Her Helping, Healing Hand
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"This treatment is no hushed, mystical, spiritual experience," writes Veronica Hauge, "For a moment, before she starts to treat you, Sreema will sit quietly, her face turned away as she takes a deep breath to center herself and concentrate her powers. But while her hand vibrates, she will chat about everything under the sun, smiling and laughing." Hauge is relating her experience with Sree Chakravarti, a self-described "Delhi housewife" who possesses an extraordinary power to diagnose and treat illnesses. "My theory," explains Sreema, "is that sickness is caused when electrons in the atoms of the ailing area act abnormally. It seems my right hand possesses some kind of magnetic vibration, and I believe this vibration, or radiation, helps to adjust the electrons and create a magnetic field that balances the body. I believe that my power to heal comes from Sai Baba, the saint of Shirdi [who passed on in 1918]."

Sreema's book, A Healer's Journey, is a kind of shaman's Travels of Marco Polo, with our heroine periodically departing her relatively sheltered life in Delhi to heal the ill and convert the skeptical. She travels far and wide, treating the Saudi royal family, dumbfounding groups of Western doctors in Lebanon, the United Kingdom and America, and in general demonstrating a truly extraordinary gift. The book abounds with descriptions and testimonies of her healings. James George, former ambassador of Canada to India (also Sri Lanka and Nepal), testifies that Sreema healed a tumor on his back. George told Hinduism Today, "She is one of those exceptionally rare people who know the inner power is not their own, but is a power they serve. She is an exceptional soul."

Not all, of course, are convinced. Dr. Peter Hoenig of the Emerson Hospital in Boston presided over a demonstration of Sreema's abilities before 20 staff doctors. "The medical staff listened," he told Hinduism Today, "but was skeptical. I don't think she swayed anyone. She didn't identify anything of significance. I've seen other lay healers who were better." Joan Ames, who was with Sreema at this demonstration said, "Some doctors were defensive, others were enthusiastic."

Ambassador George defends Sreema, "I can attest that what is in her book is accurate. The Ambassador from Syria was a close friend of mine." Sreema's fame in Delhi began after she successfully treated the skeptical ambassador for a slipped disk, so badly displaced he could not even raise his right hand. "My whole life changed as a result of this healing," writes Shreema. The now-cured Syrian ambassador insisted she open a clinic right at the embassy, at which she gave treatments three days at week.

Dr. Joe Geurstein, Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine at Harvard University, arranged the Boston hospital demonstrations. Though he did not attend them, and will not comment on her reception, he himself was treated by Shreema in a private meeting. Geurstein specializes in the treatment of pain. While not willing to allow for divine intervention, he more than acknowledges that there are many factors in healing beyond drugs and surgery. He told Hinduism Today, "I was impressed that she is sincere. I think Shree feels her skill and ability was given to her and is very special. She feels an impulse to use it and is not making any income from it. I also think she is very careful about not exceeding her abilities." He attributes her success to several factors. First, that she has a strong charisma that makes people have confidence in her ability to heal. Second, that she takes a "pretty good history" of the patient's problem. And third, that she stimulates healing by physical manipulation of the body. "She has strong hands and is not gentle," he said about his own treatment. Guerstein's view acknowledges the possibility of "healing," but he believes there are rational explanations for the process.

Our interview revealed Shreema not only to be a healer, but a yogi and insightful commentator on modern life. Hinduism Today correspondent Deva Rajan met with Sreema in Tiburon, California, during her book-promotion tour.

Hinduism Today: How did your healing gift first manifest?

Sree Chakravarti: According to my horoscope, I was born with the gift. The gift came after certain shocks in my life-first my son's death, then my own illness, then my father's death. I became aware of this vibration. But I couldn't tell anybody, as I myself was very sick. After I had major surgery, I found that I could heal myself. The gift is in the right hand.

HT: How many people have you treated in twenty-four years?

Shree: Thousands and thousands and thousands! There is no end to it. They are all over the world- America, Germany, Europe, Australia-so many places, my dear. There are no restrictions, and I don't charge money. Do you pay anything for the sun's rays? Or moonlight? What right have I got to take money for His gift?

HT: How do you know if you can treat someone?

Sreema: When I have a new case, I have to see whether my hand vibrates or not. That is the first principle in my life. If my hand does not vibrate, then this current won't pass. I have got tremendous diagnostic power. Machines will fail, but my hand will not fail. It can't be human work. Impossible.

HT: Is your healing stronger at a particular time of day?

Sreema: My husband, a very learned man, read a book that said Jesus Christ had tremendous healing power. He said that Jesus Christ's power was at a maximum when the sun used to set. In my case it is different. Early morning, after my prayer, my meditation and all that, I feel much better. I like to handle difficult cases in the morning rather than in the evening.

HT: How many sessions?

Sreema: Nobody knows! If the vibration stops, I cannot do anything more. When there is no vibration, it means either I cannot do anything more, or they are cured. Gastric ulcer, for example, normally takes five to ten sittings.

HT: What illnesses can you treat?

Sreema: It has to be a physical problem. I cannot treat mental cases, spinal trouble or any skin ailment. In that case, my hand doesn't vibrate. I also don't handle chronic cases, because I am so busy. One of the most wonderful things is that my hand can remove pain. These hands are marvelous.

HT: Can you cure paralysis?

Sreema: No. Once the brain cells are dead, nothing can be done.

HT: You refer to yourself as fiery and outspoken.

Sreema: What I feel is correct will always come out. I'm an unpopular person that way. But as my father told me, "Truth is even superior to God." I've had lots of problems with government ministers and all that. But I don't care. In my life I bow down my head only to God.

HT: When you are healing, what state of mind are you in?

Sreema: Oh, just like this! [laughs]. I keep on talking with my patient and all those around me. Only thing is that when I start, I empty myself. Then the magic comes. It is like a cup for tea or water-you have to empty it, then only you can fill it up.

HT: What is your religion?

Sreema: I am a Hindu, that is the religion in which I was brought up. I worship Krishna and the Mother in all Her forms-Durga, Kali, Saraswati, Lakshmi. But I do not believe my religion as such is involved. When I go into any religious structure-whether it's a temple, mosque or church-my whole body vibrates like a stringed instrument.

HT: Do you personally feel Sai Baba of Shirdi during a session?

Sreema: I feel that all the time he is with me. Whenever I've got a problem and don't know what to do, I meditate in front of his picture. I don't feel that it is a father-daughter relationship; it's more like friends. He is there to protect me

HT: What about hatha yoga?

Sreema: I do lots of yoga myself-every day without failure. As I said, I was very sick. By doing these asanas and meditations I am today what I am. Before, I couldn't sit, I couldn't sleep without any support.

HT: And breathing?

Sreema: I find that people breathe very wrongly. Lots of our problem comes from that. I find one of the causes of sickness is to breathe through right nose during the daytime. The right nostril is sun breath. Left is moon. When there is sun up one must breathe through the left nose. Then there is harmony.

HT: You recommend natural remedies for your patients?

Sreema: Yes, because modern medicines have such bad effects. My whole health was ruined by modern medicines. Today's drugs are stronger and stronger. Ayurvedic medicine and cooking are more natural. There is not that toxic side effect. We are also part of nature, no?

A Healer's Journey is available from Rudra Press, 541 NE 20th Avenue, Suite 206, Portland, