Yatra with the Master

Gangotri Yatra
~ Bela Mahendru

With a flutter in the heart and much anticipation we embarked on the journey to Gangotri and Gaumukh. We had no idea what to expect in the coming few days, yet the whole existence appeared to be rejoicing. There was every reason for us to be overjoyed. After all, it was no ordinary thing that we had been allowed by our most revered Master, Sri M and his wife, respected Sunanda Ji, to join them for this epic “Yatra”.

We have always felt a unique peace and joy in the lap of nature. These feelings were multiplied many folds because of the resonating love for Himalayas and the Holy river that Sir and Sunanda Ji exhibited. The drive along the upper Ganga canal up to Haridwar was also very pleasant and heralded the wonderful days ahead. We started feeling a high as we gained height after leaving Haridwar for Uttarkashi. The green cover of the mountains, the gushing water of Ganga and many a waterfalls on the way took our breath away.

After resting for the night in Punjab & Sind Kshetra, an old Ashram on the banks of Ganga, we left for Gangotri early in the morning. The narrow road wound its way to greater heights and the beauty and the grandeur of the peaks became more and more overwhelming. The coniferous forests provided a great contrast to the shiny snow covered peaks peaking through the mountains. After surmounting a big traffic jam (which became worse later during the day), we reached the quaint little town of Gangotri which centers around the ancient temple of Maa Ganga (dated back to 18th century) on the banks of river Bhagirathi, at a height of almost 3000 meters.

The river makes lovely music gliding over small rocks and meandering around the big ones. The chill in the wind, the freshness in the air, the blue of the sky, the innocence of the local people and the faith in the eyes...
Q & A

Two questions from Orchha
Retreat, 8th October 2003

Sri M: Yesterday at the end of the satsang, Mrs. S asked a question. That question was, ‘What is Anāhata Nāda?’ And I said, Anāhata Dhwani. Same thing. Or, Anāhata Śādā. They all mean the same.

In its practical sense, it is said and it is also experienced by yogis when they go into deep state of meditation, especially in the Ajānā Chakra or in the Hrdāyā Chakra.

As you go nearer to that, the lights begin to appear first - the Ārati. And then, you begin to hear the sounds - the gongs, the bell, everything. Until they all stop in the end and you are merged completely in the deity. This Śādā, which comes without external interference, is known as the Anāhata Śādā. Or Anāhata Dhwani. Or Anāhata Nāda.

In reference to Ājñā Drishti, in fact you find a very veiled mention of it even in the Bible. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus suddenly says, ‘Therefore if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.’

In reference to Ājñā Drishti, when you go into a deep state of meditation, you begin to meditate, especially on the Ājñā Chakra, first you begin to see some lights. And as one goes deeper and deeper into that, one begins to hear sounds. These sounds are not the sounds of the outside world. They are not sounds produced by the outside world. So therefore, they must be sounds internal. Now these sounds are not produced by striking one object against the other. They are like a hukum or a drum, which produces a beautiful sound. This Śādā, which comes without external interference, is known as the Anāhata Śādā. Or Anāhata Dhwani. Or Anāhata Nāda.

And in the deeper state of meditation, you hear a range of sounds. It depends on the person, what kind of sound comes. But it can start first with the sound of crickets at night - Chim Chim Chim. Or it can start with the sounds like anklets - Gring Gring. There are people who hear the sound of the flute being played - Bansri. Or you can hear the sound of drums - distant drums. Or the blowing of the conch. You can also hear the sound of a beautiful Veena being played somewhere. Actually these are all sounds. Real sounds coming from somewhere. But they are not from this world. So therefore, the acid test to find out if in meditation you are really hearing this sound, is to plug your ears. Other wise, you may hear, distantly, somebody playing on loudspeaker, ’meethi meethi baton saay...’ and you may think you are hearing it inside.

Q: What is meant by Mokṣa?

Sri M: Mokṣa means to be totally free, to be completely happy, without depending on anything in the outside world. This is mokṣa - not being caught by any desire. Therefore, naturally, the corollary to it is, since you are not interested or not caught by anything in this world, it does not mean you don’t eat or you don’t drink or you don’t go anywhere. That is not the meaning. You may have something, but if it goes away, that is ok with you. This is Mokṣa. In this state there is no conflict in the mind. Therefore, the corollary to it is, since you are not attached to anything in the world, you won’t come back. That is what it means.

The other thing is, there is also the concept where great saints sometimes come back after they have attained total freedom. They come back, this is if you believe in rebirth. I do. I can’t prove it to you, but for me, it is a truth. When they come back, they come back voluntarily. They are not coming back because of any desire pulling them or any unfulfilled desire. They come back with a Śukṣma Sārīra, with a fine body, which afterwards has to get into a physical body, through the womb. They come back, knowing fully well, that to be born on this earth, is to have a physical body, have disease, have suffering, have sorrow, have everything.

