

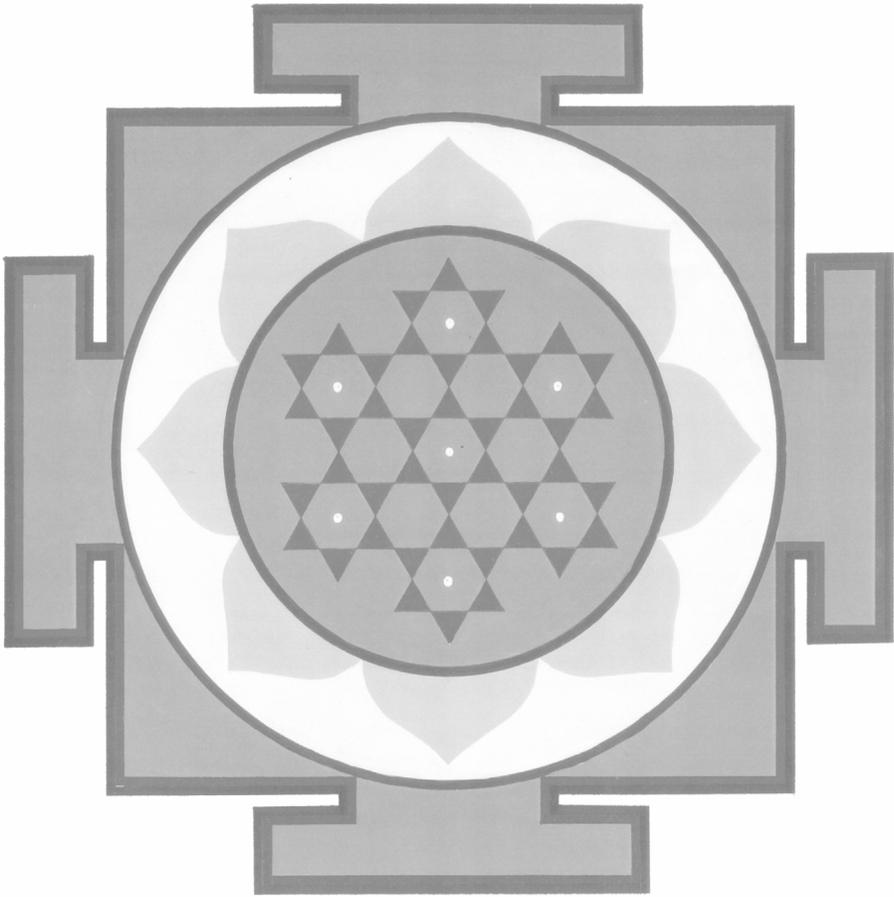


SECTION ONE

THE MARRIAGE OF SPIRIT PRINCIPLES

*Lead me from the unreal to the real,
Lead me from darkness to light,
Lead me from death to immortality.*

—The Upanishads



When by the flood of your tears the inner and the outer have fused into one, you will find Her whom you sought with such anguish, nearer than the nearest, the very breath of life, the very core of every heart.

—Sri Anandamayi Ma

O N E



THE STORY OF A RELUCTANT MYSTIC

In 1971, I had an experience of such significance that understanding it became my life's work. During the course of a week that year, I was deluged by a transmission of insight and of access to higher realms of knowledge. In the process I received a gift of spiritual awakening and clairaudience, which I had no way to integrate or understand when the experience was over. Hesitant at first, scared of what people would think and facing possible alienation from my family because of the voice I began to hear in my head—I finally made the only decision I could make. I decided to devote my life to interpreting this voice and to using the knowledge it imparted to assist people in their own enlightenment.

I invite you to consider my story as a frame of reference for the teachings in subsequent chapters of this book, and not as an indication of what you might experience or should be experiencing as a result of reading and using the *Marriage of Spirit* techniques. My journey was a product of the times and circumstances in which I lived. Chances are, your journey along the continuum of enlightenment will not be the same as mine, and that is as it should be.

A BREAKTHROUGH MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

I grew up in South Africa—a country ravaged by apartheid. After graduating from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg with a bachelor's degree in fine arts, I assumed a career as a painter. Painting was my passion and was something that had always come easily to me.

Since my childhood, art had served as a vehicle for expressing the inexpressible. Even as a child I experienced altered states, visions, and perceptions whose only acceptable outlet seemed to be through my hand and onto canvas.

It was only later, with hindsight, that I came into the conscious understanding of how each vision and subsequent painting was a gift given from my unconscious, a learning experience that would help prepare me for my life as a mystic. Altered states often happened while I was painting or even while I was contemplating painting. This weaving of art and mysticism fostered in me an expanding desire to find a greater understanding of the nature of consciousness itself.

While painting in my art studio one morning in 1971, I went into an altered state. It seemed to have been brought on by my extreme response to an argument with some friends at dinner the night before. We had just finished eating and had stumbled into a thorny discussion about art and science. The two men at the table, one of them my husband, considered themselves scientists; my girlfriend and I were artists. At the time, it seemed like a stupid argument about the merits of art versus science, yet it had struck a chord deep inside me. I had unusual clarity that night, and I could see there was no intrinsic difference between the two. They sprang from the same source, expressed the same essence. At the core they were the same.

Seeing two seemingly opposed means of perceiving the universe, one based in intuition and one based in empirical logic, as one and the same thing was an extremely radical idea to all of us then. Yet the truth of this was crystal clear to me in that moment. It was my absolute certainty about this *sameness* that was so fascinating to me at the time. However, no matter how hard I tried, I could not begin to explain to the others what I was seeing. Suddenly I was painfully aware that all of us, by arguing about the supremacy of art or science, were not just missing the point, we were also involved in several polarized struggles. Male–female, right–wrong, real versus imagined. For some reason, that night, this dualism was more than I could bear. I became very agitated and then quite disconsolate.

The next morning in my studio, after having been awake most of the night grappling with what I had *seen*, my mental state suddenly shifted. My mind broke open and became crystalline and vast. Time seemed to stand still. Understandings about the previous night's discussion flooded my awareness. I had the clear realization that my knowings of the evening were the truth. This sensing of truth was so profound, it made

The Story of a Reluctant Mystic

my heart race, and I experienced emotions I had never before felt. I was in what I now know to be a state of unity consciousness, a state for which I had no reference point at the time.

That morning, as the insights continued to pour through my consciousness, I knew that I needed to write. I was seeing the resolutions to all my frustrations from the night before, gaining a very clear mental understanding of them, which allowed me to verbalize them in my journal. As the pages accumulated, the innate unity which underlies all of the dualities that we know in this world became clearer and clearer. This initiated in my mind the understanding of the fundamental concepts behind the Marriage of Spirit teachings. I had always felt a mystical presence in my life, even as a child, and particularly in conjunction with my painting—but this intense and direct transmission of information about unity was something new, and it grabbed my full attention. I was compelled to be completely present with the experience.

During a week of accessing this state of higher consciousness, I wrote about 30 pages of notes and created two paintings. One painting was of a flying angel, painted as though I was looking up at it. The other was of a mother holding a child. Both were subjects that I had never used before. The two paintings emerged effortlessly, almost as though someone else was using my body to paint them. I know now that the paintings were another gift from my higher self, messages from the state of unity. The paintings would play a significant part in a later drama.

Each morning during this particular week I woke to find that the altered state was still present, and when it finally abated, I was overwhelmed with grief at the loss. However, I was still left with the legacy of the experience. Not only did I have the 30 or so pages of writing and the two paintings, but this breakthrough experience left me with clear but intermittent inner guidance—guidance which stayed with me in my everyday awareness.

Three difficult weeks passed as I tried to make sense of what had happened during this extraordinary event. I vacillated between elation and depression, wondering at times if I was going crazy, wondering why this was happening to me. Then I learned that I was pregnant with my first child. Caught up in the excitement of that, I put the precious pages into a closet, pushed the events which they recorded to the back of my mind, and temporarily forgot all about my experience. At the time, there was no place for it in my life and no time to make one. A month later, curiosity got the best of me, and I tried to re-read them. To my dismay,

the writings were all but unintelligible. The concepts that had been obvious to me at the time, I was now unable to relate to. Because of the loss of the unity state, I had no context into which to fit them. They might as well have been written in Greek. The world stood still for a moment, and then it began to spin as my sense of reality tilted. My thoughts raced out of control as I fell prey to the belief that I had spent a week writing nothing but gibberish. My mind gave in to the fear that perhaps I was going crazy. Becoming increasingly embarrassed and paranoid, and to my later regret, I threw the whole dissertation away.

