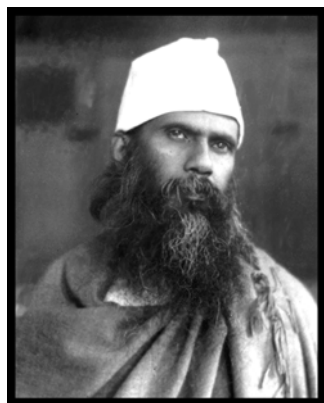


My Life With Anirvan

Part - XV

The return journey was more adventurous! I left Shillong on 2nd October



Sri Anirvan

with Shikha, a niece of Sandhya, who accompanied me to Calcutta, took the train from Gauhati and crossing the Brahmaputra River reached upto Barauni. The railway tracks were washed away in the heavy rains. So we had to get down the train with our luggage, huddle ourselves in a truck and reach Mokama junction at a distance of a few miles. Sometimes pushing the truck in deep waters! From Mokama we again took the train and reached Calcutta on 5th October!

This time Sri Dasgupta was in charge of the Path Mandir and I got a room on the backside of the Mandir, facing Sri Anirvan's Haimavati which was at the far end of the spacious compound of Sri Aurobindo Path Mandir. I spent one and half months in the quiet and peaceful atmosphere of the place. One felt the force of silence emanating from the centre around the whole area of the Path Mandir. Apart from the evenings, I spent the whole day in silent meditation, doing all my personal work. I used to go to Anirvanji every evening between six and eight, except on the days when Anirvanji had special appointments from outside or when he held talks at the Path Mandir. Generally the talks were held on Saturday evenings. Even during the evening meetings mostly we talked silently, sometimes exchanged information. It was like sitting before Sri

Raman Maharshi at Tiruvannamallai – the only difference being, I was more intimate with Sri Anirvan and could talk freely in the same language!

During my stay at Shillong, one day I visited Sandhya's house and one day I and Sandhya went for a walk at a beautiful place called Shillong Summit from where if the light of the day permits Mount Everest can be seen! One day, I went to Usha Bhattacharya's to attend the Sraddha ceremony after her mother's death. Anirvanji also attended the function. One day I went with Anirvanji to the vegetable market of Shillong, managed mostly by the Khasi women! It was a sight to see! Anirvanji would stand silently before the preferred stall. He looked like fakir! The Khasi woman would attend first to well dressed people looking rich and would purchase a lot of vegetables even though they had come after Anirvanji! Anirvanji would neither say a word or push himself before! simply wait silently with a little smile on his face! That day I tried to intervene! But he stopped me by a gesture!

I returned to Calcutta on 5th October, 1961 after nearly one and half month's retreat at Shillong in the charged spiritual atmosphere.

Anirvanji came down to Calcutta with Sandhya in the last week of December 1961. With Sandhya and after a short stay at Calcutta left for Ranchi, Patna, Allahabad and Delhi, the places he regularly visited during winter since the forties. Sandhya too accompanied him. He returned to Calcutta on 31st January 1962 from Delhi.

During this period I went to Varanasi with Sudha and Narayani Basu, wife of Dr. Atindra Basu, a friend of ours since 1948-49. Dr. Atindra Basu had suddenly passed

away in London on 17th October 1961, where he had gone for research work for his book on Anarchism. Since then Narayani Basu came in closer contact with us. The main purpose of our visiting Varanasi this time was to attend the talks of Sri J. Krishnamurti which were being held there between 22nd December 1961 and 18th January 1962. Tapas who was by now a staunch devotee of Krishnamurti had arranged for our stay at Besant Vihar, Varanasi on the bank of river Varuna where Krishnamurti usually stayed and gave his lectures. Tapas also arranged our special interview with Krishnamurti.

One our way back to Calcutta, we visited Gaya and Buddhagaya too.

Anirvanji and Sandhya passed the month of February 1962 at our place, 6H, Keyatala Road.

This was Anirvanji's General programme when he stayed with us at Keyatala Road. He got up very early in the morning and by 6-00 am finished his regular Asana-Pranayama etc.

7-30 to 9-00 am: Upanishad class.

9-00 to 10-00 am: Reading or interviews.

10-00 to 11-00 am: Going for a walk to the lakes which is very near.

11-00 to 12-00 am: Bath and lunch

12-00 to 2-00 pm: Reading newspapers, rest.

2-00 to 4-00 pm: Personal work. No interviews.

4-00 to 5-00 pm: Individual interviews

5-00 to 8-00 pm: Talks at Sri Aurobindo Pathmandir or open discussion at Keyatala road or visit to some places.

8-00 to 10-00 pm Dinner, general talks with family members etc.

On 1st March 1962, Anirvanji and Sandhya left for Shillong by plane and I resumed my normal activities.

Until Anirvanji came over finally to Calcutta in the end of 1964, we used to hold our weekly Dharmasabha every Sunday morning from 10-00 to 11-30 am.

After receiving a postcard informing about his reaching Shillong, Anirvanji wrote me a letter on 7th March 1962,

My dear Gautam,

You must have received my post card by this time. I could not write to you on Sunday, as I was very busy with some repairs to be done. I am now almost settled and hope to begin work from Monday next. The cold is still very severe. In addition to that it has been raining for the past two days. Today a biting wind is blowing and it seems, we have been put to cold-storage!

I often remember the strenuous but happy days that I passed with you. This time the family was running quick smoothly and all of you had some time to spare.

I hope, you remember what I told you before I left. I feel very deeply for you. You are the head of a spiritual family and Bandhuji's mantle has fallen upon you. Even if you are in no mood for work just now, you must help the family and the cause by radiating peace, strength and joy to others. I can assure you that you shall always be in my thoughts. Live deeply, truly and energetically.

Sandhya's school opens today. Her elder sister-in-law and the ailing child were to be released from hospital last Monday. I hope the child is quite alright now. Sandhya has asked me to send to you all her love.

Bablu must have been back from the camp. How did he fare there?

My love to you and Sudha, Sharad, Jyoti, Bablu and Kiki (Apurva & Aparna – son and daughter of Sudha and Bandhu Dharmapal).

Please write to me as often as you can.

Ever yours A.

-Sri Gautam Dharmapal