Even the birth of a child is quite sorrowful. It is a tough thing to be pushed out of the womb, with your heart coming out. That itself is quite tough. Knowing all this, one voluntarily comes, with the intention, that, ‘since I have seen something wonderful, why can’t I take some more people with me. Lead them on, towards this. Does not matter what is happening to me.’ That can come only when one’s mind is on a highly spiritual level, where one is not afraid of suffering for somebody’s sake. So this is where the whole concept of compassion is.

In the Mahāyāna system, there is the concept of Bodhisattva, which is borrowed from the Indian system of some yogis coming back to help. They call it Bodhisattva. The person has almost reached nirvana - that means he has not yet reached. He knows he can reach nirvana. His one foot is there. The other foot is in the world. And he says, ‘Let me come back.’ This is the vow of the Bodhisattva, which says, ‘Out of the innumerable people in this world attain nirvana, may I come again and again and help them towards it, no matter how much the body suffers.’ This is...
Jewel in the Lotus’s Spanish Edition Release by Sri M

Report by Federico Grandi

Last August, the Spanish translation of “Jewel in the Lotus: deeper aspects of Hinduism” (Joya en el Loto: Aspectos más profundos del Hinduismo) was released by Sri M in Argentina and Chile.

Spanish readers from all over the world now have access to the Spanish version of Sri M’s book “Jewel in the Lotus: deeper aspects of Hinduism” (Joya en el Loto: Aspectos más profundos del Hinduismo) through www.joyaenelloto.com. The book was released by Sri M in Argentina and Chile in August this year.

Sri M’s Latin American tour started in Buenos Aires. The book was first released in the Escuela de Estudios Orientales (School of Oriental Studies) of the Universidad del Salvador, a very prestigious University of Jesuit origin. The event had the support of the Embassy of India in Buenos Aires. More than one hundred people attended the presentation, which started with a sitar concert by a very talented local musician.

The Director of the School stressed on the open-mindedness of its founder, Reverend Father Ismael Quiles, a very prestigious scholar whose curiosity led him to enquire deeply into eastern philosophies, religions and thought and later started the school, the only one of its kind in Latin America. With that spirit of curiosity and enquiry, the school welcomed Sri M. The Director of the school and the audience were very excited to learn Sri M had studied in a Jesuit school back in Kerala. A very lively audience, mix of young students, professors and people from outside the academic circle interested in these matters, followed with deep interest and attention Sri M’s speech. He focused on explaining the meaning of the title of his book, Jewel in the Lotus, and explained, in a nutshell, the essential and deeper aspects of Hinduism and the spiritual search.

The second part of the tour took place in Chile, with three functions: Santiago, Valparaíso and Isla Negra. The events in Chile were organized and supported by the Embassy of India in Chile, H.E. Pradeep K. Kapur, Ambassador of India in Chile, who wrote the foreword to the Spanish version of the book and his wife, Ms Kavita Kapur, provided an outstanding support that was key for the success of the book release in Chile.

The event in Santiago took place in the auditorium of a beautiful Café Literario (“Literary Coffee Shop”), a mix of a coffee shop, a library, a bookshop and a cultural center located in a wonderful park. The audience, more than one hundred people, was a mix of ambassadors and diplomats, public administrators, yoga teachers and practitioners, and curious people from different walks of life. The introductory speech and official book release was done by the Major of Providencia, an avid speaker and a prestigious politician. Major of the Municipality were the Embassy of India is located. H.E. Pradeep K. Kapur followed with an overview of Hinduism and the spiritual quest and an introduction of Sri M and Federico Grandi, translator of the book and interpreter of Sri M during his Latin American tour. Sri M gave an outstanding speech, focusing on the deeper aspects of Hinduism and the search for our true identity. The program ended with a very lively Indian cultural program and a tasty Indian dinner.

In Valparaíso the event was hosted in the School of International Business Studies of the Universidad de Valparaíso. The auditorium was packed with more than one hundred and twenty students, professors and University authorities. The school Director stressed on the importance for International Business Students to understand the philosophies and thought of different cultures of the world, in particular of India, one of the most important emerging markets and economies. The young minds were thrilled at the approach of Sri M to philosophy and spirituality. Professors confessed that they had hardly seen the students so absorbed in the event.
in a conference. The event ended with a very lively questions and answers session, with questions that ranged from the relevance of a vegetarian diet to the compatibility of business and spirituality, to mention just a few. Students cheered in excitement when a copy of Joya en el Loto was donated to the University’s library.

