

CHIT-ANANDA



Two Experiences of 'Awareness Bliss'

Peter Wilberg

2009

Introduction

Recently I was once again blessed with two further of countless instances in which I experienced long and intensely sensuous states of ‘Awareness Bliss’ (*chitananda*). Both instances began in the same seafront hotel as the last such experience that I shared on this bulletin board, and also at the same time – as the sun was setting. In both instances, Karinji and I sat in silence for over an hour – indeed a full two hours in the second instance recounted here. Getting up and leaving was difficult for me, for I felt I could have remained seated in the same place and the same state for an eternity – the state of deeply sensuous ‘Awareness Bliss’ (*chit-ananda*).

Instance 1:

Once again there was an awareness of *feeling* all that could be *seen* ‘out there’ – whether different densities of cloud, seagulls and waves, aeroplane vapour trails, or ‘man-made’ things such as brick walls, cars, Victorian lampposts, garage doors, drainpipes, brass doorknobs, metal road signs, a painted dustbin – as erotically sensuous shapes and textures of soul, sensed ‘in here’ - within my body. At the same time all motions of wave or cloud, planes or persons were felt as being in perfect harmony with the music playing in the background in the hotel – as if orchestrated by it.

Sensuous Awareness Bliss is both ecstasy and ‘in-stacy’. For like the nature of the Soul Body itself, Awareness is ‘ec-static’, extending ‘out there’, *beyond* the boundaries of the flesh and surrounding, touching and feeling in a most sensuous and tactile way anything sighted at a distance in space. Yet at the same time Awareness is also ‘in here’, *feeling* each thing sighted *within* the boundaries of the flesh *as* a sensuous shape and texture of inner-bodily awareness - the ‘Soul Body’.

What I especially noted this time however, was that things I would normally perceive as ugly, decayed or ‘shabby’ appeared like the most wonderful works of art – as if any one of them (the painted dustbin for example) could have been placed in its own empty room in an art gallery as a mesmerising abstract sculpture or creative ‘installation’.

It seems to me that the key to sensuous awareness bliss lies in not ‘taking’ what is perceived ‘as’ this or that familiar, nameable thing or person, but instead letting oneself take them in and be taken up by them into their purely sensuous nature and form. This is comparable to the way infants perceive before they have been taught the names or uses of things. Thus an infant in the cot does not hear ‘a car passing by on the street’, but experiences being inwardly and sensuously *touched* by an un-nameable vibrational quality of sound. Nor does the infant see ‘its mother’s face’ or hear ‘its mother’s voice’ but rather senses itself and its feeling tones echoed in her tone of voice, mirrored in her face and seen (or unseen) in the light of her gaze.

Yet as adults we can still choose at any time *not* to see a bicycle, building, cloud or dustbin *as* a ‘a bicycle’, ‘building’, ‘cloud’, or ‘dustbin’; *not* to see this building as ‘a shop’ or ‘house’ - and *not* to see this or that person as either a ‘stranger’ or as anyone I ‘know’.

A great work of art can prevent us from interpreting what it portrays ‘as’ this or that – some familiar and nameable object - and/or allows us to see such things (for example a figure, house or landscape) in a new light – finding innate meaning not in seeing it *as* a figure, house or landscape but in its sensuous appearance or look. The Eye of Awareness is like the eye of an abstract or expressionist artist – a Kandinski or Van Gogh. It enables us, like the artist, to see and feel the innate meaning or sense present within any sensuous thing or ‘form’, nameable or not, and thus to see and sense all things as living works of art. In this way we transcend the world of name and form (*namarupa*). We do so *not* by ‘controlling’ or ‘suppressing’ the senses but, on the contrary, by intensifying our immediate sensuous experiencing of things – not seeing them ‘as’ this or that (as ‘a cloud’ or ‘a lamppost’) and in this way not letting *shadows* be cast on things by a prior understanding or mental ‘idea’ of what they are.

This recalls Plato’s cave allegory, in which shackled prisoners facing a cave wall mistake the shadows for their reality – until one of them is led out into the light. Seeing something ‘as’ this or that was itself Plato’s understanding of the Greek words ‘idea’ or ‘eidos’ - which *in themselves* meant nothing more than the *sensuous appearance* or ‘look’ of anything ‘seen’ or ‘sighted’, but was extended to include the sound of anything heard, or the feel of anything touched. Sensuous Awareness Bliss is ‘enlightenment’ in the literal sense – seeing things in the light of awareness as purely sensuous ‘forms’ (Plato) or “idea-shapes” (Seth), all of which are essentially forms and idea-shapes of Awareness itself and of its Light.

Seeing and sensing whatever is sighted in the Light of Awareness and through The Eye of Awareness - in a purely sensuous and 'a-conceptual' way - there was (and is) nothing merely commonplace in the world of the senses. As an example, looking at the bar in the hotel, it was not the multi-coloured range of bottles of brandy and other spirits that drew my gaze and excited my senses to an intense pitch – instead it was a simple plastic milk bottle of the sort one buys in the supermarket - almost empty but for a few centimetres of remaining milk. Next to it was a full plastic container of milk of the same sort, but this was less inwardly touching and erotic than the *almost* empty one – in which the relation of inner fullness and emptiness was itself *full* of innate sensuous meaning.

