is cultivated and/or systematized or organized, i.e. coupled with knowledge and intelligence, perhaps with a definite purpose for causing harm (i.e. others’ insecurity), it becomes what we call evil. The so-called “Devil” or “Satan” is the personification of this. The ego is the very first and last thing in this world – the ultimate illusion.

Paramananda used a very nice picture to illustrate the nature of the ego after Self-Realization: When we burn a piece of paper with a printed text on it, afterwards we are left with a dark flake of ashes in which the burnt text will appear as white and fully readable – as a positive which has become a negative, in the terms of photography. It is just like that after *nirvikalpa samadhi* – the ego goes from being active to being passive. Without the ego life cannot live in the body, so it has to persist for as long as there is physical life, but it stops being active. The ‘death’ of the ego means the fulfilment of the spiritual life (in the *adhyatmic* sense), and if anyone thinks they can be free with their ego intact, they have misunderstood everything! There is certainly no lazy and easy way, and absolutely no quick-fix – all have to make a sincere effort. All in all we may say that spiritual development is like all other growth in nature – it takes its time and needs its maturing to be harmonious.



Blue-throated Barbet (*Megalaima asiatica*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 28.12.2014. Photo: BP.

Finding the Truth

One of the greatest truths of life is that we are “blinded by what we see”. That means that we allow ourselves to be dazzled and thus deceived by the outer impressions, and that everything isn’t necessarily as it appears. This commonly accepted ‘seemingness’ is actually the greatest world illusion, one that we all struggle with in some way or other, and which appears on all levels and in all conditions of life. It causes us, for instance, to see duality and parts when we should have seen harmony and unity. Yes, it is fully natural that it is so, but if you aren’t satisfied with always accepting only *relative truths*, then you must attune yourself to your inner reality, which is gradually unfolding the permanent and stable centre which is the source of your very life and the origin of all your activities.

Closely related to this is another great truth of life, which is that “**everything is what we make of it**”. From this we can understand that everybody’s outlook is from their own point of view, exactly because we are all different individuals with different impressions, experiences, apprehension and understanding of the world around us. From that standpoint we choose what kind of attitude with which to meet our fellow human beings, situations and our surroundings in general. But this choice is completely our own, and we can change it at our own will.

A consequence of this lies expressed in the good old proverb: “**It is not how you are, but how you deal with it**”. This is the deepest wisdom of life formulated in the simplest way, and shows that we can perfectly well live harmoniously in the midst of a chaotic life. We decide ourselves the degree of impact we allow anything external to have on our lives.

“**Every man is the architect of his own life**” and “**every man is the blacksmith of his own happiness**”. We ourselves make the world that we live in, individually as well as collectively. The notion we have about something or someone, moulds the reality we live in at any time. Strong notions create expectations, and when the expectations are not met, it causes problems.

A genuine truth-seeker who wishes to go all the way to find the truth behind everything – the ultimate Truth *beyond* this life, from which all the truths *in* life derive – he or she has to be humble and open to the possibility that the truth might be something very different, or even completely opposite, to their own notions and conceptions. The Truth is the TRUTH, so anyone really wishing for the Truth has to accept that and be ready for anything! It’s no good having strong ideas beforehand – it will not do even to have a minute, vague thought. Nay, even the very *wish* for Truth itself has to go in the end. Only then there might be a possibility, if God wishes!

My personal account

During all my experiences with Paramananda that I have written about throughout this book I have quite openly revealed my feelings and failures at any time, not wanting to leave anything out from my personal agonies, struggles and confusions, hoping that the reader should be able to feel them somewhat familiar and, at least to some extent, recognize or identify with them. I had the very best teacher anyone can have so this is my way of sharing freely the lessons I have learnt from my company with him on this journey of life. So, in summing up my own search for Truth, where does it leave me, my person? – what did I actually do, what did I ‘experience’

and what did I ‘gain’? And – what happened afterwards?

As mentioned in the Prologue I did not have any notions about God, but also no thoughts or wish for ‘Enlightenment’. I was only occupied by the thought of finding the Final Truth behind everything, *whatever it might be and at any cost*. To me the truth was the Truth, so there could be no room for any un-truth, falseness or deception of any kind. Therefore, I could only surrender to that. And as I knew there were so many truths, I wanted the Final and Absolute only – which would reveal the truth about myself, about God and about this life and existence.