Isla Negra, a beautiful spot on the Pacific Ocean, was the perfect setting to close the Latin American tour for the release of Joya en el Loto. The event was hosted in the headquarters of the Fundación Pablo Neruda, located in one of the houses of the famous Nobel Laureate Chilean poet. This is the place were the mortal remains of Neruda and his wife rest, facing his beloved sea. The house has been turned into a museum and reflects the poet’s fascination with the ocean, with big windows overlooking the Pacific waves as they break on the rocky shore. Wooden floors that make sound as you walk through narrow passages, combined with low roof doors, the sound of the ocean and a kind of decoration proper of a sailboat makes you feel for an instant you are sailing across the sea in a beautiful and immense wooden ship. The President of the Neruda Foundation gave an introductory speech, followed by a presentation of Sri M by Mr D.V. Singh, Second Secretary and Head of Chancery of the Indian Embassy in Chile. Foundation members and the audience, around one hundred people, followed with great interest Sri M’s discourse, which focused on the meaning of Joya en el Loto and the essence of the spiritual quest. The event finished with an Indian cultural program by very talented Chilean artists. The book release in Isla Negra was covered by CNN Chile.

We would like to thank all the people that made this successful Latin American book release possible. In particular, the authorities of the Universidad del Salvador and the School of Oriental Studies in Buenos Aires, and the Embassy of India in Chile, headed by H.E. Pradeep K. Kapur. And of course, a big thanks to all the good friends that have helped during the different stages of this project.

We would like to finish by sharing the poem that Sri M composed in Chile and he offered as a closure to the Latin American book release tour in the Fundación Pablo Neruda:

O Pablo! O Neruda! Deep I drank the wine you poured, in stirring notes of poetic song, though served in English glasses. And in drunken ecstasy flew in one day to the blessed land where you were born. A chilly day it was in Chile, but I was warm; The special wine you brewed coursed through my veins and kept me warm. The snow clad mountains, sisters of the Himalayas, the rivers, the hills, the dancing waves of the sea that kissed the sandy beach. Above all, the people so beautiful, full of smiles and friendly glances, took my ecstasy to the tip of the Andes. And yet I was missing you, in your home in Valparaiso, in your home in Isla Negra, in Bella Vista, at some table, with a group of lovely friends. No, I didn’t find you, But I found the essence of your Soul, still shining bright.

(Note: Gracias means “thank you” in Spanish) …Gracias Sri M!

http://www.satsang-foundation.org
Perhaps not to be is to be without your being, without your going, that cuts noon light like a blue flower, without your passing later through fog and stones, without the torch you lift in your hand that others may not see as golden, that perhaps no one believed blossomed the glowing origin of the rose, without, in the end, your being, your coming suddenly, inspiring, to know my life, blaze of the rose-tree, wheat of the breeze: and it follows that I am, because you are: it follows from ‘you are’, that I am, and we: and, because of love, you will, I will, We will, come to be.

Pablo Neruda (July 12, 1904 – September 23, 1973), Chilean Nobel Laureate Poet, 1971, English Literature

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Sri M

Buenos Aires, August 12th, 2010

Dear Sir:

It is a great honour for the community of the School of Oriental Studies “R.P. Israel Quiles S.J.” to have this unforgettable opportunity to listen to your exposition. This School which was founded forty three years ago, has always been interested to share the thoughts of those personalities who improve our minds and enrich our spirits. That is why your presence is so important for our professors and students. Your speech will be discussed by them in our classrooms and in their conversations for long.

Thank you.

[Signature]

Prof. LUISA VITTO S.R.L.
Escuela de Estudios Orientales
Sede de la Universidad de Buenos Aires
Buenos Aires, August 12th, 2010

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http://www.satsang-foundation.org
of the pilgrims, all contributed to a very moving experience for us. We really felt blessed that we were in the sacred shrine with our revered Guru and were reminded of the doha:

Guru Gobind dono khare,
kake lakegaan Paon
Bailhari Guru aapno,
jo Gobind diyo bataye

In the afternoon, we headed towards a place called Gauri Kund and Suraj Kund in Gangotri. The natural beauty of the place was truly soul satisfying. The river Bhagirathi passes through the huge rocks splashing into a massive fall which weaves beautiful designs in the air and then finally falls into a basin before continuing its journey down the mountains. We could hear melodious sound of flute, being played by a sadhu sitting on a huge rock. This appeared to be a divine setting for the evening meditation for which we sat on the boulders.

The following day we packed our backpacks and fixed our trekking shoes and started our trek to the source of the river Bhagirathi – Gaumukh at the height of 3,753 meters. Bhagirathi joins Alaknanda at Deoprayag to form Ganga which is the life stream of millions of people. The source of this mighty, Holy river lies in Gangotri glacier which is about 30 kms long and surrounded by peaks like Bhagirathi peaks, Shivling, Meru, Chaukhamba etc. The terminus of this glacier takes the shape of a cow’s mouth and is thus called Gaumukh which is 18 kms from the town of Gangotri. On the way, we camped at Chirbasa and Bhogibasa camping grounds.

The trek (which is the most inadequate word to express the journey) was the most special experience of our lifetime. We were trailing behind our Master with our ‘dhyan’ focused on his feet - truly our life’s desire – to live close to him, his teachings - walking slowly, carefully, sure-footed with japa on our lips, humility in our hearts and attention focused on the source from where we come. The beautiful snow covered peaks, the river and the lofty mountains making us realize as to what a minuscule part of the creation we are and constantly reminding us of our real journey, our true goal for which God has created us.