BECOMING A CLOSET MYSTIC

Much of the paranoia and fear that made me destroy the writings describing the mystical experience were related to a sense of apprehension about how my conservative husband would react. Initially, although I was relatively comfortable with the idea of receiving inner guidance, there were times when I questioned my own sanity. In 1972, shortly after the birth of my daughter, when I finally told my husband about the mystical experiences that were now commonplace in my daily life, his reaction reinforced my worst fears. He had recently done a medical elective in a mental hospital, and he assured me that the only people who heard voices in their heads were those who were mentally ill.

Neither one of us had ever heard of channeling or of other forms of divine communication back then, and when I saw the look of fear on his face, I thought he would have me committed to a mental institution if I persisted. Out of fear, I never mentioned my experience to him or anyone else in our circle of acquaintances again. For a long period of time, I lived a kind of double life—the one in my head, and the one in my body. My body continued to live the life of a doctor's wife, driving the car pool, going to social functions and taking care of the family. Eventually the discomfort of denying my inner self became so great and my confidence in the fact that I was not crazy was so strong, that I finally decided to come out of the closet. This was a gradual and painful process that spanned a time of many outward changes in my life as well.

A COUNTRY STEEPED IN POLARITY

I became an adult under the oppressive regime of apartheid—at a time when its ideology of separating black from white had reached a point of critical mass and when it was clear to most people that something monumental was going to happen soon. Stifling censorship and strict rules

about how people—both white and black—should live their lives had for a very long time been an integral part of the nation's collective consciousness. In the summer of 1975, when I awoke from a dream and told my husband that we had to leave the country, we both knew instinctively that a time of great transition and upheaval was beginning.

I cannot imagine a more perfect example of extreme polarization into which a mystic could be born. My life-long feelings of depression and helplessness surrounding the injustices of the apartheid system in my country—feelings shared by many of my countrymen—would have to be replaced by hope, compassion and love if things were ever going to change. But how? The *how* came to me directly through divine intervention in a way that challenged head-on my notion that one person cannot make a difference. The voice that had come to me in 1971 was guiding me to hold the intention, hope and belief for the possibility for peace in South Africa. I understood that others were being asked to do the same, and that the individual and unified intentions of even a small number of people would be enough to bring about significant changes. Much later I came to understand that at a point of critical mass, when a certain number of individuals are holding the same intention, change is manifested in the whole of human consciousness. That is eventually what I saw happen in South Africa as the end of apartheid gave way to a new regime.

Two weeks after my prophetic dream, my husband was handed a solicitation for a research fellowship at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Medical School. A week after he accepted the position, rioting broke out in Soweto, where my husband was completing his residency. It was the beginning of the revolution. Suppressed at first by the press was the fact that many of the first riots were staged by children, ages 8 to 18. The police opened fire on some of the groups, and many children were killed or severely wounded. It was a frightening and brutal time for all people in South Africa. I would have felt extremely guilty for leaving had it not been for the voices of my guides. They urged me to come to the United States to further my spiritual growth so that my prayers for peace in South Africa could grow in strength and meld with those of many others in South Africa and around the world who also prayed for the end of apartheid. It would be those united, individual voices that would eventually help shift the balance of energy, the magnetic charge of experience, in favor of dissolution of the old regime. Through this experience, I began to see that if enough people awaken to their true, inner, divine nature, the whole of human consciousness can undergo the kind of evolution of consciousness

that seems to be what is required of us if we are to survive as a species on this planet. Since that time, the destiny behind my teaching the Marriage of Spirit principles has been to help raise consciousness.

COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET

After the birth of my daughter in 1972, a deep restlessness came over me. I knew I was looking for something but did not quite know what it was or where to find it. The clarity of the unity experience in 1971 was gone. I knew also that what I was looking for was connected to her arrival and in some way connected with what I was to give her. On the strength of that small knowing, I became available to inner change, and the spiritual seeker in me was born. The birth of my son followed three years later. His conception came at a time when I had just become initiated into formal meditation, and this time my expected baby announced his arrival in the form of a dream. I realized that a tremendous sensitizing of my awareness and my seeing was taking place as I observed the dream. I was beginning to attune to a more subtle level. Hence I perceived the meaning conveyed in the dream of my unborn son—a perception that would have been too subtle for my awareness to register in the past.

My marriage did not survive the coming-out process—a process increasingly punctuated by periods of intense meditation, study, and inner work. My husband and I drifted further and further apart. After the unity experience in 1971, and during the later separation and divorce process, I found myself drawn to the writings of authors who were on the cutting edge of a new spiritual psychology. The writings of authors such as Carl Jung, Roberto Assagioli (*Psychosynthesis*), Arthur Janov (*The Primal Scream*), Fritz Perls (*In and Out of the Garbage Pail*), and Erich Fromm (*The Art of Loving*), resonated with the inner teachings that I was experiencing at the time. Their work helped to ground me in thought and practice, and it helped motivate me to continue with my own spiritual growth.

In the early 1980s I was guided to work with two teachers of transformation for a period of about four years. My children went to live with their father, and in 1986, after becoming increasingly aware that I was growing in spiritual connectedness, I entered a period that was, in its conception and form, rather like a Himalayan cave experience. Many people are familiar with this concept—of Indian and Tibetan yogis, such as the great Tibetan ascetic saint, Milarepa, who retreat to distant caves, to live reclusive lives of meditation and austerity in their quest for enlightenment. Yet my cave experience took place in one of the most

densely populated areas of west Los Angeles. I have often wondered why I was guided to go into seclusion in such an odd place and finally decided that, if for no other reason, my guides had a great sense of humor. In fact it was probably because I had several very rigid concepts about big cities. I believed that a large, densely populated area was the last place that I, or anyone else, could wake up.

During a two-year period in a small apartment near the confluence of two major freeways, on the west side of Los Angeles, I began an extended and solitary spiritual practice of complete seclusion and deep meditation. For two years I worked through a step-by-step unfolding of an awakening into the same state that I had held so briefly in 1971. It moved my awareness from the memory of a temporary, altered state, held at the dawning of my quest, to the solidly grounded, natural state in which I now permanently live.

Also during the inward-turning time of 1986-88, I came to see one of the amazing and intricate pieces of my own unfolding destiny. I realized that the experience in 1971 had also been a connecting with the soul of my as yet unborn daughter. The paintings of the angel and the mother and child that had emerged during that week were telling me of her imminent arrival in my life and, most importantly, that the state I was experiencing was her message to me. As amazing as it seemed, we had made an arrangement to awaken one another. I saw and understood clearly that she was the angelic being who at that time was helping me to remember the state of unity consciousness.

This notion of divine assistance is common in mystical teachings, especially amongst the Tibetans. The arrangement between my daughter and me was this: When I was caught in the forgetfulness of this life and she was out of the body, she was to remind me of who I really am—in a much larger and more essential way than I had been aware of up to that time. And when she took manifestation and was caught in the limitations of world and body and had forgotten her origins, I would be free enough to show her the way and to help her to awaken. She was born in February 1972, exactly nine months after my seven days of initial unity consciousness. Today, she is on her own dedicated journey of awakening.

SORTING IT ALL OUT

We all have remarkable mystical experiences, whether or not we are fully aware of them or choose to admit to them. Unfortunately, our altered

states are often quickly buried in forgetfulness or pushed aside when they threaten our existing sense of reality—which they do when we don't have a way to integrate them into our current awareness. However, in this instance, I could not escape mine easily because I had written it all down, making it real and concrete, even though those writings were now gone. I had tried to get rid of the experience by throwing the pages away, but I could still see them clearly in my mind. They had been branded into my awareness. As fate would have it, the basic premise of unifying opposites and a return to unity never left my conscious mind again.

