



The Mt. Tron Mail

SPECIAL EDITION No. 34

Week 8 * Mt. Tron University of Peace Foundation * 2022



Paramananda and Bjørn, Ljan, Oslo, Norway, autumn 1993. Photo: Knud Larsen.

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

DEDUCTION

The Purpose of Life

There are those people who will hold that as a human being we are already “enlightened”, and if we only can understand that and feel that, we are eternally free. Then there are some more radical people who refuse to accept any notion of “we”. For them there is no “I” and “you”, and no individual being – only one Being or simply “what is” – and there is actually no meaning to life at all, life just happens more or less haphazardly. For all of them it is very easy to say that all is but a dream and nothing ever existed. Therefore there is nothing to do with regard to spirituality and realization – just go with the flow. This quick-fix is very popular these days, because you can just convince yourself that you are “as enlightened as the Buddha himself”, so there is no problem!

However, this results from a very serious misconception. In essence we are certainly full and complete, unbound and ever free – absolutely, and there should be no doubt about it – but *how* do we *know* that? That is the question! And to get the answer to that question we certainly have to *do* something as an individual. It is not at all enough just to understand intellectually or to convince oneself, or to feel it or in some way experience it within one’s mental sphere. If we are already enlightened, then why

do we have the confusion and ignorance that we are not? And why are we manifested as individual beings with physical and mental life if that is only a meaningless illusion? This seeming duality and plurality of manifested life with body and mind is not our enemy. It is not the product of a mad Creator or of a God who has made a big mistake. ¹⁾

These people who hold and advocate this grave misconception do not accept the law of karma and reincarnation, nor the existence of evolution and everything else, and in reality discard all teachings from Krishna via Buddha to Ramakrishna, and all the Rishis from Valmiki to Vivekananda and Osho, dismissing all by saying there is only Being and nothing else. If we perceive anything else it is only illusory dream, that we should discard immediately as false. They are actually denying their own life and existence. So why are they so eager to have their voices heard? When one realizes THAT one becomes mute – one does not proclaim it to the world. Do they think that they speak from the Absolute? That is a complete impossibility! They can certainly only speak from the dual reality in which they live and are active. They try very hard to find words for the wordless and to explain the inexplicable, but completely in vain, because they do not realize that every word they utter is by nature dual and that everything about them necessarily must be dual.



Quaker (*Neopithecopszalmora*). Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 14.12.2011. Photo: BP.



Oriental Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 22.12.2014. Photo: BP.

The reality of The Absolute cannot be understood or expressed as it is beyond mind and understanding – it can only be realized. So what is the use of trying to explain it? Remember, the Buddha completely refused to engage in discussion of philosophy for very good reasons. He did not explain Nirvana. He only said: “Follow this truthful, middle, eight-fold path and practice, practice, practice – and then you will see for yourself”. But perhaps now we think we know so much better? After all, the Buddha was just another enlightened being and now there are so many of us, right?

Of course, from the standpoint of The Absolute this life may appear like a dream. It is just like when we dream during sleep every night. The dream is then our reality because we do not presently know anything else – not until we wake from our sleep. When we are dreaming we do not know or are not at all aware that we are dreaming. Instead, what we see and hear and experience in the dream-world is our sole reality. We have no feeling or idea of a three dimensional world of physical sensations and we do not know at all that our experiences are only mental on a sub-conscious level. Not until we suddenly wake up to the waking state of mind and the waking consciousness. Only then do we realize that the other reality was “just” a dream and we immediately discard it as unreal. In much the same manner, in *turiya*, when our mind has been made passive and transcended, we realize that also this world – this entire Cosmos of time and space and physical elements, and all of manifested life – is only a far distant dream which does not actually exist or have an existence of its own.

So, yes, it is absolutely correct. But I can only realize this and understand this and speak about this from the standpoint of the “waking dream-world”, after coming back to it from *turiya* – after regaining my mind and senses! So we shall have to accept the full consequence of this kind of “dream-reality” and not pretend that it is something else or that it does not really exist. And for realizing this we certainly have to do something – actively as an individual with our spirit, mind and body – to overcome our ignorance and become completely fulfilled and free – to live unity in diversity. That is the whole meaning. Because only by this self-effort or self-sacrifice can we be able to feel the bliss of existence. Without duality and individual life it is not possible.

