

‘The more you love, the more dimensions there are to His beauty...What I have said is very vital for the tuning of meditation.’

Feb 18, 1995 Kirtan at Corfton Rd (Madonna) to celebrate the birthday of Guru Dev Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

On Jan 24, we heard that Swami Ambikananda had suffered a second heart attack, much worse than the first. It was said that he had lost the greater part of his heart function, and that the damage was irreversible. However, less than two weeks later Swamiji overruled the doctor's advice and discharged himself from Boston Hospital while still very sick. He insisted that he had to prepare the kirtan for the ashram's most important celebration - the birthday of Guru Dev, Sri Ramakrishna.

The kirtan began with a play enacting the pilgrimage of Khudiram, Ramakrishna's father, to Gaya, where he was vouchsafed a vision of Lord Vishnu. The God appeared to Khudiram and told him He would be born as his son.

Ambikananda himself took on the part of Khudiram, performing it with great attention to detail. In particular, he performed the requisite puja, or worship, with meticulous care. When the play was over, Tryambaka sang his song of Sri Ramakrishna manifestation as the Divine Child (‘On a path of light, in the realm of the Devas...’), accompanying himself on accordion while the devotees danced, including Swamiji himself, though exhausted and breathless. He even tried to blow the conch. ‘Ramakrishna is born today,’ he called out in uncontainable joy. ‘He is new born as a divine child.’

Next Swamiji summoned Swargananda to read out the message he had prepared as a welcome for the latest member of the ashram, Sanjana's new-born daughter, who was to receive the name of Lillie:

‘Lovely Lily, welcome on earthplane, Bhumata, best wishes on your first kirtan on Friday under Ramakrishna Paramahansa. We worship and sing your glories as a divine child. We worship you in form of Divine Mother, born in Sri Ramakrishnaya, two in one. We pray and hope you accept our little offering. Pray abide with us and enlighten us. Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om.’

Ambikananda then loudly called for ‘full musica!’ Tryambaka sang I am a true lover of Sri Ramakrishna, I am a devotee of Mother Sarada...’ followed by Mahayogini with ‘Give me pure bhakti, give me pure love.’

‘Sink in the flow of music!’ Ambikananda called. ‘Let your heart play with every heartbeat. God dwells there. Show me your love! Sing with me. Swim in the ocean of Ramakrishna!’

Ambikananda then led chanting of eight stotras to the Goddess from Devi Mahatmya¹ and extensive singing and bhajans from musicians and devotees, culminating with Mahayogin's song to Sarada Mai, Holy Mother, consort of Sri Ramakrishna and incarnation of the Divine Mother: ‘Mother Sarada, Holy, Holy, Holy, Mother’, which moved Swamiji to cry out, ‘Call to Mother Kali. Call! She will certainly come!’

The atmosphere became still more intense, more concentrated. Ambikananda was so exhausted by now that he was scarcely able to stand, but nothing could stop him celebrating the birthday of Guru Dev. It seemed as though he might collapse at any moment, and yet he blazed with divine light.

At length the music came to an end and prasad was served. There was a period of quietness. After the meal Ambikananda gave a discourse mainly addressed to his Mauritian relatives, many of whom were

¹ ‘O Sarvamangala mangalye Sive Sarv'artha-sadhike; saranye Tryambake Gauri Narayani namo'stu te...’ ;

present. He spoke in a mixture of French, English and Mauritian patois that was not always easy to follow:

‘A lot of people here, they don’t know much about themselves. And there is one who doesn’t even know you but can tell you more about you, even warn you, isn’t it? You believe in him, and what he has said has sometimes come to pass. And he will see that this comes to pass, otherwise it will be untruth, you understand? Hindu Mauritian I am speaking, not Hindu Hindu. But Mauritians are very proud: proud of their food, of their ways, of their culture, and they want to know the truth. What is God, beside love? Truth! What does Guru Gita say: *Sathyam Sathyam varananye*. And Jesus: “I am the Way, the Truth – “ Truth is God.

‘*Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram*.² First There is no one greater than Shiva, the end of all, A U M , the bindu dot.³ And *Sundaram*, Beautiful! Not only beautiful, but beautiful, beautiful, *beautiful*! When you see, you can’t believe it, you have to ignore it straight away – “I haven’t seen that!” You can’t believe you have seen it. Sri Krishna said in Bhagavad Gita, “Look Arjuna, look! The multifarious colours!” And the more you love, the more dimensions there are to His beauty. If you love Him immensely He will come in the form according to what your love is. And every time you have a vision of God your personality changes. He makes you become universal so that you are not just dogmatic, one-sided. Many times God comes like a child so you can hold him in your arms, so a man can become a mother of God. But you have to convert your heart from worldly to divine.

