



Maa..... An Awakening!

An Experience

Pradeep Darooka

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I woke up with a start, engulfed in bright white light. I could feel something wet underneath me. My pyjama seemed totally soaked. I reached out for my cell phone, it was 3.45 am. There was a strange glow all around. I had never experienced anything like this before. Suddenly a smile crossed my face. I went back to sleep.

My sister Sunila knocked on the door, and simply said, 'we have to go'. I was in Pune at her place having come there the day before. I switched on the light. My white pyjama had blots of red on the back side. I went to the bathroom to change. My underpants were soaked in red. I felt the area below my navel near the groin. It was gone. The lump was no longer there. I scanned the hara. It was glowing purple! The muldhara chakra was on fire.

Maa had finally passed on; in Brahma muhurat on Kartik ekadashi. She had chosen the most opportune time..... or was it someone else who chose it for her? My sankalp was for that Sunday, the 24th of October. But I had lost all track of teethis, and had no idea that my sankalpa was for Kartik ekadashi. I had definitely not asked for Brahma muharat. We reached her bedside in the Bhatia Hospital in less than two hours. It was as if I had developed wings to be with her. I was on the cell phone almost the entire drive from Pune to Bombay, gathering my reiki circle together and performing the closing circle. We completed it before sunrise.

When I got to her bedside, she was calm as a frozen lake. I touched her forehead. It was still warm. Her skin felt as soft and supple as a new born baby. There was not a single wrinkle on her face. She was glowing. The sahasara chakra had already closed. I touched her feet and put my forehead to them. She blessed me.

I had experienced the divine.

August 1999

The connection was established in August of 1999. I was in London. I received a call from my nephew in Bombay asking me to come immediately as Maa was in a coma in the ICU. I rushed to the Bhatia Hospital next morning after arriving late in the night. Dr. Suhas Shah, under whose care Maa had been admitted to the ICU, had already informed the family about the inevitable happening any day. When I first met him that morning, I took an instant dislike to him as I do with most doctors. I was not allowed to go into the ICU. Later in the morning I was allowed to 'visit' her for five minutes. I desperately wanted to reach out to Maa. She was calling me. I pleaded with the doctors, the nurses, the officials to allow me to be with her for an hour or so. I told them about reiki, explained that I would just place my hands on her body without talking to her or disturbing her in any way, all to no avail. Finally that evening, after much convincing and pleading, Dr. Shah agreed to allow me near her. Tears arose and I thanked him profusely.

The next two days were a blur. Once I had gained admission to her bedside, the nurses became more friendly and inquisitive as they saw me placing my hands all over Maa. There was a lot of curiosity. Most of the time I was in a daze and my eyes were shut. The only thing I still remember is a surge of fire in the form of a ball. There was a strange sensation in the anahaat chakra. In my three years of reiki initiation, I had never experienced this sensation. Some time on the second day, I remember watching Maa opening her eyes and locking them with mine.

My ajna chakra was on fire.

Two days later, Maa came back home. It was a homecoming for me too.

A few days later when I met Dr. Shah to settle his fees, he was a changed person. Or perhaps, I was a changed person? I took an instant liking to him. In the middle of his busy consulting hours in the hospital, we spent almost thirty minutes talking about Maa's condition and recovery, and what he perceived as a 'miracle'. I told him there were no miracles only happenings (this is well before I came across Ramesh Balsekar and his teachings!). I thanked him for his help and support. Even though I doubt whether his text book conditioned mind allowed him to 'accept' reiki or grasp the phenomenon of healing beyond that induced by drugs, I was genuinely touched by his warmth and sincerity so rare in the medical profession. We both became 'converts' to a degree, and more importantly, a connection had been established.

1999 to 2004

The next five years was an intense period of spiritual and personal awakening and awareness for me. It was a serene whirl of yoga, meditation, healing, scriptures, satsangs, naturopathy, ayurveda, martial arts, shamanism, crystals, aroma, sound, chakras, auras, astrology, nadi shastra..... all coming together and building up on the foundation laid by Sheryl Benson, my reiki teacher who initiated me in 1996 in Boston. My curiosity and intense travel bug took me to Dharamsala, Rishikesh, Kumbh Mela, Bodh Gaya, Ganeshpuri, Pondicherry, Pune, Osho, Kerala, Himalayan Institute, Kripalu Center, Sivananda Ashram, shaman healers, various monasteries in South East Asia and in the USA. It was a journey I wished would never end. My sabbaticals from the corporate world were getting longer. Maa thought I had taken sanyas and started preaching to me the importance of grihastha ashram before sanyas ashram! I asked her what was the difference, so long as I was in some ashram! She had her intellectual and spiritual limitations, typical of most Indian women conditioned by and trapped in the ignorance of, what passes for, Hindu religion in India.