Then there were people – bodies. Many of these might normally have struck me as somewhat repulsive, ugly, fat, misshapen, badly dressed or somehow 'distorted' or 'disfigured' in their posture, look and expression. Yet now I saw each person's body as an odd or eccentric but nevertheless *perfect* living 'version' of themselves - the very 'distortions', 'oddities' or 'eccentricities' in their appearance or dress being what made them such *fascinatingly* unique living sculptures and works of art. I was reminded of Jane Roberts, who describes a very similar experience of people in one of her books – that of seeing every person on a street as but one 'eccentric' yet perfect 'version' of themselves.

Yet if 'my' experience of both people and things in a heightened state of sensuous awareness was but a *small taste* of the *erotic intensity* with which IT - the One Pure Awareness or *Paramashiva* – constantly and continuously experiences the sensuous beauty and meaning of *all* manifest bodies and beings in the cosmos (all its *Shaktis*) then IT must truly and indeed be in a state that could be described as tantric-erotic 'ecstasy' and 'instacy', comparable to an never-ending *orgasm* of Awareness Bliss, the eternal sexual union or *Maithuna* of the divine couple or *Yamala - Shiva and Shakti*.

Others have compared my accounts of extended and intensified awareness bliss with experiences on LSD. Yet had I myself *only* been able to understand or 'bracket' the experiences in this way - as a sort of spontaneous and enjoyable 'trip' without drugs – I believe the experiences themselves would neither have been *possible* in the first place, nor assumed the particular character that they had. Herein lies a paradox however. For without the capacity for a higher-level awareness or 'recognition' of the resulting state of

consciousness *as* something far more profound than a mere drug-induced alteration of brain chemistry, not even a drug such as LSD could have induced it.

Awareness Bliss teaches that all that can be perceived with the senses is imbued with innate sense or meaning possessing a beauty of its own – and that therefore there is nothing that is ‘ugly’. I have long had similar experiences in tantric pair meditations. Nobody I have meditated with, whether man or woman, and no matter how ‘attractive’ in conventional terms or not, has not appeared to me as anything else than *divinely beautiful* in meditation. That is why I am so glad that Karin Heinitz has published a book entitled *Tantric Poetry – My Lord of the Living Light* - which shares her sensuous experiences of tantric initiation (*diksha*) through tantric pair meditation (*maithuna*).

Karika

Sunset and Sunrise.

The Setting Sun is the dawning,

Rising Sun of the One Divine Awareness;

Its Sky made radiant by the Living Light of Awareness

That Light which alone let things be seen, and which also

And alone lets us see things in their true light – the Divine Light,

Revealing them as living shapes of that Light, yet now freed of

The *shadows* cast by any and all ‘ideas’ we may have of them.

For a thing itself *is* nothing but an *eidos* or *idea*, and that in

Exactly the way in which the Greeks understood these words:

Not as ‘ideas’ or ‘images’ *in our heads*, but as the very

Beingness of ‘things sighted’ and sensed *out there* -

Just as they present themselves to the soul through

The senses themselves, and not through any mental

Concept or ‘idea’ of what they are - or what *we* are.

For we *too* are nothing but sensuous living shapes of

The light – of the Living Light of Awareness ;

Brought to light by Its invisible Sun; which

Forever shines but never sets or rises, our

Lord of the Living Light.

Practice guide 1

Seat yourself comfortably, and in total silence, in a place with a variety of sights and sounds. Allow something, however commonplace, to attract your sensory attention and see it *just as it is* – attending purely to its sensory form and features rather than seeing it as this or that – as ‘a glass’ or ‘table’, ‘car’ or ‘chair’. Let more and more things attract your attention in this way, seeking to sense them with and within your whole body, as well as seeing them your eyes.

Instance 2:

A week later, in the same place and at the same time, there followed yet another experience of Sensuous Awareness Bliss, this time characterised entirely by the dimension of aural rather than visual experiencing. It was as if, sitting this time with eyes closed and ears wide open, I was immersed in a ‘sonorous bath’, one which was at the same time a veritable *symphony* of distinct and diverse sounds – background music and sounds from the restaurant kitchen, the air hum of an extractor fan, the clinking of cutlery and of metal coins in the cash till, the chinking of ice cubes in a bucket and the crash of an empty glass bottle being dropped into a bottle bin, the swinging sound of doors, opening and closing, the soft padding sound of footsteps as people walked to and fro, and together with all this the murmur of human voices of different pitches and tones. This symphony of sounds was a *perfect* symphony, with all its sounds in harmony with one another and even with the sounds of actual music being played in the background. And like a musical symphony it had its phases of acceleration and deceleration, as the general hubbub of activity and sounds now increased, now decreased, raised or lowered itself in pace and volume – yet again in perfect synchronicity with changes in the music itself. Then again, as in a symphony, there were ongoing themes; in this case the mellow-toned voice of a Yorkshire-accented man sitting at a table behind me, and the occasional low murmur of his wife in response.

