



# The Mt. Tron Mail

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*Swami Paramananda in his hut in Banagram ashram, 1995. Photo: BP.*

## IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

MY EXPERIENCES WITH  
SWAMI PARAMANANDA

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI IN THE WEST

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# FOREVER PARAMANANDA

## *Paramananda leaves his physical body*

On Saturday November 27<sup>th</sup> 1999, in the evening, Norwegian time, the telephone suddenly rang. It was Trishan phoning from a hospital in Calcutta. To my great surprise he told me that Paramananda was hospitalized and had been so for the last week, and that his condition was very critical. And then he ended the short call by saying: “And I don’t know what will happen now!” If Trishan is saying anything like that it must really be very serious, I thought. I informed a shocked Tripti Ma and went thereafter directly to my bedroom and closed the door after me. There in my bed I sat in Yoga and deeply concentrated on Paramananda, and immediately I could feel him. That was in the last moment, because at once my *kundalini* started spinning in the *sushumna*, but not as usual. This time the spinning was anti clockwise instead of clockwise, and immediately I had the understanding that now Paramananda would leave his body. “Oh-ho, you want to leave your body now?”, I said to him, and right away my thoughts went to Banagram and what would possibly be happening when Paramananda would not be physically present there anymore. Then, like a film for my inner eye, I saw everything that would be happening in Banagram in the next years – that it would be a very difficult and rather chaotic time for all, full of discord, separation and decline, but that finally all of that would come to an end. Thereafter, Paramananda left his body, and as it happened he shared some of his infinite *ananda* with me – his divine ecstasy and bliss – his rapture of release at finally being totally free of the physical body’s barriers and limitations. About five minutes later Trishan phoned again and, with a tearful and trembling voice, conveyed the message that Paramananda had left his body. “Yes, I know”, was all I said. And then, before he ended the call and hung up, he asked me to inform all of our friends in the Western world.

This happened while I was in the middle of preparing the December issue of our newsletter “The Mt.Tron Mail”, which this time was devoted entirely to the orphan children and Paramananda Mission. Under the front page headline “Help orphans in India!”, I wrote an article about a new sponsorship organization, SPM (“The Organization of Support for the Paramananda Mission’s Orphanage in India”), which had been established on October 10<sup>th</sup> that year by Kari Ada’s elder sister, Hanne, and her husband, Harald, in Narvik, North Norway. Thereafter, I had written a thorough article about the founder and the history of

Paramananda Mission in India, together with its work and activities, and how daily life and life style went on there. But now I also had to add an obituary of Paramananda. Under the headline “**Live Paramananda! In Memory of Swami Paramananda**” I wrote the following the very next day:

The Mt.Tron Mail was written and completed with articles about the sponsorship organisation and the Paramananda Mission, when suddenly a most unexpected and shocking message came from India – Swami Paramananda had left his body! It happened shortly after midnight, the night to Sunday on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, local time. A whole world of friends, followers and admirers are totally dumbfounded. Immediately it feels unreal that we no longer will be able to see and experience him through our physical senses – that we no longer will catch the infection of his wonderful smile and receive his unutterably loving eye – that we no longer will experience his great friendliness, and the enormous harmony and joy it was to be together with him in this way. It is a brutal reminder that everything physical in this world is transitory, and that it is more important to remember him in our hearts and to live out the ideals and truths he showed us.

Swami Paramananda was an unparalleled human being. To try to describe him in words seems almost hopeless. He has meant, and means, so infinitely much for an enormous amount of people – tens and tens of thousands – who all have met him and developed a personal relation with him during his short, but very intense life. To him they have been used to come with their problems, small as well as big; to reveal their innermost confessions; to seek consolation or guidance; and to get initiated into the inner mysteries of life. Or, as it were, only to experience joy and fun. Paramananda had everything and gave everything. With his spontaneous naturalness, simple living, incredible friendliness, sacrificing attitude and infinite wisdom, he won our hearts. We felt that he understood us better than we understood ourselves, and therefore he got our full confidence. He never left us disappointed or deserted. When we were children we needed love, security, protection and care from our parents. After becoming adults and being able to think and decide most things ourselves, we still find that we are mentally immature and have many of the same fundamental needs, while in addition, we want the answers to all our deep most questions. For sincere truth seekers it is therefore only natural to give their confidence to a person who displays far more maturity and experience than they have themselves, if, in the first place, one is so fortunate as to meet such a full and complete human being.