Each sojourn brought me in and out of Bombay. It brought me to Maa, who lived alone ever since my father passed away in 1986, and whom

all her three sons had abandoned for greener pastures abroad. When I left the shores of India in 1982 to go to the USA, my father asked me whether I will ever return. I said yes, absolutely, but just do not know when. I could not redeem this promise during his life and the time to redeem had still not arrived. But I knew it would.

Maa, the matriarch of a family she had raised amidst adverse circumstances, after getting transported from the sleepy town of Akola to the bustle of Karachi as a result of her marriage, and then getting uprooted from Karachi to Calcutta to Bombay after the partition. A family of 8 children, 13 grandchildren, 12 great grandchildren and their varied spouses. As my interaction with Maa increased, a certain quietude started creeping in our relationship. Words became redundant. Expectations, emotions, responsibilities, duties started fading. As the youngest of her eight children, and almost an afterthought for my parents (a six year gap between my next older sibling and myself), I always felt very close to her. She supported and protected me in my angst towards my father. We always had a certain understanding and bond typical between the youngest child and his doting Indian mother. Yet, it felt different now. Something had changed since 1999. Maa and I had transcended certain barriers inherent between any two individuals.

I had started living her life.

Her pains, her discomforts had become mine. She did not need to express or ask. I knew it. She did not need to reach out. She had already become enshrined within me. There was no need for that thread of white light for healing. As her heart kept shrinking, I started breathing for her. As her kidneys started failing, my incontinence increased. As her digestion became weaker, my appetite for her favorite items increased. After all these years, I finally learnt to say no to her. There were no pangs of guilt. She understood. She knew it was not me, but she herself who was saying no.

It did not matter anymore.

My interest towards astrology reached a crescendo. I had my readings done under three different schools, Indian astrology, Western astrology, naadi shastra. I was amazed at the confluence of the three readings. Besides touching upon myriad aspects of my life, each reading mentioned 2004 and one of them mentioned October 2004.

My reiki intuition took over.

August 2001

I felt like a dead end. I was back in the USA. My sojourns had become less frequent. Maa was becoming weaker and lonelier. But I was away from her and could not be with her for various reasons. My corporate career seemed totally faded in the distant past. My dreams of a healing center in India were not materializing.

And then I got a call. A six week consulting assignment in Bombay. The stars had lined up. Something called 9/11 happened. Nothing was going to come in the way. I landed in Bombay. I surprised Maa by reaching home the morning she was having a havan performed on my father's shraadh.

Her joy was muted. Not really. I was elated. She knew I had come home, even though I was staying in a hotel in the distant suburbs.

The six week assignment became a two year project. The entire time I was in the hotel and barely visited her once or twice a week. Each time I visited her, she cooked her favorite items, without asking me. She knew I would eat and she would relish. Her appetite had diminished considerably. How did it matter? I was eating. We hardly spoke of anything consequential. She knew I would take care of everything. I knew what she wanted.

October 2003

My assignment was over. I finally made up my mind. I decided to move back to India. I bought an apartment in Pune. I could not imagine living in Bombay, leave alone with Maa. She knew; she understood. Never

once did she ask that I move in with her. She was so overjoyed, how could she ask for anything. I felt her unexpressed desire. I cried. I was helpless as all I could do was watch and be a witness. (I had discovered Osho but not Ramesh Balsekar yet.) I started getting the apartment ready and furnished to move in by the middle of next year. I was running against time. 'October 2004' would not fade away.

It will go away only after it has come. Not a day before.

April 2004

I finally met Ramesh Balsekar in Bombay at his morning discourse, after having heard about him from a Brazilian friend four years earlier, and a year after I started reading his books. He turned out to be everything except what I had imagined him to be. I had tears in my eyes that first day when I touched his feet. I knew my search was over.

As I was practicing my morning asanas, I felt a twitch in my chest on the left side. I ignored it. It persisted. While not painful, I could feel it now and then. As I give myself reiki, I felt the lump gradually moving towards the anaahat chakra. I did some visualization. I saw something dark brown, almost black and dirty. It was quite small, not to cause any concern. It had almost become a plaything. I sought it out each night before I fell asleep. Over the next few weeks, I felt it increasing in size and shifting downwards.