All of us are born with a natural quest to know ‘The Truth’ which is mostly sidelined by the struggle for survival and misplaced ‘goals of life’ … but for sure, each one of us has faced life situations which pose a dilemma and a big question as to ‘how do I act now?’ Being close to a living master and observing him is the biggest blessing in this light as we find a reference point in life. He teaches us through example … his simplicity, his compassion, his humility, his flexibility, his overflowing love for everyone, his sense of humour and ability to laugh like an innocent child and at the same time , his absolute clarity of thoughts, logical mind and objectivity ... the list could go on and on and on ...

The trek had come to an end. Our guide Dhiraj, Our cook Praveen and the porters had made our trek very comfortable and served us with love and affection. Dhiraj our guide was elated when, at the time of parting, Sir offered him his jacket and shoes. He was a good soul and truly deserved the warmth, comfort, blessings and protection of master’s personal belongings.

The Yatra was coming to an end and with a heavy heart we bid adieu to snow peaks the cedars and pines, the mountains, the waterfalls and the river to come back to humdrum of cities and the hectic activities of life. But we only have to slow down for a moment to be transported back to the eternal beauty of the great yatra and the great experience.

Thank you Sir! Thank you Sunanda Ji!

There is a Supreme Reality which pervades this universe and into which finally this universe will go back.”

— Sri M
Today I am going to speak on a subject, which is indeed quite fascinating. It is a magic word kind of and used everywhere in most occult books and every now and then you hear of people trying to practice something, which would suddenly and immediately boost their spiritual awareness. That magic word is ‘Kundalini’. In the occult books on the subject it is called Kula-Kundalini.

What is this Kundalini which is talked about so much in most occult books, books on yoga and so on. Let us look at this very carefully. Kundalini is considered by the tantras as the manifestation of the infinite Supreme Energy called Para-Sakti or Bhavānī. It is said to reside in potent form – not kinetic, not active but in inactive form – at the base of the spinal cord of all human beings, coiled like a spring. Or in the tantrik symbology, as a snake, turned 3 ½ times around itself, waiting to be awakened by the spiritual practitioner.

So, a snake has been the symbol of Kundalini for many hundred years. It is because it is also the symbol of wisdom. It is the symbol that you find on the head-dress of the Pharaoh for wisdom. It is the symbol that you hear of people trying to practice yoga, which includes exercises, breathing techniques and chanting of special sounds – mantras – then the sleeping snake hisses and raises its head and begins to travel up the spine, through the central channel in the spine, which according to yogic anatomy, is called the Sushumānā Nādi, or the channel of Sushumānā.

When the sleeping energy, the great Kundalini, is awakened by resorting to the proper means, guided by a proper teacher, then it awakens and begins to move up the Sushumānā channel, touching six centers, as it ascends, until it reaches the top most center, which is known as the thousand petalled lotus, the Sahasrāra Chakra. This is, actually located at the crown of the head. And when the Kundalini energy reaches there, then it merges with the supreme reality who is called Śiva, and when both are merged, the yogi enters Samādhi or a high super-conscious state where he realizes his identity with the Divinity all pervading supremely peaceful Being.

As the Kundalini ascends, along the Sushumānā, center by center, through the six centers, the yogi’s vision or the yogi’s internal vision expands and he gains access to realms and dimensions which are beyond the reach of the ordinary senses.

Finally, when the Kundalini energy reaches there, it merges with the Paramātman, which is the blissful Being at the crown center, the yogi is absorbed in an ecstasy which far exceeds the ecstasy that any ordinary human being has ever experienced before.

That is the link between tantra which basically is the subject of the arousal of the Kundalini Sakti and sex.

The theory of tantra is that sexual energy, for all human beings, given food, and shelter is the most enjoyable experience. It is that same energy, the sexual energy, which is sublimated into life energy and by the process of meditation is treated to travel up in the upward direction instead of the downward direction. Which is why so much stress is laid on keeping your sexual energies and keeping them together at the lowest center where the Kundalini sleeps. Which is known as the Mulādhāra – the root foundation, if you literally translate it.

However, the ecstasy that one experiences when the sexual energies are gathered together and made to awaken the Kundalini and when that Kundalini reaches the Sahasrāra Chakra which is the crown chakra of the head – is a multiple orgasm which no human being has experienced anywhere in any one of his lower centers.

The experience may be called the supreme orgasm but it is nothing to do with the sexual centers. It happens throughout the body, especially with its center in the Sahasrāra Chakra or the thousand petalled lotus. Before that it also happens in the heart center which in yogic terminology is called the Anāhata Chakra, and is in the center of the chest.

The rising of the Kundalini therefore is a rising of consciousness from the gross to the subtle and to the subtler and subtler levels until it reaches the highest stage in the Sahasrāra Chakra and the yogi enters into a deep trance which is an altered state of consciousness, which is a Super Conscious state where the yogi no more is identified with the little body that he or she has, but with his Supreme Self which is Supreme Ecstatic, full of Supreme knowledge and Supreme peaceful.