As we find ourselves as human individuals, living in this world, having ego, mind and body, we need to fully accept our experienced reality and to learn about it. Who will like to live if there is no meaning to life? This life is actually extremely valuable! Life always wishes to live and certainly wants to enjoy itself and there is nothing wrong about it! And manifested life most certainly has time – past, present and future – and it has a purpose and meaning and evolution. Nothing happens by chance – there is cause and effect and the law of karma and reincarnation. There are so many things that we need to know and that we need to do, because we need to be active. We have got this body and mind for a purpose, and that purpose is to realize “our” Self *in the world*. Because we can only know the Self *through* our body and mind *in* this life – without this manifested life it is impossible. And we can only savour the bliss of existence with mind and body in life.



Purple-rumped Sunbird (*Nectarinia zeylonica*), Banagram ashram, Burdwan, West-Bengal, India, 01.02.2013. Next page, top: 30.01.2013. Both photos: BP.

So this “dream” is not so bad after all! There is nothing wrong about this manifestation and life! ²⁾ The only illusion (*maya*) is our wrong identification, which we are constantly making ourselves by project and attachment, and only we, ourselves, are responsible for that.

Let it be perfectly clear, then, that **The Absolute** or **Ultimate Reality** is a singularity *with two aspects* (just like the two sides of a single coin); **static** (*shiva*) and **dynamic** (*shakti*). As we are born with individual bodies and minds in a completely dynamic world, and our deep sleep is fully unconscious, we have become overwhelmed and deluded by the dynamic, and therefore obtained a wrong identification with the transitory individual reality. So in order to restore the right identification we need to *realize the static aspect of our being*, which is the very foundation and prerequisite of our dynamic life, through and beyond all of the dynamic. This is fundamentally and usually a natural, spiritual growth and process in which the mind eventually becomes pure and completely passive. Only then it is possible to fully realize the static aspect of the Absolute through another level of consciousness called *turiya* or *nirvikalpa samadhi*, which is also called Self-Realization (*Atmajñana*) or God-Realization (*Brahmajñana*), and only then will it be permanent with no more confusion of identity, because then you are *fully becoming That* (i.e. physically, mentally and spiritually you have become completely static).

Certainly, we can be aware at any time of our passive, witnessing Self (*sakshin*) through the temporary stillness of our mind, because the Self is always there, perfectly passive and witnessing everything. And that is why we are learning to only observe our mind during meditation, so that gradually we will be more and more aware of the observer rather than the object observed or the process of observation, which is exactly the purpose of meditation. The activity of dynamism is not at all possible without the permanent presence of the perfectly static, on which the dynamic fully depends. Therefore, as a matter of course, the static is always there and can be *felt at any time*. But that does not mean that we are “enlightened” or “realized” only because we can be aware of the Witness (*sakshin*) through a temporary stillness of the mind, even if that may feel like ‘Perfect Silence’ or ‘Peace’ or ‘Emptiness’ or only ‘Pure Awareness’ in the ‘Eternal Now’. Unfortunately, many seem to think like this these days. The Witness can be *felt* in this way, yes, but not *realized*. The realization of the Witness can only happen by a perfectly passive mind (as described above) – “stillness of mind” is still an *active mind*, even if it doesn’t feel like that, and all those attributes we are giving to that “stillness”, even if we say it is only ‘Pure Awareness’ or ‘Pure Being’, are felt and understood by the mind only.

Paramananda once told me: “I see only consciousness, but with consciousness is also ignorance.” Therefore we

need a good conception to have perception, and we need an art of life and living to take us to the goal – to the fulfilment of life – the journey of Love towards Perfection. Remember that Paramananda’s guru, Ramananda Avaduth (in the chapter “Paramananda’s Genesis and Life History”), advised him to just find a cave in the Himalayas and live in secluded meditation on *Advaita Vedanta*. If that is the only thing to do in life, then why do we have life? All the ‘trouble’ of manifesting the universe would not have been necessary then. Only after my own experience with *turiya* (in the chapter “Guru Kripa”) did Paramananda teach me about *baul* and told me to practice *baul sadhana*.