July 2004

It was time for me to go back to the USA and pack up and come back for good. I was in the car after Balsekar's discourse to visit Maa. Lalloo, her servant of many years, called on my cell phone. Maa had fallen in the balcony and was in pain. My sister Nirmala called soon thereafter, asking me to get to Maa as soon as possible. It was pouring outside. It was one of those days in the Bombay monsoon when everything is flooded and you cannot get any where. I was able to reach her only later that evening. She had fallen on the plants in the balcony and her chest seemed to have taken the brunt of the pressure. She complained of pain in the chest, but was otherwise quiet. Her maid Archana was

applying hot water bottles. The next day the x-ray did not show any broken bones. Dr. Parikh, the family doctor suggested a chest brace that seemed to give her no comfort.

She kept complaining of pain in the chest. Everyone thought it was muscular because of the fall and would heal itself gradually. I gave her reiki that evening. Her chest was ablaze. The anaahat chakra was all dark and ominous. I did the visualization and saw a lump the size of a golf ball on the left side. It was dark brown, almost black and dirty. I let her sleep. I went back to my bed, and sought it out. It had moved further down, just above my navel. There was no pain, just a soft sensation.

I felt divine.

August 2004

My apartment in Pune was still not ready. I was getting anxious. Maa had now lost almost all appetite. I was eating like a pig. Her kidneys had almost failed. My incontinence had become more intense. She was gasping for breath every so often. My pranayams became more intense.

She could no longer stand erect, leave alone walk with her walker. She was totally bed ridden. Dr. Shah was back in charge. I spoke with him for the first time since August 1999. His advice was simple; hospitalize her. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to care for her at home. But being a doctor, he was not sensitive enough to the nuances and the dynamic forces that were in play. He did not understand Maa, he did not understand me.

Maa was resolute. She would not go to the hospital. She wanted to be at home, under the care of Archana and Sarita and Lalloo who had all so lovingly cared for her all these years. She still wanted to know what was cooking in the kitchen, who was at the door, and whether Lalloo was short changing her while buying groceries.

I had drafted the obit. I also had the hand written piece of paper where, many years ago, Maa had scribbled her wishes upon her passing away. I was leaving on the 15th of the month for the USA. I got together with my four sisters the day before, and discussed the entire plan in the event of anything happening in my absence. We all agreed that under no circumstances would we hospitalize Maa. We discussed and agreed the funeral and post funeral plans. I summarized everything and put it in an email to Krishna, Pramila and Dilip, my siblings in the USA.

I could not have been less emotional.

August 15th 2004

I bid Maa farewell telling her I will be back soon. She patted me and blessed me. As I went to sleep on the flight, I felt the lump. It was in the hara, the manipura chakra.

September 1st 2004

I called Maa from Boston. She could barely speak or hear. She asked when I was coming back. My flight reservation was for October 1st, I told her. She could not hear and kept asking 'You are coming on the 25th are you not'. I finally said yes. She seemed happy. I called the airlines and changed my reservation for the 24th.

September 5th 2004

My sister Mridula called from Bombay. She said Maa was in a lot of agony and discomfort but was not 'letting go', waiting for me. She suggested I come back at the earliest and help relieve Maa of her misery. I said I will think about it. I checked my hara. The lump had not moved much. There was still no pain.

September 22nd 2004

I was traveling in the USA. I had a message on my voice mail to call Bombay immediately. I spoke with Pramila my sister from California

who had already reached Bombay. She informed me that the doctor had found a lump in Maa's chest and wanted to test it for malignancy. They had finally figured what was causing her the pain all along!

I scanned my hara. The lump had moved into the swadisthana chakra.

She also informed me that Dr. Shah was adamant that Maa be hospitalized immediately, but Maa refused to listen to any one until I returned. I reminded her that we had all decided not to hospitalize her under any circumstance. I asked for Maa but she was in no position to speak on the phone. I asked my sister not to bother putting Maa through the biopsy test. It was not relevant.

September 25th 2004

I reached Bombay early morning. After her morning rituals, I finally saw her a little later. She hugged me and started sobbing. I told her, I have come back home. I had finally redeemed my promise made to my father 22 years ago. I asked her whether she would like to go to the hospital. She just looked at me and kept sobbing. All day long, there was a lot of pressure from my sisters, doctors and others to take her to the hospital. I refused. At 7.30 pm she moved her bowels, and then called me urgently. 'I can not breathe', she gasped. I scanned her anaahat chakra. It was very dark. I panicked. I called Dr. Shah, Bhatia Hospital, and the ambulance in a space of 5 minutes. She was admitted into the ICU within half an hour. Ramesh Balsekar's teachings were truly alive! That night I went back to the conversation with her on September 1st. I slept like a log.

I had never been happier.