*Paramananda’s bed inside his hut at Shantibu, November 27th 1999. Photo: BP.*

I met Paramananda for the first time at the railway station of Burdwan in Bengal, a day of June in 1983, while he was on one of his regular tours in Bengal and made a change of trains with a couple of hours halt here. He made an indelible impression from the very first moment. Our eyes met as he smiled his incomparable, winning smile, while at the same time he pronounced my name in perfect Norwegian as no other Indian. Like that we sat and smiled to each other for a long while, and I felt that I had met a most heartfelt good friend and that we had always known each other. Only a couple of days earlier I came from a month’s stay with a ‘typical’ guru in North India. He had a spectacular appearance of which he was very conscious, and he was ‘typical’ in the sense that he kept a certain distance to everybody else, with himself highly elevated. He was extremely dominating and manipulating, and kept a severe discipline. To come from him directly to Paramananda was like going from night to day without twilight. The difference was almost total. At that time I was also familiar with certain Indian gurus who had come to the West and given the age-old noble tradition a bad reputation. They lived their lives like emperors with their many subjects in the greatest luxury, and with titles as ‘His Holiness’ and so on. Widely famous, in spite of their dislike for children and hate of poor people. But I stared into the eyes of something which, intuitively and without any doubt, felt genuine and real. All the years later have taught me that I wasn’t wrong at that time.

Swami Paramananda has always been kindness itself. So simple and easy, and so releasingly natural in all situations and relations. Always ready to give himself wholly and fully if anybody was in distress and needed him. He

was extremely dynamic with a powerful energy which apparently seemed inexhaustible. All the highest spiritual ideals, noble religious motives and abstract philosophical thoughts, were made completely practical in his life. With his own example he showed us that these noble ideals really are living and attainable, and not only beautiful words we find in scriptures or distant qualities we are reaching out for. In spite of him having only four years of schooling and never reading books, he was an ocean of wisdom that could hold exhaustive lectures on nearly every kind of subject. He loved children, always took the side of the weak, and was incredibly liberal and understanding at every aspect of being human. Nothing was sin or sinful. He used to say that the only sin was to think about sin. And he never placed himself above others. He clearly said that the highest spiritual goal is immanent in all of us and that anyone can realize it, if only the sincerity is great enough and the intensity in our yearning is strong enough. His advice and guidance were always tailored just for you, in accordance with your nature and liability, and they were always directed towards the process of liberating and not towards making you dependant on him or anything else. Once he said that ‘I have sold myself on the market of life’, and surely we experienced that he could never say ‘no’ to anyone who was in need of him. This total sacrifice was the life of Swami Paramananda in a nutshell.

Already in 1983 he told us that the life span of his body in this life would not exceed the age of 47 years. So those of us who knew him well understood that the time was nearing. Such men as Paramananda never die, they only leave their bodies – consciously. Therefore, except from the purely physical, everything is as before. Live Paramananda!

## Great sorrow in Banagram

Paramananda was a little less than a month short of completing his 45<sup>th</sup> year. Still it was two years earlier than he had intimated to us, so most of us felt he went before his time. Perhaps it also would have been possible for him to do *kayakalpa* in India but, obviously, sometime during the last years, it had become clear to him that he should not live any longer in this life. Exactly when and what was the cause, only he himself knows. At least it was clear to him when he was at Shantibu the year before. But all these things are just as they ought to be, and nothing happens without his own will.

The very circumstances around his death were quite dramatic. One night he suddenly fell ill and fell down on his bathroom floor where he lay until someone found him in the morning. When those nearest to him gradually understood the gravity of his health condition, they wanted to

take him to the hospital. But Paramananda told them that it would be completely futile as the doctors would not have any clue about his illness. However, the others were of the opinion that all of his devotees and followers would never forgive them if they would not do their utmost in such a serious situation. So then Paramananda let them have their way and he surrendered completely to the circumstances. At the hospital in Calcutta his health condition deteriorated rapidly every day, and frequent x-ray photos of his lungs showed a kind of hyper speedy development of inflammation in both his lungs. It was not pneumonia, but a kind of virus the doctors had never seen before and therefore were unable to treat – just as Paramananda had foretold. The last pictures showed fully infected lungs (appearing completely ‘white’ on the x-ray photos), and it must have been very tough, physically speaking. After one week at the hospital he was finally freed.