Yet the symphony was also a *brilliant* symphony, never monotonous or purely repetitive, but with new and unexpected sounds emerging at unpredictable intervals – a burst of speech or laughter, the sound of a chair being scraped along the floor, the clank of a beer or wine glass

being set down rather loudly on a table, or the steamy sound of an espresso machine being activated.

What was important was not just hearing these sounds with my ears but sensing them with and within my whole body. Thus sounds heard from behind my back were felt as touching a region of my back with their vibration. I have already referred to the infant's experience of sounds, sounds that they have not yet learned to name or identify - as a type of 'inner vibrational touch'. And indeed the voice tones and pitches of people speaking were felt from *within* my body, arising from exactly the same regions or resonant cavities - whether head, chest or belly - as in theirs. Every sound literally touched and excited a part of my body, whether from without or within, in a way that had an almost erotic quality - thus giving the whole experience the nature not just of a warm sonorous 'bath' or perfect symphony but also and above all a wonderfully deep and blissfully relaxing 'sonorous massage'. The experience of sounds as the sonorous bath is comparable, I believe, to the experience in the warm waters of the mother's womb, where it is the aural rather than visual dimension of the baby's sensory awareness of the world that is predominant - just as it is the mother's voice and the tactile dimension of her embrace and touch that is most significant in early infancy. The 'soul body' is a womb of fluid feeling awareness. Its surface can be described as a 'sonorous skin' - sensitive to the vibrational touch of sounds from without - able to feel and resonate within them from within.

I have also referred to the way in which, seeing things, one can gain a direct tactile sense of their textures - the materials they are made of - sensing these as textures of one's own inwardly felt body. Seeing the smooth translucent surface of a glass one senses its glassy texture, which is at the same time closely related to the sound it would make if struck. So it was that with my eyes open just before leaving the restaurant, I observed a shelf stacked with empty glasses in the bar, and in seeing them also felt and 'heard' their smooth glassy texture as silent or potential sound. I also not only saw but sensed and heard the sight of pure white milk being poured into a glass jug, feeling the milk's whiteness, fluidity and flow as a silent sound. Whether it was the sound of glass on glass, metal on metal, wood on wood, or glass or metal on wood, these sounds resound with and reveal to one ears the different textures of things. This is similar to the way sight too reveals the way a thing would potentially feel to one's touch or how it would weigh in one's hands.

Leaving the restaurant, walking around in the open air and then riding home on my bike, I found myself acutely aware of the different sensuous textures of muscle, tissue and bone that made up my own felt body. Through my legs and feet, indeed even through the metallic structure and rubber tyres of my bike, I was acutely aware of the textures of pavement and tarmac, more or less even or uneven, upon which I walked or rode. The bike had become, in a most unusually intense way, an extension to my body – but in such a way as to enable me to feel the qualities of the ground beneath it throughout my *entire* body, along with *its* variety of sensuous textures.

Being once again in the open of course made me more aware of distant sounds such as the cries of seagulls in the sky. In this way, like the open sight of sky and sea, sounds can expand our sense of space. Yet it was the enclosed space of the restaurant, which like the enclosed space of the womb or of a symphony concert hall, facilitated the experience of the ‘sonorous bath’, ‘sonorous touch’ and ‘sonorous massage’. Space as such however is essentially a *singular* openness. It is only our perception of it that may be enclosed, divided or blocked by the walls of buildings and rooms. Essentially also, space *is* nothing but our way of perceiving the open expanse of pure sense-free awareness – within which alone things can appear to us – be seen or heard, touched and felt.

Practice guide 2

Listen to sounds that catch your attention.

Hear them just as they are, not as sounds ‘of’ this or that thing or person.

Don’t just hear them with your ears but sense them with your whole body.

Feel them touching you from without and resonating in you from within.

Sense your whole body as a sonorous skin.

Final Note:

The ‘experiences’ of Sensuous Awareness Bliss recounted here and elsewhere, however intense, should by no means be considered as basically ‘unusual’ or ‘out of the ordinary’. On the contrary, they simply serve to remind us that we can, at any time, give more time to our immediate sensory awareness of things, and in this way reap the huge healing value of pure sense-free awareness – which is precisely that which *intensifies* our experiencing of the

sensory, allowing us to sense with and within our bodies – and that in a most tangible, tactile and erotic way - everything that we otherwise merely see with our eyes or hear with our ears. Through heightened sensory awareness we can also come to experience the healing power of the *sounds* that all things essentially *are* - letting them touch and massage us from within and without. The most *fundamental* healing dimension of ‘Sensuous Awareness Bliss’ lies in helping us to recognise how pure awareness itself can *return us to our senses* – letting us literally ‘come to our senses’ in an otherwise insane world.

Practice guide 3

Listen to something you see, whether a table or tree, cloud or piece of cutlery.

Particularly if it makes *no* audible sound, sense its visible shape and texture *as* a sound. See it as a sculpture. Hear it as a silent sound.