At this point, it is a good idea to go through at least a cursory study of the anatomy of the yogic Chakras.

The centers through which the Kundalini travels, which lie in the spine, the Sushumānā are called Chakras. Chakra means a wheel – which moves - which rotates. And therefore, it also happens to be the meeting point between the Pranic energies of the human body and the energies of the psychic world which flow in from outside.

When both combine and begin to move or rotate, then it is called a chakra. These chakras are almost like whirlpools. The energies are always moving. They never stop, that is, when the Kundalini touches the centers. Otherwise, they are usually asleep.

The Hatha Yoga Pradīpikā and the Shatāchakra Nirūpana, the two important authoritative text books on the Kundalini and the chakras say that basically there are three Nādi’s. The Idā, the left side and the Sushumānā Nādi are the channels through which life energies or prāna operates. The Idā is on the left side of the spine. The Pingalā is on the right side of the spine. And the Sushumānā of course is in the middle of the spine.

All the three start from the Mulādhāra chakra – or the root foundation center which is at the bottom of the spine.

While the Sushumānā Nādi goes straight up and joins the Sahasrāra chakra on the top or on the crown of the head, the other two Nādi go on either side of the Sushumānā, cross each other at the center of the eyebrows, which is called the Bhrūmādhya or the Ājñā Chakra, and then go and join Sahasrāra Chakra.

So the yogis say that the joining or the crossing together is the Sangama of the Varunā river and the Assi river – that is the Idā and the Pingalā at the Bhrūmādhya which is the Ājñā Chakra or center between the eyebrows. The Bhrūmādhya is known as the holy city.
This is because the energy called the Kundalini is ascending from the gross to the subtle. So from solid state, to the liquid state. It is a great symbol - which means it is becomes subtler and subtler.

The next center, which is at the naval is known as the Manipura Chakra. It is also known as the Kundalini Chakra and is represented by a triangle with its apex upwards. The color given to it is the color of fire. As red as fire. Like a red hot burning fire. A flame. And, this is the central part of the chakras where combustion takes place or heat energy. Great heat of the Kundalini is symbolized here. When the heat of the practice of Kundalini yoga emanates from the Manipura Chakra, then the Kundalini rises further up from solid to liquid and from liquid to gaseous state. Passing through the heat center of the Manipura Chakra. The next center, is the one called Anahata Chakra, which is in the center of the chest. It is represented by what is called the Srs Chakra. Two triangles are inter-twin or put together - one equilateral triangle pointing upwards, the other pointing downwards. The Anahata Chakra is colored sky blue which means it shows still subtler energy which may be in the physical world compared to the gaseous state. So from solid to liquid to gaseous. The energy has become subtler and subtler and the consciousness has moved from gross to the subtle.

The next chakra is the one that is at the throat. This is known as the Vishuddha Chakra. The chakra of purity. I forgot to mention that the Anahata Chakra is also called the Anahata because when the mind is fixed on this center, one hears the sound which is un-struck. Which means the inner sound which is sound of Aum or the Pranava, vibrates within this chakra when the mind or consciousness ascends to it.

The Vishuddha Chakra which is the throat center is symbolized by an oval and the color is indigo. The tattva is Ākāśa. Or the ether. Or that from which the Ākāśa Tattva according to the Sāṅkhya philosophy and the tantra, is that from which everything else comes. All forms are created and that into which all forms merge at the end. This is Ākāśa. In English it can best be translated as ether but then ether that is just a translation.

The energy, the Kundalini as come up to the, let us say the Vishuddha Chakra. Therefore, consciousness has risen from the gross, from solid to liquid to still subtler gaseous and then to the level of Ākāśa which is the ether.

From here, the next two chakras - one being between eyebrows which is called the Bhrūmiṇāda or the Ājñā Chakra, is symbolized as a pure white two petalled lotus with a small white, milk-white Lingam at the center. And that is the center which kind of opens the door ways to the highest levels of consciousness.

If you see figure of a Śiva - Lord Śiva, the Lord of the yogis, who is only deity who sits in cross legged posture and meditates himself - you see that he has a third eye. That third eye is a very important is a very important center. A very important chakra called the Ājñā Chakra or the Bhrūmiṇāda.

There is a story in Indian mythology, in the Śiva Purāṇa about Kāma Deva, the god of love, the god of sex, the god of emotion, the god of desire. Kāma can best be translated as desire. It could be any desire. Sensuous or non-sensuous. Desire as such.

