

I Wonder What God Feels Like

**by Anima
December 2005**

I was born in a small town called Dehradun, in India, about 36 years ago. For the first four years of my life, I lived with my maternal grandparents while my mom aspired for a teaching degree at school.

As I was growing up, my dad became an alcoholic and a chain smoker. For the next sixteen years, he was rarely sober, often drinking from morning until night. Most of the time, I worried about my mother and dad fighting, and I often fretted over his ability to hide the booze or whether he would come back home safe. One day, dad's body just gave up...he became really sick. That was the turning point for him and his family. He turned towards spirituality and started meditating, often gravitating towards Osho's group, which had a major influence on me as well. He constantly told us to watch and be aware of who was looking, and soon I developed a habit of watching my thoughts and actions. It almost felt as though I was split into two...one acting and one watching...

As a child, I remember feeling that this was all a dream, and I was someplace else dreaming this life. Being born in the Indian culture, certain beliefs are simply part of who you are...for example, reincarnation, God is all there is, in everything, has no shape but will appear in whatever form I would imagine. So, as a child, in times of crisis, I would turn to my personal God in the form of Krishna. My miserable life made me focus on something bigger than my immediate surrounding. I started meditating when I was in my late teens. I was certain that somehow I had to find a permanent solution to all this suffering. I couldn't imagine having to go through another life or being born again...and to break out of the cycle, I had to find Nirvana... Soon I realized that underneath all this suffering, the real pain was the pain of feeling a separate self...

My life changed abruptly in August 1998 following the move to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and meeting the Pittsburgh Philosophical Self-Inquiry Discussion Group (PSI). I was dealing with my dad's death, a recent matrimony, and not knowing what or where my life was going. I saw a flyer in the library asking "What are your goals in life?" and had the notion it was a typical career-related seminar that helps sort out your mess. On Monday, I attended the meeting and encountered Art T., Cecy R. and Reggie O. and found myself saying that the purpose of my life was to find enlightenment. I was truly happy to meet this group because the members were just so honest—finally, I could say the things that I wanted to.

For the next five years, I attend the PSI retreats, TAT Foundation retreats, and the regular Monday meetings. Participating in these meetings was like psychotherapy for me. Initially, this group or Mr. Rose's approach did not fit into my picture of a "spiritual" group, as there were no incense sticks, gurus in white/saffron robes or holier-than-thou pure people. Still, I couldn't help myself. It was a productive period of insight and realizations about my psychology. My focus

shifted from outside to completely inwards. I know now that if I hadn't met Art...my life would have traveled in a totally different direction today. Mr. Rose said that psychology and spirituality go hand in hand, and it is certainly true for me.

Initially, self-inquiry involved trying to understand this small "s" self first. It was hard for me to accept the robotic nature of this little being called "anima." Eventually, I realized that I was done with the psychological work, there was nothing more I could do about my personality, and there really was no path. God was either here and now and not in some distant future. For me, the problem was this little "me" was somehow getting in the way. But how does one get itself out of the way?

I used to think that having a family and children would result in the biggest block in my spiritual search. But as I passed thirty years of age, I realized that nature would not stop bothering me unless I accomplished what it expected me to do...that is, to reproduce. I got pregnant...and that was the period where I observed a break from a regular monthly hormonal cycle. In addition, my physical body slowed down to the point where I could see everything about this anima—I was at the physical level...all the desires, idiosyncrasies, the special little things that we identified with were totally at this physical level. The little self simply dissipated. Little anima was just a simple robot going about mundane life, doing the habitual stuff, thinking the thoughts and just living. Pretty soon, even the desire for enlightenment disappeared because the quest seemingly involved ego gratification. There really was nobody in the driver's seat. The vehicle moved quiet efficiently on its own. The self had disappeared completely.

In May 2004, Art had a profound experience. I felt alive again because I thought this is my chance to talk to God directly. On June 3, 2004, I was unable to sleep. It was 5:30 in the morning...the thought occurred to me, "I wonder what God feels like." And in that moment, I witnessed/experienced what Wren-Lewis describes as the "Dazzling Darkness." If you can imagine what Alive Energy would feel like, It was That. The physical body and mind were lying on the bed just panicking. My head felt as though it was about to burst, the blood was rushing to my head, my eyes were watering and the mind was having thoughts...no eyes were needed to see It, or ears to hear It, or any of the tools that we have to Be It...I was/am That... The physical body/mind wanted to turn away from the experience because it wasn't comfortable, and there was a feeling that the body would die if consciousness would not return.

I realized that I am the absolute, non-individualized Awareness, as is everything else. The little woman (as Bob F. calls it) still goes on playing its role but with that complete Freedom, which you can't understand.