After being disappointed by Christianity in my early teens I eventually found answers within Indian philosophy and practical methods to follow in Yoga, which only increased after moving to Mt. Tron and Alvdal in 1978 where I discovered the great spiritual heritage of the Indian yogi and rishi Anandacharya. And only after meeting Paramananda in 1983 did my search really start to deepen. With him there was a natural blend of selfless service (*karma-yoga*), devotion (*bhakti-yoga*) and self-analysis (*jñana-yoga*), together with an ever increasing practice of meditation or neutral observation as a passive witness (*sakshin*). *Karma-yoga* happened spontaneously and naturally as a result of my other practices, and I never had to think about it. It became very much part of my nature. And also the *bhakti-yoga* part happened naturally as a result of my deep love of my guru Paramananda. He was such an amazingly lovable person and everybody who met him loved him – his blissful eyes and smile and lustrous face, and incredible solicitude and friendliness always – really beyond words! It was only the meditation and the self-analysis parts that I had to learn by regular practice.

As I have set out for the reader previously in this book, my *sadhana* went on in this way more or less successfully (more less, in my own opinion) until 1987, which was the year of my great transformation. Actually, in that one year only, I did proper *sadhana* with the greatest intensity and with the greatest result. What happened to me in Banagram in India late that year will forever re-

FOOTNOTES

1) There are those who will very persistently hold that we are all already “enlightened” so that we do not need any guru and that the idea of having a guru is nonsense because the guru does not really exist. But can you tell a child that his parents do not really exist and that he does not need them because, as a human, he is already “enlightened”? Actually, everything in life may act as your guru if only you are susceptible enough and trusting enough – trees, plants, animals, mountains, rivers, lakes, sun, moon, stars – all are there to befriend you and help you on your journey through life. At a certain point in your spiritual development, when you have gained and become established in the concentration of mind, you will find that even your own mind will act as your guru. Then, of course, there is

main unspoken, but it changed my life entirely. *What I had been searching for – I found*. I do not need to give any further portrayal of it – I only want the reader to be aware of the fact that Paramananda later told me that it happened by “*Guru Kripa*”, i.e. by his blessing, and that only after that happening he initiated me into the teachings of *Baul*. Actually, when he told me this in Shantibu in Norway a couple of years later, I was a bit surprised, because I had thought that it happened spontaneously to me because I thought myself naturally ready. On account of my prolonged experiences with *savikalpa samadhi* I thought that it happened as a natural result of that.

But my Guruji Paramananda knew better. And as you will remember from my account above, after coming back to Norway again after that happening, after some time my consciousness again came down completely and my mind became fully arrested by my body. Paramananda knew, of course, that there was still a problem of sex to be solved in my mind, and therefore things happened the way they did. So after *Turiya* again a new *sadhana* started – *baul-sadhana* – because, as a human being, I was still not full and complete, but needed to come to terms with a fundamental side of the *Shakti* aspect of me.

As this kind of *sadhana* involves another and thus is not only my own, naturally I cannot say much about it. But in his last message to me during his last visit to Norway in 1998, Paramananda indirectly called it to an end and only told me to take care to die consciously when my time would come. And ever since people have come to me for comfort, consultations, initiations and teachings – just as he predicted. By now, by the grace of God, I have many spiritual children. They come to me completely without any prior announcement and completely free of charge, just like the bees very naturally come to the blooming flower.

However, it took many years for me to really see the meaning of manifestation – to understand the ‘purpose of life’ – which Paramananda, in Shantibu in 1989, told me I would do “in the future”. So again his words of promise to me came true! *Jay Guru!*

the “inner guru” – which is you – your Self, whose reality accounts for the saying that we are “already enlightened”. Yes, it is certainly the truth, but how do we know that – how does it come to our knowledge? The outer guru is always only a reflection of your “inner guru” – but everything outer is there for you to become aware of the inner, hence the necessity of the “outer guru”.

2) Today some influential people in the media advocate the opinion that ‘enlightenment’ is the original or absolute state of our Being – it is simply “what we are” – and thus there is no such thing as becoming it or achieving it: “You cannot become what you already are, which is Enlightenment”. But ‘enlightenment’ is an act or happening which comes from the verb ‘to enlighten’ – it is the ‘act of enlightening’, or the ‘state of being enlightened’. In the first case you cannot

be an act which is something you *do* or is *done*, and the latter case clearly states that it is a result of an action or event. The Buddha *became* enlightened after entering Nirvana, and, as everybody knows, it was the result of a personal process or struggle, and it was not the

other way around. These people seem to mistake 'enlightenment' for Atman or Brahman or Nirvana, and because of that there is no path or process or *sadhana* or effort for purity of mind. Hence the present enormous contradiction and confusion about 'Enlightenment'.