‘And after the vision you also have experience – but don’t tell everyone too much! Experience comes in a flame, a wind. You have to be strong. Your heart can beat fast, or stop. If God comes, who are you? Just a dust, a suction in the vacuum! So all the crookedness in you is straightened. *Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram*. First try to get one glimpse. Take the Name. I told you what to do. The body is full of darkness. Bring the light of God.’

...

When the Mauritian relatives had gone Ambikananda said:

‘Before meditation all becomes silent. This state of silence is the beginning of meditation. What do you silence first? Your body, your mind, your thought to keep from wandering, to bring it back to the same point – it’s not easy; if it was so easy everybody would be - [*laughs*]. The Word is the effect of meditation, which means, the Word also is Jesus. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” and dwell among us, eat, drink, cry, and all this.

‘Truth is God, truth, truth, truth, nothing but the truth. Therefore a single thought of true prayer is like a mountain of reading and things like that. Just one thought of truth comes from the heart, tears swell, you fall asleep, pass out if you don’t go in trance –it’s too powerful. You go on and on without calculation. Spontaneous love, spontaneous realization, spontaneous payment. Some get their wages the same night! Everything here is spontaneous, just like my meditation. And Jesus Christ is invisibly here, he is still here, not gone. You see, they are witnesses. We said in the beginning, “the Word was God”, see now the Christ is coming, now the effect. You know why He is here? Because what we get is the state of the *supernaturel du Christ*, Christo, blissful state of Jesus Christ. When Ramakrishna died what did he say? Kali, Kali, Kali. And what did Christ say? “Father, into Thy hands I confide my soul.” But before that, “My God why hast Thou abandoned me?” Why? It’s a play of hide and seek. A great sport, and still going on. God plays with life and death, brings back in different body. It goes in cycles and years. It’s so real, like a dream awakened, to test you. All this is to test you, what is your full level best between Me and your free will choice? The free will choice is people wanting to build their own kingdom here. Everything is a trick, God’s play, maya.

‘Music is another maya; but music can be ecstatic, fragrance, love opened and welcoming. There is nothing like music, God Himself listens to music before you see Him, gandharvas, kinnaras, celestial dancers! But what does GSR say about maya?

² Truth, Godliness, Beauty.

³Bindu. In Hinduism the point at which creation begins.

Devotee: 'Aspects of God are maya.'

Ambikananda: 'that's very close, that's a good one!

Another devotee says something about formless beyond maya.

Ambikananda: Yes, yes, go through form to formless, but it's not an easy matter. Can you see God in formless reality? Even about God with form you are a bit dubious, isn't it, though Himself is saying it many times: Rama has said, Krishna has said, Jesus has said, Ramakrishna has said. And not many fully believed them, only those who really believed. Still, if you are with name and form it is easier to understand. But most powerful to God is language of the heart, straightforward. From the heart there is an invisible link: heart, tears, spontaneity, *clairance*, the mind get clearer, there is calmness and oneness - it has to be in unison. What I have said is very vital for the tuning of meditation because meditation is like an instrument, if it is not in harmony you get a bad note, bad music.

'So there are two kinds of maya: *vidyamaya* leads to God, and *avidyamaya* leads away from God. Whatever is leading away from God, switch off! But actually switch-off comes from God, not from you. You are *told* to switch it off, to shut up and all this, and go and say prayers. God tells the devotee, "Shut up, no good," or "Switch on, something is here." God is the inner guide, He even sings you a song.⁴ It is God who tells you appropriate lyrics and all this, there is meaning in it, you know. And kirtana is very good; it cleanses. The name of God purifies, purifies! You can't realize what a river of holy water it is to wash away your sins, previous and present, and warning, and ward off! So powerful! But you must practise these by yourself. You can come here and be influenced by us and by music, it's not bad, it's very good, but you have to do a little bit of self-effort, you have to blossom this seed of Brahman in your own house and privacy. Then you "can have the vision of God – but you can't touch." So says Sri Ramakrishna in GSR.

'It's a lot of private personal you. You come to know what is His doing, thinking. But if there is sickness you can't do too much, sickness has its own commandment. Therefore it is said that when you are sick there is no yoga, you have to have good health. Spirituality is not a bad life, it's a beautiful life! But you have to be willing - it all depends on yourself, isn't it. You can't borrow someone else's painting and say, "That's my painting, that's what I have done," when it's not yours, it's not your work.'

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⁴ See Kirtan songs (from GSR)