Kāmadeva, the god of desire is supposed to shoot arrows of flowers at us, at human beings and even the gods. And they fall under his power. This Kāmadeva, poor guy, once went to Śiva and tried to shoot his arrows of desire on him. Śiva the mighty Lord of Yogi's, who had conquered all desire and who was supposed to have just opened his third eye, which is the eye of the knowledge and Kāmadeva was burnt to ashes in no time. Which means that when a desire or the center which is known as the Ājñā Chakra is activated or opened, which happens when the kundalini energy reaches the Ājñā Chakra, then the mind understands the reality behind all illusion. Therefore, all illusions are burnt to ashes. It also means that one arrives and achieves supreme satisfaction and unlimited bliss and happiness and therefore, has no other desire left. And that happens when the kundalini reaches the Ājñā Chakra, which is the last but one.

It is the doorway to the highest which is complete merging with the Supreme Being which happens in the last to the lastly the highest chakra at the crown of the head. The place, the center, which is known as the Sahāsra Chakra or the 1,000-petalled lotus. 1,000-petalled simply means infinite. It symbol of the infinite. The color associated with the Sahāsra Chakra - there is no one single color. It is technicolor. All colors flow out of this chakra. In fact, if one is clairvoyant, if one can see and looks at the Sahāsra Chakra, what is seen is a fountain which seems to come out from the crown of the head and flow in all directions around the body in different colors. Multi-hued colors. Colors which are so bright and lively that one may not see such colors on this earth.

Each of these chakras starting from the Muladhāra to the Sahāsra also have their sounds which are known as the Bijāksharas. The seed sound. The lowest sound of the Muladhāra Chakra is associated with the sound ‘Lung’. It is not Lung, it is not L, but somewhere in between. So Lung is the sound which is associated and which is the Bijāksha of the
Muladhāra Chakra. When the yogi fixes his attention on the Muladhāra and continuously chants ‘Tungs’, the energy is supposed to activate or awaken.

The sound or the Bijākshara of the next chakra, which is the Śvadhisthānā Chakra is ‘Vung’. Vung – Vung – Vung.

The next which is the Manipura Chakra is ‘Rung’. Rung – Rung. The sound of Aruna or the fire. Rung.

The Bijākshara of the Anāhata Chakra is ‘Young’. Young – Young – Young. Anāhata Chakra which is in the center of the chest is activated by the sound of Young.

The seed sound or the Bijākshara of the throat chakra, the Vishuddha Chakra is ‘Hung’. It is the great Bijākshara of the Buddhist Mantra. Most of the Buddhist, Tibetan Buddhist mantras have the sound of ‘Hung’. The sound of Vishuddha Chakra or the chakra of purity, Vishuddha.

And, for instance the famous mantra, ‘Aum Mani Padme, Hung!’ – ‘Hung’ is the sound.

Then the Ajā Chakra which is between the eyebrows and the Sahasrāra Chakra are together covered by the Prāṇava – ‘Aum’. When you chant, ‘Aum’ it covers both the Ajā which is the eyebrow center and the Sahasrāra Chakra or the crown chakra.

These are Bijāksharas. When we chant it from the Muladhāra upwards it is ‘Lung’, ‘Vung’, ‘Rung’, ‘Young’, ‘Hung’ and ‘Aum’.

There are many techniques and many ways to awaken the kundalini. Which are given in the shastras. For instance, there is what is known as the Śri-Vidyā Upāsanā. Which the followers of the Samayā Mārga use to awaken the kundalini energy.

The Soundarya Lahiri purported to be written by Adi Shankardchéryā celebrates the ecstasy of movement of the kundalini, here called Bhavāni, all the way up the Sushumanā until she merges with her lord Śiva in the Sahasrāra chakra. The Soundarya Lahiri, the Lalit Śahasrānamā and other tāntrik texts contain certain Bijāksharas or seed sounds which actually have no meaning by themselves. But which are vibrations which would awaken the kundalini and make it move up the spine till it reaches the Sahasrāra Chakra and unites with the Supreme Lord.

Jō kūch hē sō to hī hē
All is you Oh! Divine

O biance to the Masters who reveal the sublime Truth in simple lyrics and beautiful songs which vibrate at the very core of an aspirant’s heart.

Our Master sang this song and initiated us in realizing the mystery of the universe in such a profound intimate relationship with the Supreme Being that pours out in these melodious stanzas — “All is you Oh! Divine. Only you are mine. ‘To You I bow!’”

On April 22, 1886, Sri Ramakrishna was recuperating at Kashi Garden. Hirananada, a classmate of Swami Vivekananda and another devotee from Sindh came to meet him. In the presence of all, Swami Vivekananda sang this ghazal since this was a favorite of Sri Ramakrishna.

All is you Oh! Divine

My heart is in love with thine
All is you Oh! Divine
Only you are mine
All is you Oh! Divine

Dweller in every heart
Which heart holds you not
Every heart is thine
All is you Oh! Divine

What of angels What of humans
What of Hindus What Muslims
All are made to your design
All is you Oh! Divine

What of the Kaba or the Dair
Your worship is everywhere
All heads bow before your shrine
All is you, Oh! Divine

From the heavens to the earth
From the earth to the heavens
Everywhere the vision is thine
All is you Oh! Divine

I thought, I paused, I sought
None in your likeness did I find
It is only now that Zafar defines
All is you Oh! Divine

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called the oath of the Bodhisattva.