I have since come to know that all human beings are inherently capable of accessing vastly different states of consciousness. It is part of our capacity for multi-dimensional awareness. However, it is not usually possible for someone in one paradigm of awareness to have the remotest understanding of another paradigm concurrently. It is possible to flip in and out of different modes of perception overnight, but much harder to cross-reference them—which would require a mental, emotional and physical integration of often paradoxical elements. For the most part, we understand certain states of awareness when we are in them, and we don't when we are not. It is a fairly basic metaphysical concept that helps explain why my 30 pages of writing suddenly appeared indecipherable to me once I was back in this worldly reality.

Although as an artist I used images that came to me through dream states, I did not have any formal understanding of metaphysics as a discipline until later in my life. What was present for me earlier, however, was a feeling of connectedness to nature and a more poetical sense of my inner self. Early on, I identified with ways of understanding that were outside of the sense of reality and conditioning that my family gave me. This is one reason that my life as a mystic was eventually so easily assimilated into my conscious being. Another reason that the mystic life agreed with me relates to the fact that I was caught in a relationship of dominance and submission with my father. While being submissive to the will of others is a behavior that I have had to unlearn and process quite a bit throughout my adult life, early on it allowed me to completely give myself to the voices and teachers I encountered. Their transmissions required total commitment and selfless absorption on my part—something that would have been hard for a stronger-willed person to accomplish. And so it often is with certain aspects of our personality and specific events in our lives—they are there for reasons we rarely understand at the time. In the true spirit of polarity, what seems to be cast in

negative energy one moment is shown to be making a positive impact the next, and vice versa.

Knowing now that there is an inherent perfection to all events in our lives, I realize that it was fine that I threw the whole essay away. Although I regretted not saving it, I did not feel that the information was lost. Key pieces stuck with me, including the essay's very last sentence about *the unity of all things*. I also vividly remembered the central theme of the writings—that a process of bringing together or unifying all the polar opposites inherent in this dualistic life, brings us into the vast oneness of consciousness that is the true source of life. It was the memory of this oneness, which I had experienced directly for one week and which I know now as the unified state, that became my motivation for understanding the altered state I had experienced.

Finding the fundamental unity of consciousness underlying all of life's dualities is enlightenment—our *real* state of consciousness. It is the theme of this book. We can all experience this enlightened state by integrating the dualistic, or polarized, schisms in our personality. In other words what my unconscious was showing me that week was:

*If we integrate the dualistic and polarized
schisms in our personality, we can know
directly and palpably the unity which we truly are,
beyond the limited personality.*

These teachings, given over time, became the primary methods of integration which I used on myself and which have led to my ever-growing experience of the unity of all things. This unity is our true eternal nature. And the desire to know it is the source of the yearning inside every human being.

Unity consciousness allows us to bring the events of our lives full-circle. We yearn for closure in our lives, for events and thoughts to come around to completion and to reveal some aspect of truth about the structure of this reality and our place in it. Western culture in particular, with its heavy reliance on logical, linear progression, finds little solace in a life's apparent linear progression toward death and into the eternal void of purposelessness. We see ourselves living within the limited confines of space-time, and we often conceive of life as a form of suffering due to the perception of its nature as a random progression toward an unknown end. In contrast to this view, seeing larger circles of meaning at work

in the structure of human life enables us to bring closure and spiritual significance to the journey of life. Digging into the subconscious mind, tying up the loose ends of forgotten lessons and significances, and releasing destructive patterns of behavior are practices that lie at the heart of the Marriage of Spirit teachings.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

1. Get a journal and keep it specifically for writing down all your mystical and spiritual experiences. By grounding these precious gifts in writing, you bring them from the realm of ideas and formlessness into form. You not only make them more tangible for yourself, but they often become fuller and more expanded. You begin to see much more of the experience and to absorb deeper levels of the gift spirit is offering you. Journaling helps preserve these treasures, rather than allowing them to be covered over by the sands of time and lost in the mists of memory.
2. Try to remember past mystical and spiritual experiences, even from childhood. Recapitulate the experiences and write about them in as much detail as possible in the very beginning of your journal. Make sure to date them, even if approximate. Dating them helps later on with understanding larger cycles of change. History has a way of repeating itself, and perception changes that happened years ago will be revisited in the future. Life is a spiral; we return to where we once were but at a higher level of vibration.