This illustrates his teaching (see the chapter “Essential Teaching”) that in *nirvikalpa samadhi* or *turiya* we are experiencing the **static aspect of Brahman**, and that after this realization it is necessary to see this in the **dynamic aspect of Brahman** as well, which is this manifested world. We need to experience the **ULTIMATE REALITY** that **the static becomes the dynamic and the dynamic becomes the static** - *that they are one and the same and that there is, in reality, no difference*. Only then is our realization complete and we can enjoy this life freely and spontaneously with ecstasy and Supreme Joy as the *Sahaja Manusha* or ‘Natural Human’! This is our natural state of being and living in this world, which is awareness or knowledge of That *while* living and acting in this world (i.e. with active body and mind), but without any identity-crisis with the mind and ego.



When one experiences both the dynamic and the static aspects of The Absolute simultaneously one experiences the ecstasy of *rasa* as the dynamic aspect is all Love and the static aspect is all Wisdom. This, then, is the Divine Play or Universal Ecstasy or Union of the Static and the Dynamic, which is the condition of the Natural Human or how we are meant to live our lives in this world (our potentiality and destiny). This is the Eternal Bliss that all humans are seeking, consciously or unconsciously, and God’s purpose with this Creation.



Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 18.11.2008. Photo: BP.

EPILOGUE

Dear Reader,

As you have been reading this book the way the various chapters and sections have been arranged will have no doubt become apparent. The “Induction” introduces, in six chapters, some selected events of my early life leading to my meeting with Paramananda. Then follows the main bulk of the book which is the description and representation of my experiences with Paramananda together with my own *sadhana*, all in chronological order and arranged in six sections containing nine chapters each. A total of 60 chapters.

After this comes the “Deduction”, which is kind of a ‘deductive’ result or summing up of my personal quest for truth, based on my practical experiences and the insights they have brought (quite distinctly mine and by no means something that I have read in books or taken from anywhere else). I want the reader to understand that the way these views have been presented is my responsibility only and that they should not be taken as any direct teaching of Paramananda. They represent my personal understanding and perception, and are divided into seven chapters – the first six chapters represent a building of proper conceptions for our times, while the seventh and last chapter represents something of my own realization. I hope the Deduction will answer many questions of the reader which may have been building up during the reading of the book.

At the very end I have included a rich “Glossary” of mainly Sanskrit words used throughout the book. Their use has been necessary for various reasons. First, as much of the time described was spent in India in ashrams among sadhus and yogis, those words became commonplace expressions and therefore relate in an essential way to the ‘atmosphere’ I experienced there (many of these words were new to me then). Second, many of them represent such pinpoint accuracy as ‘technical terms’ for the process of *sadhana* and philosophical conceptions that they simply cannot be omitted from a book like this; and last, exactly for this reason I deliberately want to use them so that they may become commonplace also among Western readers and thus heighten the understanding of spiritual terms here in the West. Of course, among most serious seekers in the West the majority of these words and terms are already known, even if they are not always used very correctly or properly understood. It is my hope that this Glossary can contribute to rectifying that.

Then there is an “Appendix” about the “Mt. Tron University of Peace” with its fundamental “Art of Life and Living” course, which really represents **the true spiritual heritage of Paramananda**. It contains not only a teaching but a very easy, concrete, and practical method for all to apply, irrespective of gender, age, race, place, affinity or belief, as it is universally human.

From my personal standpoint this entire book is my contribution and my testament to the world. If, by reading this book, my fellow human beings will feel love, hope and inspiration I shall know that I have not been writing in vain. And if, in addition, they will feel an urge to know more about Paramananda or feel familiarity with him in their hearts, then I shall know that my work has succeeded and with the deepest gratitude I shall be rejoicing with you!

May your life be good and true and reach its fulfilment!

Bjorn.



Bjorn and Paramananda, Shantibu, Norway, summer 1995. Photo: Tripti Ma.



Black-hooded Oriole (Oriolus xanthornus), Henry Island, Sundarbans, West-Bengal, India, 01.12.2014. Photo: BP.

FOOTNOTES

1) If a modern Western Advaita Vedantin or non-dualist is asked a question by a truth-seeker in which his “I” is included, he is immediately cut short, like this:

- What can I do to develop spiritually and become enlightened?

- The question is an oxymoron because there is in reality no ‘you’, which is a false concept of an illusory mind, and it’s not possible because enlightenment is already there.

What nonsense! If there is no ‘you’, then who is giving the answer – who is giving the advice? Is it supposed to be God or Awareness or Absolute Being? As long as body and mind are working there will always be an “I” and a “you”. Awareness can only be aware of Itself because of the “you” – of the individual being with physical body and mind. We only know about awareness and consciousness because we are manifested through the pancha koshas. Consciousness or Awareness does not know it is Consciousness or Awareness – only we know that, through our mind and individual manifestation.