One week after the death Tripti Ma, Kari Ada and I arrived at Banagram, after procuring tickets from Aeroflot in record time. The cremation had taken place several days before in the Banagram ashram and thousands of



Paramananda's new hut in Banagram ashram as it looked a week after the cremation with a photograph of him exhibited on his bed. Here with brahmacharini Minuti in front. Photo: BP.

people had gathered around the pyre, shouting, lamenting and screaming, almost hysterically, just as Paramananda had seen in his dream which he told us about at Shantibu more than a year before. During the days we were there, people continued pouring into the ashram from all directions. There were several endless rows of people stretching far out into the rice fields, queueing in line all the way to his hut, wanting to kneel down and touch the big photo of him that had been placed on his bed, to pay him their last respects. It was incredible to observe so many people, several tens of thousands, still crying and mourning. When we arrived the car stopped just in front of the office building where Trishan received us at the steps. He was wearing a huge, black shawl over his head, indicating sorrow, and looked almost like a Muslim woman with a burka. I was very surprised to see him like that, and completely taken by surprise to feel the heavy atmosphere hanging over the ashram. That most of his outside followers would react with deep sorrow was only natural and to be expected, but that his very nearest also would react in exactly the same manner, was really astonishing to me. Perhaps I was the only one who didn't shed a single tear in connection with the physical disappearance of Paramananda. That I actually participated very closely in it on the inner plane was probably crucial for how I felt about it. But the fact that I always used to have, and still had, mental contact with him, was of course the most important factor. To me Paramananda was or is in no way dead in the sense of gone!

After embracing each one of us in silence, in a mourning mood, for a long time, Trishan took us inside the room and reported to us about Paramananda's illness and his stay at the hospital, and showed us every x-ray photo

and every hospital test. When all of this was finished he showed us to our rooms in the new guest building at Sadhana Bhavan. All the while I had felt really bad that all of my brothers and sisters there should feel such a heavy sorrow, so I thought that I ought to try to say something that may cheer up their minds a little – something that would wake them up and possibly give a bit of understanding of the situation. So as we were walking up the steps to the second floor I turned to Trishan and said: “You know, Trishan, that according to Vedanta nothing happened.” As if a bomb suddenly blasted Trishan reacted spontaneously with fierce rage and bellowed at me at the top of his voice, that in no way did he want to hear my Vedanta philosophy now! But in the same moment as he had uttered the last word he suddenly realized his error and bowed his head with closed eyes and with his palms together in *pranam*, and a total silence reigned. None of us said anything more. I don't know if he took the point, but at least he had a release of his heavy pressure!

In any case, the next days kept me busy trying to change the minds of my brethren, because it was indeed strange to witness that sannyasins and great yogis complained and lamented, saying that Paramananda had left them and that they had lost everything. “You haven't lost anything,” I pointed out, “you have gained everything!” Little by little I had to remind them about Paramananda's own words, and several then woke up from their illusion and understood, and thanked me. Only Swami Purnananda seemed to be as stolid as myself, and he also shared the same view as me that the ashram work should continue just like before. Also Mihir, Swami Prajñananda, who I met in the Tatwamasi Ashram in Singur later, seemed to be completely composed.



Two pictures taken from the guest house (Sadhana Bhavan) in December 1999; the left taken in the morning, the right late afternoon. This flow of people was constant throughout the day for several days, and this was only one of the entrances (from north) to the ashram. The main south entrance had an equal, if not greater, influx of people throughout the day and people also poured in from east and west. Both photos: BP.



From the cremation of Paramananda's body. The picture to the right shows a section of the enormous mass of people present. Both photos: Unknown photographer.