This is not easily possible. Here, we want to be free ourselves - Apna khayal. That requires a totally different dimension of thinking, where one actually begins to understand that one is not the body really. Only when that concept comes, is one not afraid of coming back. Otherwise there is always the fear that if you are born, you have to become big and then you have to go through so many trials and tribulations. You have to grow up. Who knows what is going to happen? You have disease. You have suffering. You have pain. Then you are dead – death of the physical body.

In Indian philosophy, in Indian systems of thought, there have been great sages like that, who taught that the salvation of the other is more important than themselves going to hell, if necessary. The great Rāmānujāchārya, who came after Ādi Sankarāchārya, was the founder of the Viśishṭhā Advaita system – where there is more stress on devotion rather than philosophical abstractions. What happened with Sankara, was that very soon people got too caught up in intellectual speculation. And that is the time, when Rāmānuja came. He introduced what is called, quali fi cation - Sriman Narayana. He called it Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. He and just like there are cells in the human body, all the jīva are cells in the body of Nārāyaṇa. Now you can neither say that they are different nor can you say that they are the same. They are one body. This is called Viśishṭhā Advaita. There is one Nārāyaṇa - Śrīman Narayana. He called it Nārāyaṇa for devotional purposes. He illustrated it very beautifully, when he said, 'Everything is like water. Let us consider Śrīman Nārāyaṇa to be the whole thing called water - Jala. Chemically it is the same everywhere. A cup of water before you is the same as the river that is flowing. Intrinsically, quality-wise, there is no difference. But you cannot run a steamer on this water. You can only run it on the river. There is a difference. And yet there is no difference. That is called Viśishṭhā Advaita.

This great Āchārya, Rāmānuja, was born in the south, in a place called Śrī Perumbudur. In that place, when he was a young man, he was taught the great mantra - Om Namah Nārāyaṇa. It is a mantra which you find in the Bhaagad. It is a great mantra- Om Namah Nārāyaṇa!

His guru initiated him after all the trials that are necessary to ensure that one is ready for it. He initiated him into the mantra, 'Om Namah Nārāyaṇa'. And then the master told him, 'This mantra is to be given only to those who are 'Āptas' that is who are capable, who are qualified to receive this.' And he gave him a description of those who are qualified to receive it. And whoever takes this mantra, will reach Vaikunta and will be face to face with Śrīman Nārāyaṇa. There is no doubt about this, if you have faith. But do not give it to a person who is not ready for it, or who is not qualified for it, who is not a brāhmaṇa. What he meant by brāhmaṇa is one who has brahmanical qualities.

Now the young disciple asked him, 'Sir, what happens if by mistake, I give it to someone who does not have this qualification?' The teacher said, 'You will go to a hundred hells. Rāmānuja said, 'What about that person?' 'He will definitely reach Vaikunta,' said the Master. 'Ok, Sir,' said Rāmānuja. He did pranām to his teacher and went to a nearby hill which is still there in Perumbudur. And he said, 'All of you come. It does not matter who you are. Come, I have a great mantra with me, which will take you to Vaikunta.' He told everybody to chant this mantra.

So everybody told the Guru, 'Something is wrong with your disciple. This is what he is doing.' The Guru then called Rāmānuja and said to him, 'What are you doing? You will go to a hundred hells.'

He said, 'I can go a thousand times to hell. Let them all go to Vaikunta.' Such a heart! And then the guru said 'He is my real disciple.'

A Gift... And memoirs
By Sreelakshmi
From Peepal Grove School

E ach student here at PGS, when they leave, will carry back with them a gift - something they have either learnt or improved upon, during their stay here. For me, the gift will be Music. In many ways, PGS has proved to be, at least for me, an experience that has greatly helped me expand my horizon in so many areas. In the area of Music however, it was more than an explosion.

It’s difficult to explain the lure of Music. It has its intangible addictive quality to it – enticing you without your knowledge, and once you’re completely drawn in, only then you realize the intensity with which those soul-stirring melodies have affected you.

So, too, it was for me. It started as far as I remember, as an innenough session of singing whatever the latest songs were, in the dormitories, every Saturday and Sunday evening. As times went, I discovered a couple of other girls who seemed to be interested in the same kind of music as I was - and from there it took off.

One of us happened to be an instrumentalist - she played the keyboard. She also happened to possess a flair for notes - the musical kind. Coincidently, the other girl happened to have a voice beautiful enough to bring life to tunes we churned out. And me? I just went on doing what I was best at - waxing lyrical!