The same goes for the almost contemptuous dismissal of the mind in the concept of “illusory mind”. If the mind is illusory then how can they think that they can speak anything that is of Truth? Or speak at all? Because we can only think and speak by the power of mind. The very concept of Vedanta itself, by which they have been heavily influenced – and, in fact, the very influence itself – is only possible by mind. Thinking and speaking is only possible thanks to mind.

So the mind itself is certainly not illusory – only our wrong identification with it – that is the only illusion!

Truth cannot be explained! It is completely futile to try to explain the Ultimate Reality. It is really impossible and can only cause lots of confusion. It can only be realized.

2) This is a mantra (hymn) from the Atharva Veda:

**Om purnamada purnamidam purnat purnamudachayate;
Purnasaya purnamadaya purnamevavasisyate.**

“That is full, this is full”

The Absolute is full, and all the creations that evolve from the Absolute are also full; because un-fullness never emerges from fullness; fullness emerges from fullness. Untruth never comes from truth – truth always begets truth. So truth realizes truth, and the remainder is also truth. Under this condition there is no chance of untruth.

(As explained by Swami Paramananda)

GLOSSARY (simplified)

advaita – non-duality; sole; the most well-known concept (or school) of *Vedanta*. See *Vedanta*.

ashram – spiritual centre or community mainly for *brahmacharis* and *sannyasins*.

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.

Brahmajñāna – ‘knowledge of *Brahman*’; God-Realization.

Brahman – ‘The Absolute’; ‘Absolute Consciousness’; ‘God’.

guru – ‘from darkness to light’; spiritual guide who dispels ignorance and confers wisdom.

manusha – ‘man’ or ‘the human being’, or actually ‘the self-conscious, humanitarian human’.

jivatman –

maya – “illusion”; the world; the seeming duality and manifold; impermanence, transience.

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*.

pancha koshas – ‘the five sheaths’ that envelope the *jivatman* (from inner to outer): *anandamayakosha* or the sheath of bliss (identity, ego, *chitta*); *vijñānamayakosha* or the sheath of higher mind (thoughts, intellect, understanding); *manomayakosha* or the sheath of lower mind (feelings, will, superiority/inferiority complex); *pranamayakosha* or the sheath of energy (ten *indriyas* or senses, ten *pranas* or vital forces); *annamayakosha* or the physical body (blood, bone, flesh). See *jivatman*.

rasa – ‘juice’, ‘essence’, ‘elixir’; the most intense and ecstatic form of pleasure or bliss in life.

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.

sadhu – a person who performs *sadhana*; respected and revered, wandering holy man or woman in India. See *sadhana*.

sahaja manusha – natural human, with the right identity and without any confusion. See *manusha*.

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, yoga*.

Shakti – ‘power’, ‘energy’; the dynamic aspect of the Absolute; the female principle; the counterpart of *Shiva*. See *Shiva*.

Shiva – ‘in which everything rests’; the static aspect of the Absolute; the male principle; *Shakti*’s counterpart; the “king of the yogis” and the origin of all yoga (i.e. the first yogi). See *Shakti*.

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 *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

veda – ‘knowledge’ or ‘Divine Wisdom’; denoting the oldest scriptures of the Hindus, consisting of four books – *Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Veda and Atharva-Veda* – written in Sanskrit, and which have formed the basis for all later literature of India; traditionally transmitted orally by recitation of words, melody and rhythm, only very late in prehistoric time were they written down, i.e. reduced to text. See *vedanta*.

vedanta – ‘where the wisdom ends’ or ‘the end of the *Vedas*’, i.e. the complete knowledge of the *Vedas*; the philosophical part of the *Vedas*, which represents the very essence of the *Vedas* and of Indian thinking, which deals with the inquiry into the nature of the Absolute; the last of the six major philosophical systems of India. See *advaita, veda, vedantin*.

vedantin – a practitioner of *Vedanta*. See *vedanta*.

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 *Astanga 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*.



Common Rose (Atrophaneura aristotolochiae), Satavisha, Azim Ganj, Murshidabad, West-Bengal, India, 14.03.2014. Photo: BP.

An ‘Appendix’ follows in the final issue next week.