The last days that Paramananda was alive and for the cremation, Bryan and Shanti were present in the Banagram ashram, and also Ragnhild from Norway, as the only ones from the West. Ragnhild, who then lived in Trondheim, we had first met when she participated at the course at Savalen in 1995.

One of those days someone called me to come to Paramananda's hut. There Tapi Ma and Swapan were waiting for me. *Brahmachari* Swapan had come to Banagram as an orphan child and finished all of his schooling there. And as an adult he had decided to continue living in the ashram and lend his help. All the orphan boys of the ashram of course looked upon Paramananda as their father. So it was kind of a natural choice for Swapan who found a brush and made it his task to sweep and always keep Paramananda's hut in order. He therefore became kind of a 'right hand' to Paramananda, and he always kept close to his hut at any time in case Paramananda wanted something. It was also Swapan who found Paramananda in the morning when he was lying sick on the bathroom floor. Tapi Ma, whose sannyasini name is Pavitra Prana, was one of those who always stayed close to Paramananda whenever he was in the Banagram ashram. She was a native of Banagram village and was very young when Paramananda first came there. From the very beginning all of her family were close friends of Paramananda and it was with them – the Muckerjee family – that he always had his supper whenever he resided in the Banagram ashram. Both of her brothers – Dipti Maharaj and Hari Maharaj – were sannyasins in the ashram, known as Swami Boomananda and Swami Sahajananda respectively, and only her younger sister was married. Also her cousin sister, Reba, and cousin brother, Keshab, were in the ashram, and her uncle Nava Kaka, was a yogi who visited the ashram daily from the village.

Now she had sent for me by messenger to come to Paramananda's hut. There she had Swapan fetch a packet on a shelf high up on the wall, which she gave to me, while explaining that in the summer Paramananda had instructed Swapan to see to it that Bjørn received that packet the next time he came to Banagram. Swapan was quite surprised to

hear that he should give that packet to me and not Paramananda himself, but now, of course, it was all too clear why Paramananda had instructed him thus. From the packet I pulled out a child's sophisticated toy. It was a blue velvet bird which had batteries inside the branch it sat on and which twittered known melodies if you clapped your hands. Every time it had finished singing a melody and you clapped your hands, it started anew with another melody, while all the time nodding its head and wagging its tail! Altogether it had four different melodies. We all had a good laugh, because it was really enjoyable and entertaining, and I spontaneously exclaimed: "Ah, Guruji's last joke with me!" That it was a bird and that it was blue, was really to the point, and that it could even sing I took as a hint. And then, on top of everything, it had a feathered crest on the top of its head as an answer to my bald pate! If Paramananda had received it as a gift himself or he had ordered it especially for me, was unknown, but in any case it was most wonderful to receive a gift from him in these circumstances – post-mortem so to speak – that he thought of me in this way and brought humour to the whole situation. Fantastic!

Tripti Ma and I went back to Norway on December 23<sup>rd</sup> after having been away for three weeks. Kari Ada wished to stay a few days more, so she returned on January 4<sup>th</sup> 2000. She had planned to take the train and Tripti Ma and I were to fetch her from Alvdal railway station. There we waited for a long time until a message came that an accident had happened to the train and it would not be coming. Back in Shantibu we heard the news about the horrible Åsta accident, a few kilometers south of Rena in Østerdalen (on the line passing Alvdal), where two trains on the same line had collided head on and were in flames. Kari Ada was supposed to be on the north-bound train and we didn't know if she was among those people who burned to death inside the two trains, so we experienced some very nerve-racking hours. In all, 19 people were trapped inside the burning wagons and met with a most horrific death. But thank God, Kari Ada's flight from Calcutta had been delayed, so that her whole journey was delayed and she came by bus from Oslo to Alvdal some hours later, arriving safe and sound.

Almost on the first anniversary of Paramananda's death, early in the morning of November 29<sup>th</sup> 2000, I had a very powerful dream about Paramananda. First I saw him dying. Thereafter he came back to life and laid his arm around me, bringing me close to what was happening to see for myself how he actually died. It was a very physical fight in which he struggled hard to have enough air – to breathe – and the whole thing was very different from what I had heard from Trishan and others about the circumstances of his death. We were in a room with other people present. This was the dream, but it was only

many, many years later that I heard from my friend doctor Datta, who was one of very few who had been present, as a doctor, that Paramananda actually had great breathing problems at the end, just like I had seen in my dream, but did not know anything about at the time of my dream. In retrospect I clearly see that Paramananda took the help of my physical body in his moment of death for leaving his body, as my body was healthy and I could sit straight. But, naturally, that was only possible because we were mentally attuned for as long as it lasted.



