

LETTER No 24

(Ma's letter in Bhaji's handwriting)

Baghat
Dt. Kangra
Punjab
27/8

Kalyaniashu (a term of endearment made to a junior deserving affection),

Your letter dated 3/8 reached here the day before yesterday after wandering in many places. It seems that when you write 'Anandamayi' it is misdirected. After your wish to install Yogeshwar in Yoga Mandir was fulfilled, further manifestations of special powers have occurred. It is no surprise that He will reveal Himself in keeping with your deep devotion and your religious feelings. World is only a bhav, a play of bhav. Well I want to ask you if you want to learn the puja according to the scriptural ordain or do you prefer what you are doing at the moment?. Did it ever come to your mind that your puja is not done properly? Let me know all this.

Do your puja with the bhav that arises at that time. All are one. Worship of one is worship of all. As long as various samskaras arise in the mind different methods are prescribed to neutralise them. If you want to worship your image of Shiva in a different way do it. Keep the lingum as it is without turning it and do puja on it. As the samskaras are neutralised you will get a glimpse of the One and you will understand the One.

Let me know when you could come over here. I will write to you then how to get here. Aren't you coming soon?

Your Ma

Yogananda (Ma said "I give this name to Yogarani (the queen of Yoga), Yogeshwari (the presiding deity of Yoga) and the worshipper of Yogeshwar of Yoga Mandir. You be the first one to address her (as Yogananda)"). Having the good fortune to receive Ma's order, I wrote to you as Yogananda, and I pray at Ma's feet, so that you with your bhav and karma become one who will command our highest respect. That is all for today. Surely you must have received the previous postcard. Ma asks 'how are you spending your days after leaving your job'. You wrote you have lots to talk about what are those let me know.

The analysis:

In the previous letter Ma hinted about Her uncertain movements. BG's letter was redirected to Ma in Solan. In her letter BG perhaps had written about some special experience or manifestation of Yogeshwar (the name of the

lingam), while worshipping the installed Siva Lingam in the temple in her house (Ma gave it the name Yoga Mandir). From Gurupriya Didi's diary we found that Ma brought a Vaneshwar Siva Lingam from Benaras and gave it to BG for worship.

It seemed that BG's experience was encouraging. A special spiritual experience is directly related to the intensity of devotion. Ma said, "**The world is only a bhava, a play of bhava.**" (bhava means inner religious mental disposition). With right mindfulness and increase in intensity of devotion inner sanskars manifest in the seeker's consciousness and he takes it to be a manifestations of God. It is interesting to note that though BG was not following the method of worship as ordained in the scriptures she still had the spiritual experience. It is a fact that the bhava of an aspirant plays a significant role in spiritual practice. In the early stages of sadhana such bhava does not play such an effective part. If one is not totally committed to spiritual life, the outside world always distracts the seekers's mind. Any spiritual experience that comes during the course of sadhana should correspond to the experience of the sages of old, who spent much time in spiritual discipline. The scriptures are tried and tested, being the outcome of the practical experience of the sages. Spiritual practices determined by oneself may at times lead to unfortunate results. So it is better to be guided by the scriptures. Ma was quite aware of BG's egoistic attitude and so instead of being imposing we find Ma offering a suggestion regarding the method of worship. Ma put the onus on BG as to whether she should follow the way described in the scriptures, or her own method. Ma wanted BG to let her know if she felt that her puja was not being done properly i.e. according to the shastras.

It seemed that BG was uncertain as to whether to worship the Shiva lingam alone, or other deities as well. Inner tendencies - sanskars - lead the seeker to worship different aspects of God. Ma said that all the different images of God are but the manifestations of One only. As long as the seeker has not become convinced of this he should only worship his/her Ista. With this single mindedness gradually sanskars for the other aspects get neutralised. The method of worship may be different, and this depends on the worshipper's mental attitude, but the image should be fixed.

The shape of the Vaneshwar shiva lingam is such that it is difficult to distinguish the top from the bottom. The worshipper should be very particular to place the lingam always in the same upright position and not upside down. Ma said that as sadhana progresses her sanskars will get neutralised and she will have a glimpse of the One i.e, the ultimate God of love of the seeker. Ma wanted BG to give her all the details.

The letter ended here. As Bhaiji was writing on Ma's behalf he wrote a post script himself from which we come to know of Ma's special comment about BG.

In the PS Bhaiji here addressed BG as 'Yogananda' and then explained why. He quoted Ma, **“I give this name to Yogarani (queen of Yoga), Yogeshwari (the presiding deity of yoga in female form) and the worshipper of Yogeshwar (the presiding deity of Yoga) of Yoga mandir (the temple in BG's house). You (Bhaiji) be the first to address her (as Yogananda)”**. Bhaiji was the first to address BG as Yogananda and considered himself as fortunate to receive Ma's instruction to address BG by that name. He further wrote that BG should harmonise her inner and outer actions so that she could reach the highest goal of life and so command the greatest respect from future seekers. It seemed that to devote her time totally to a spiritual life BG had resigned from her teaching job. Ma wanted to know her daily spiritual routine.

The post script of this letter is important from another angle. If we review Ma's physical lifetime and Her sayings we find that she never uttered anything in vain. Even when She praised anybody there was never an iota of exaggeration. Her use of words was always measured and to the point. The words of commendation Ma used about BG are something unheard of from Ma. Perhaps it was the only instance when she used words of praise with such eloquence and firmness. The words such as “worshipper of Yogeshwar”, “Yogarani”, “Yogeshwari” and “Yogananda” should not be taken as mere rhetoric as these were spelt out by Ma. Such words would be used for one who had attained the highest goal in spiritual life. Now the question arises; did BG reach that state at the onset of her spiritual journey? If not then why did Ma utter such words about a new aspirant?

No. 10 Bayuato

St. Kaupua

Pungib

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