What helps about the atmosphere of PGS is this freedom that is given to you to explore. We’re encouraged to
A Hymn By Kabir Das Ji
recorded in Sri Guru Granth Sahib

Awal Allah noor upaya, kudrat ke sab bande
Ek Noor te sab jag upjaya, kau mande
logaa bharam na bhulo bhaaee
khalak khalak khalak meh khalak poor rehio sarab thaaee
na kachh poch maati ke bhande
sabh meh sacha eko soee tis kaa kiya sabb kachh hoee
Allahu alakh n jaayi lakhya gur gurr deena meetha
Kaho kabir meri shanka naasi sarab niranjan deetha

First, Allah created the Light;
then, by His Creative Power, He made all mortal beings.
From the One Light, the entire universe welled up.
So who is good, and who is bad? ||1||
O people, O Siblings of Destiny, do not wander deluded by doubt.
The Creation is in the Creator, and the Creator is in the Creation,
totally pervading and permeating all places. ||1||Pause||
The clay is the same,
but the Fashioner has fashioned it in various ways.
There is nothing wrong with the pot of clay
- there is nothing wrong with the Potter. ||2||
The One True Lord abides in all;
by His making, everything is made.
Whoever realizes the Hukam of His Command,
knows the One Lord.
He alone is said to be the Lord’s slave. ||3||
The Lord Allah is Unseen; He cannot be seen.
The Guru has blessed me with this sweet molasses.
Says Kabir, my anxiety has been taken away;
I see the Immaculate Lord pervading everywhere. ||4||

Kailashpati

I
It was a cold and rainy night at the mountain
The tents were pitched
Just below where Thy abode is my Lord.
Under Thy watchful eye we slept
And awoke to Thy silent call at dawn
Coming out we saw the splendid morning
And thee with thy golden brush
Colouring the peaks which lay in
the arc of thy iridescent brush!

II
Thy first lovely sight
Across the mountain range
O Lord
Was so beautiful
It made this life worthwhile
Then I knew that all thy creation
And all thy manifestations are true
That you are near and yet are far
In far you come near.

III
The blue above and blue below
The Cobalt, the Prussian, the lighter hue
The purple-blue and the sombre hue
The stretch of water against the sky
Interspersed with blue and white crags so high
A scene which a painter may never try
O holy Lake was it thy loveliness
Or some Other Presence
Which made you appear more than just a picture?

IV
Not knowing how we will make it
Yet with a quite confidence
Connected to thee
We set out, each one.
You held our hand and led us across
You gave us rest when we thought
we could walk no more.
You saw each one to the shore.
Lord we wished to see your form in
the abode of Light
Not knowing that the quite flame burning
in my heart and all the hearts
is thine.
Heart to Heart

I Wonder
By Bhavani

I wonder about Master often. I wonder whether I will ever know him completely. As there is only 'me' and my own standards to use as a yardstick, how can I get a true picture? I do not know how to go beyond – how to see people as THEY ARE. It is so true that we look at people and things as we have trained ourselves to... Highlighting what appeals, ignoring what we think is not important, rejecting what is unappealing etc; all, according to OUR OWN STANDARDS. So I find that I am only seeing or relating to ‘Me’ in others and missing out on the variety of The Lord’s creation.

Master M – our kind, loving and gentle teacher... lives an ‘ordinary’ householder’s life in an ‘EXTRA-ORDINARY’ way! He is a living example of a Karma yogi as described by Swami Vivekananda – He works unattached & free. Look at him... He is ever at rest yet never resting... He is FREE and ready to guide others to be free too!

I wonder how he functions. He is a friend – a friend we can speak to at anytime, whatever we feel like. How many calls would he be attending in a day? I wonder... Each call we make, every question we ask, every worry we off-load is absorbed completely leaving us lighter and happier... but what about him? I wonder.... This fountain of pure selfless Love, the effortless kindness that flows from him, his wisdom, his humility and his keenness to help as many as possible – NO MATTER WHAT – is a blessing bestowed upon us... but what about him? I wonder... how must he feel when we miss the point? When we CANNOT FULLY UNDERSTAND the import of profound statements dropped ever so casually and sometimes very seriously?

We cannot help bowing down to our Guru. Not just because we have been taught to, but the love & wisdom that emanates from him, fills us with gratitude and the desire to express it makes us want to put our head at his feet. He allows us to express ourselves whichever way we want... some like to kiss his feet... He allows it all... not wanting to hurt a single heart. But, then again, I wonder how he feels... he does not want DEPENDENT people grovelling at his feet... he points the way to ‘TOTAL INDEPENDENCE’... He is ever so casually and sometimes very seriously?

Thinking further upon it, I questioned – What is it we are looking for? Are we seeking ‘spiritual’ intervention for our ‘worldly’ problems? What do we seek? Do we really want to know what life is about besides eating, sleeping, thinking, sitting and enjoying bhajans, satsangs or talks on the Gita and other Upanishads – is this not hunger?

“My plate is full, but nobody is hungry.” I wondered – there are so many of us attending the retreats, going on yatras, sitting and enjoying bhajans, satsangs or talks on the Gita and other Upanishads – is this not hunger?

The Satsang Foundation

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