Banagram ashram had experienced a rapid development during the four years since my last visit in 1995. Top left: View from the new Sadhu Bhavan looking north. The north-east corner of the ashram is open, and Paramananda's hut is situated between the trees to the left, on the other side of the pond. Top right: Sadhu Bhavan, where all the male sannyasins stay (white colour in three floors), with an extension of dining hall and kitchen (partly white in two floors), as seen from the village. Middle: The construction of the new school building form an angle towards south-west. Above: Part of the kitchen (left) and the dining hall (right). All photos: BP

## Separation and disintegration

A very special point at issue which arose immediately after the passing away of Paramananda, was the cause of his death. It was claimed by some that he had been poisoned by a certain female in his inner circle, and that person is still accused by many for this alleged crime more than twenty years later. As early as during the winter of 1984-85 Paramananda himself, at the Mukherjee family house in the Banagram village, said that at a certain point in his future he would be poisoned by a woman who was very close to him, and which would be the cause his death.

I was together with Sobbo in the village that night when Paramananda predicted this, and as Paramananda had spoken in Bengali, Sobbo translated it to me afterwards. A clearly upset Sobbo told me everything on the way back to the ashram. Reflecting on this he sighed deeply that this had to happen but at the same time expressed relief that at least it would not be any of us men who would be doing it. There were also many others present that night so that Paramananda's prediction of the circumstances of his own death should not be unknown. And, of course, it means that it has happened according to his own knowledge and will, so why then *accuse* anybody about this? Just think about poor Judas who had to suffer for two thousand years for having betrayed Jesus – accused by the whole of the Christian world. It is only lately that scientific research on the New Testament of the Bible has revealed that everything points to the fact that that incident was being staged by Jesus himself – that Judas had received instructions from Jesus to do exactly as he did and that it was therefore no betrayal. The other disciples, who did not know about this instruction from Jesus to Judas, misunderstood the whole thing, and so to posterity, it has become known as a betrayal.

This explanation is the only likely one, and Paramananda had told it to us already in 1989-90 at Shantibu and in Italy, more than 20 years before science discovered it. Interestingly enough, that same winter of 1984-85, I was introduced to Achut Barua, the elder brother of the homoeopath and acupuncturist, Dr. Vidut Barua, who came with us to South India in 1985. Achut was a family man and a close friend of Paramananda from before his sannyas life. He was a very smiling and lovable person who was extremely kind, self-sacrificing, humble and modest, almost a little bit shy. He came with Asgeir, Glenn and me on our pre-winter of 1984 tour with Paramananda in Bengal, as mentioned earlier. The thing about this man, Achut, in this life, is that “everybody” knew him as the same identity as Judas of the Bible!

So those who held that Paramananda was *murdered* by poisoning should think again and learn from history. Because it is not necessary to let this history repeat itself, as we have the full liberty now of interpreting the events differently.

There had always been a most wonderful atmosphere in the Banagram ashram, with an enormous positivity and enthusiasm among all who lived there. Paramananda supported all in their aspirations and gave full freedom to each and every one. He showed full confidence in them and thereby made them to yield their very best. There were no rules or regulations about how life should be lived in the ashram – that was not at all necessary – and there was never in any way any dictator in the ashram. Deeply inspired all were always full of self-sacrifice, and in front of their own eyes they always saw a man whose thoughts, speech, life and deeds were one and the same. Great doctors from Calcutta used to visit the ashram's hospital at weekends to work for free, because they felt such joy to be able to help others in need without the aspect of money involved. Everyone did great work with the greatest joy, without any thought for themselves. As long as Paramananda was physically alive, he was the natural and unifying centre uniting all and was the all-fulfilling source – who everyone sought after and felt harmony with, and who satisfied all. It was he who kept all the various natures and different personalities united. But as soon as his physical presence was gone, things fell apart, and conflicts and trouble in paradise arose. Just like what happens in almost every good family when the parents die and the inheritance is being divided among the children. It is almost like a law of nature.