GLOSSARY (simplified)

- adhyatmika** – one who is always focused on *atman*, or sees everything in the light of *atman*; who belongs to *atman*. See *atman*.
- asana** – physical body posture in Classical Yoga. See *yoga*.
- atman** – the Self, in which rests the unity of being, including man, nature and God.
- Atmajñāna** – 'knowing the Self'; Self-Realization.
- baul** – philosophy with man at the centre, physically, emotionally and spiritually; practitioner of the Baul Philosophy.
- baul sadhana** – *sadhana* with a partner of the opposite sex, mainly following tantric principles. See *baul*.
- Brahmajñāna** – 'knowledge of Brahman'; God-Realization.
- Brahman** – 'The Absolute'; 'Absolute Consciousness'; 'God'.
- bhakti-yoga** – the Yoga of love and devotion. See *yoga*.
- guru** – 'from darkness to light'; spiritual guide who dispels ignorance and confers wisdom.
- jaग्रata** – 'awake'; one of three states of mind and levels of consciousness which all people experience daily throughout life, in which we are conscious with an active mind. See *swapna*, *sushupti*.
- Jay Guru** – "Victory Guru"; an expression often used by the disciples to honour or remember their guru on various occasions. See *guru*.
- jiva** – 'life', i.e. containing the three bodies – gross, subtle and causal.
- jivatman** – "individual self", i.e. *atman* reflected in the individual; (actually:) "*atman* as experiencer of life". See *atman*.
- jñāna-yoga** – the yoga of wisdom; one of the major forms of yoga in which traditionally the power of the intellect's discernment is the main factor; the science which demonstrates that by self-knowledge, self-control, and self-reverence the human being can attain the highest end of life, and which teaches a system of self-development through the expansion of the understanding, with a view to transcend the limitations of nature and mind. See *yoga*.
- karan sarir** – 'the causal body'; the body of individual identity and bliss. See *sthula sarir*, *sukshma sarir*.
- karma-yoga** – the yoga of selfless service; action without the hankering for benefit or result.
- kriya** – 'action', 'activity', 'work'; (here) physical body exercises typically directed towards the purification of certain organs.
- manusha** – 'man' or 'the human being', or actually 'the self-conscious, humanitarian human'.
- nirvikalpa samadhi** – that form of *samadhi* which is without any object in mind and which therefore cannot be explained, in contrast to *savikalpa* and other forms of *samadhi*; also known as "opposite *samadhi*", completely different from all other forms of *samadhi*. After complete *nirvikalpa samadhi* there is no more cause for rebirth. See *samadhi*, *savikalpa samadhi*.
- sadguru** – Self-Realized guru.
- sadhana** – 'which leads straight to the goal'; a person's spiritual search or quest for truth (which involves personal commitment and practice); the collected effort – physically, emotionally and spiritually – for the realization of life's end.
- sakshin** – 'The Witness'; the Atman as a passive witness of everything in life; the subject (as opposed to the object). See *atman*.
- samadhi** – 'union' ('putting together' or 'bringing into harmony'); full absorption in meditation; the eighth and last step of Classical Yoga. See *nirvikalpa samadhi*, *savikalpa samadhi*, *yoga*.
- samskara** – impression (in the mind).
- savikalpa samadhi** – when the mind has become a unity; "universal mind" or "super mind" (but still mind, as different from *nirvikalpa samadhi*, which is without mind). See *nirvikalpa samadhi*, *samadhi*.
- Shakti** – 'power', 'energy'; the dynamic aspect of the Absolute; the female principle, which is worshipped in many forms, like Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati, etc.; the counterpart of Shiva. See *Shiva*.
- shishya** – disciple (or selected disciple).
- stuhla sarira** – 'the physical body'; the material body maintained by food. See *karan sarira*, *sukshma sarira*.
- sukshma sarira** – 'the subtle body'; the body of intellect, mind and vital airs. See *karan sarira*, *stuhla sarira*.
- sushumna** – "the governor channel"; the central and only vertical channel of the astral body, which connects all the seven *chakras*, and through which the *kundalini* both descends and ascends. See *chakra*, *kundalini*.
- sushupti** – 'deep, dreamless sleep'; one of three states of mind and levels of consciousness which all people experience daily throughout life, in this one unconscious and the mind is inactive. See *jaग्रata*, *swapna*.
- swapna** – 'dream'; one of three states of mind and levels of consciousness which all people experience daily throughout life, in this one sub-conscious and the mind is active. See *jaग्रata*, *sushupti*.
- titiksha** – patience, endurance.
- turiya** – "the fourth state of consciousness"; the transcendental or super-conscious state, beyond the three ordinary states of consciousness – waking, sub-conscious and unconscious; the "Rishi state" or realized. See *rishi*, *nirvikalpa samadhi*.
- vasana** – mental tendencies (i.e. that which 'empowers' wishes, desires, will, etc.).
- vritti** – obstacles or modifications or propensities of mind, caused by worldly attachment.
- yoga** – 'conjunction'; spiritual science that unites the individual with the universal in the human being; the second of the six main philosophical systems of India, established by Rishi Patanjali and called "Classical Yoga" or Asthanga Yoga, consisting of eight parts or steps – *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, *Samadhi*.
- yogi** – one who masters yoga; practitioner of yoga. See *yoga*.

Continuation follows in the next number next week.