October 2004

She stayed in the ICU for a week. Both my brothers from the USA had arrived. All her eight off springs were with her. The medical diagnosis was clear. The kidneys had failed, the heart was barely pumping, and she refused all intake. It was a matter of any day now, according to Dr. Shah. But I knew she was not ready yet. I scanned her sahasara. It was

closed. I scanned myself. The lump had barely moved. Access to her in the ICU was very restricted, so we decided to bring her out to a private room. The next few days became a routine. I slept in the room most of the nights.

My sister Urmila had started sensing something. She asked me a few times about the date. I kept quiet. Mridula, my other sister insisted that I was 'holding Maa back' and should 'let her go'. How could I? I was only a witness, not the doer. I attended Ramesh Balsekar almost every morning. I shared my daily experience with him and every one present. His teaching was coming alive for me each day. Advaitya was no longer just a concept; it had become real for me. What better teaching could I ask for? Osho said I could only be a witness. Balsekar says I am not the doer. It was all ringing true, each day, each moment.

October 10th 2004

It was Maa's birthday. She was barely able to open her eyes. I asked her if she would like to come to Pune to the new home. She nodded, and said yes, take me there. Her eyes were moist. I scanned her. My hands froze on the back of her head. There was an unmistakable glow and heat. My heart jumped a beat.

The sahasara chakra was open.

I felt a tightness in my groin. I scanned myself. The lump had moved all the way down. It seemed to have shrunk a bit, but ominously dark as always.

The next few days I was with her as much as possible. I stayed with her in the room almost every night. She had become Brahmaleen, one with the Creator. I wanted to be as close to this leela as possible; absorb and bask in as much of the divinity as possible. There was no thought, no emotion, no sensation. Her aura got brighter each day. The colors had started to fade. She was encircled in white light that became more intense with each passing day. Maa, reiki, me..... the distinctions had faded. There was no healer or healing, just pure white light.

Dr. Shah continued his twice a day visits, amazed at her resilience. We no longer talked about reiki or miracles or healing. It was not relevant, and he would not understand. All that mattered now was his warmth and caring attitude as if his own mother was lying there. Ironically, he said, 'we can only watch'. I smiled. I wished Ramesh Balsekar was there to hear it!

October 20th 2004, 8.35pm

Everyone had left. I was alone with Maa. She was in a deep sleep. I sat beside her, and as always placed my right hand on her head and left hand on her anaahat. The sahasara chakra was still open. I closed my eyes. I saw a red glow and felt a twitch in my right hand. I opened my eyes. Maa was looking at me with eyes wide open, like a baby who had just woken up from a long peaceful sleep. I quickly grabbed my cell phone and started shooting her video. She rolled her eyes and moved her head from side to side. I immediately called my sisters to tell them what was happening. They wanted to come over. How long would this continue? I hung up the phone, and placed my hand on Maa's forehead. She looked into my eyes and nodded. A tear slipped from my right eye and I nodded back. She closed her eyes. I needed to let go. She was ready.

I stayed awake all night in meditation. The sankalpa came at about five in the morning. All of the reiki energy had accumulated. It was accompanied by a vision of a long highway leading away from a bright light into the forests yonder. I came out of my stupor.

Maa was in a deep asleep.

October 21st 2004, 12.30pm

I came back to Maa's room in time for Dr. Shah's morning visit and also to inform him that I was leaving tomorrow for Pune for a couple of days. He examined Maa and asked me not to go out of town. I reluctantly agreed and closed my eyes. How could I explain my sankalpa to him? How could I tell him that Maa would not leave unless I left first? I kept quiet.

October 23rd 2004, 7am

I scanned Maa for the last time. The sahasara chakra was still open. I touched and kissed her forehead, touched her feet and left immediately for Pune. Dr. Shah did not need to know.

October 23rd 2004, 10pm

I went to the bathroom before going to bed. As I was emptying my bladder, there was a sharp, excruciating pain in the groin. I almost screamed. I went to sleep like a toddler.

October 24th 2004

My pyjama was bleeding red during the entire funeral. I was emptying my bladder profusely.

The healing was complete.

October 31st, 2004

I went to settle Dr. Shah's fees in his consulting room. We spent almost an hour together. He had become part of the family. I wanted to give him a reiki hug. I hesitated. He would not understand. We talked about Maa mainly. From August 1999 to the present. We touched upon my journey briefly. There was no mention of reiki, miracles etc. this time. He asked about my healing practice. Then he simply said, 'after a point, even the doctor can only watch'. I said to myself, Dr. Shah I would want you to be my doctor until that point.

I went home, to Maa.

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