Paramananda wished to prepare me for this, which was inevitably going to happen, the last time he was in Norway. So one day in 1998, as the two of us were standing together in the yard of Shantibu, he suddenly started to talk to me about Trishan – something that he otherwise never did. Once, many years back in Banagram, in the presence of many others, I heard Paramananda say many complimentary words about Trishan – that he was the greatest worker in the whole world and that nobody could sacrifice himself for others with such a great capacity. And those were words that most of us could endorse. All could see the enormous work he did for the Banagram ashram over the years – always on the move to or from Calcutta or other places, to arrange for and to organize all things. He was always the last one to take rest at night and the first one to rise in the morning after perhaps only four hours of sleep. Always ready to help others, and always at hand and at Paramananda's side if he was going somewhere or for anything else that required his organizational skills. Trishan oozed authority even from afar, and the common villagers used to be a bit afraid of him as he could be quite authoritarian in

his behaviour at times. His self-confidence seemed to be unlimited, and he was extremely conscious of his own proficiencies and position. So to him, it seemed like the most natural thing in the world to dominate others, just like a *dada* (big brother) is expected to do in India. But he was always extremely efficient and got things done, and never gave up on anything.

Now Paramananda talked to me about Trishan in a way that surprised me – as if he *excused* him. It was clear that Paramananda, with very carefully chosen words, tried to hint at something about Trishan's various weaknesses and basic nature. It was quite astonishing. However, he didn't want me to be in doubt of the most essential, so in the end he added: “You and Trishan are the same.” This statement felt surprising at that moment, but not incomprehensible on account of all the many special utterances about me from him earlier on. But only many years later did I understand why he suddenly started to talk to me about this, and what he wanted to prepare me for regarding Trishan, when it had become clear to all what a big source of worry and frustration Trishan had become as a self-declared, despotic ruler of the Paramananda Mission after the demise of Paramananda.



At Shantibu that last summer Paramananda had also talked to us, as he had in India, about the continuation of the *guruparampara* after him, i.e. who would perform the initiations after him in the Banagram ashram. It would be Murari (Swami Nishkamananda); Hari (Swami Sahajananda); and Nava Kaka from the village. Not a word about Trishan who was not mentioned at all in this connection. We already knew that Trishan was not among the 64 gurus of Paramananda, but belonged to the circle of six organizers in the so-called ‘Paramananda Mandala’. (Some years earlier Paramananda had told us about a kind of organizing of his disciples, friends and supporters, which consisted of seven concentric circles of increasing numbers with him at the centre. After a while these circles were illustrated, given colours and a form like a kind of mandala).

To this day, to those of our Indian friends who approach me when I am in India and ask me why things have turned out the way they have and if it will ever end, I say: “Trishan is in his present role because you in your passivity have allowed it. Paramananda wants *everyone* to be active – not only Trishan.”

*Saurabh Pundhir, also known as Swami Vividishananda, and the author in Banagram ashram, December 1999.*

*Saurabh had a project recording video interviews with many of those nearest to Paramananda about their lives with him.*

*Below: Recording in the garden outside Paramananda's hut with Tripti Ma among others present.*

*This was the first time I wore the alpi (kirtle), having dyed it blue, that Paramananda had made for me before our departure for Norway more than ten years earlier.*

*Photographer unknown.*



## Paramananda's last lesson

Everything happened afterwards in Banagram just like Paramananda had shown me in that vision at Shantibu immediately before he left his physical body. So in contrast to most others I have never been surprised about what has happened there. Everything is natural and in a way unavoidable – that is how it always happens both in nature and in human societies – *but still it is not acceptable and not how we want it to be*. Therefore it is possible to do something about it, and that always depends on ourselves. We cannot sit passively and just wait for Paramananda to intervene from beyond on our behalf, while at the same time we only lament and complain about all things. ***That somebody takes the responsibility of improving things is how things develop and actually become better in this world.***

Paramananda's physical demise was his last great lesson to us all! By that, with all clarity, he showed us the essence of the Vedantic truths; how life is connected and the chain of causation with the eternal, spiritual first, via the mental and then the physical as the very last, temporal end product; that spirituality means knowledge of Atman, as the one and only Reality which is unchangeable and always existing, on which everything else depends and is the most important of all in life always. His whole life and teaching in the greatest love and humanity was completely rooted and anchored in this, and by his physical disappearance he proved it. Because then there was nothing physical left that we could lean on, or make ourselves dependent on, but instead we have to stand upright on our own feet, depending on our own spiritual power, which, of course, is the same as Paramananda's spiritual power, anyway!

There is an Indian proverb that says that “the guru never dies”, so why then should anyone think the opposite?

When I reminded my brethren in Banagram about the dream about his own death that Paramananda had told us about, in which he only observed the whole thing and laughed, and which also they themselves had heard from his own mouth – they finally understood and came out of their temporal emotional blindness.

When Sarada Ma cried after the death of Ramakrishna, he revealed himself to her and said: “Why are you crying? I haven't gone anywhere! I am only in the next room so that you cannot see me, but I am here all the same!” (Free translation).

From that day toward the end of the 1980s when I tuned myself to the mental communication with Paramananda, I have never felt any break or change in this communication up to this day – if he has a physical body or not makes absolutely no difference. That is why I said to Trishan that “according to Vedanta nothing happened”. From the spiritual perspective it does not make any difference, that is for sure – if it isn't like that, then the spiritual has no meaning, then all the spiritual truths are valueless! That is because the physical entirely depends on the spiritual, while on the other hand the spiritual surely does not depend on anything physical – also proved by Paramananda at his physical demise.

In Banagram, where on a daily basis all were used to seeing and hearing and relating to the physical body of Paramananda, they got completely blinded by their own senses and then out of their minds when that body suddenly was no more. They had made themselves completely dependent on his physical body. That was the tragic fact that afterwards unfortunately changed many people's attitude and lifestyle dramatically. But the ashram's orphanage and school continues and expands, and literature of and about Paramananda flourishes. Luckily he has written something himself this time, in contrast to many of the earlier great incarnations. And in addition there are numerous records from various *satsangas* with him, together with personal memories and notes.



*The site of the cremation of Paramananda's body where some of the ashes from the fire were left. Behind, to the left, the eastern end of Sadhana Bhavan (guest house) is seen.  
Photo: BP, December 1999.*



*Paramananda's new hut, which he could only use for little more than a year. Behind it is seen the new addition to the guest house.  
Photo: BP, December 1999.*



*Mihir (Swami Prajñananda) and Bjørn in Tattwamasi ashram in Singur, December 1999.  
Photo: Swami Purnananda.*



*Inside Paramananda's hut at Shantibu, November 27th 1999.  
Photo: BP.*

## GLOSSARY (simplified)

**ananda** – bliss, joy (divine).

**brahmachari** – male performer of *brahmacharya*.

**brahmacharini** – female performer of *brahmacharya*.

**brahmacharya** – apprenticeship (period of training), or the first of four stages in a Hindu's life; self-discipline, especially in relation to sexuality.

**dada** – elder brother.

**guruparampara** – the unbroken line of initiation from guru to sishya (disciple).

**kayakalpa** – yogic science which renews and prolongs the cycle of the physical body.

**kundalini** – 'coiled up'; the central, 'serpent-like', power in man which is the cause of the development of the human body (through the serpent-like spinal cord) by its descent from the crown of the head through the *sushumna* by the spinal cord, and which remains 'sleeping' (and coiled up) at the tip of the tail bone after the completion of the body, and performs (passively) all the autonomous physical body functions from there, but which ascends (actively) through the *sushumna* again following the spinal cord back to the starting point at the crown of the head if, or when, the individual has a spiritual awakening; basis for all physical and mental life in the human being, or the substratum of all bodily and mental energy. See *sushumna*.

**pranam** – respectful greeting, found in various forms and variations.

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

**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; governs both *ida* and *pingala*, the meridians on the left and the right part of the body, respectively, in connection to the physical body's nervous system. See *kundalini*.

Continuation follows in the next number next week.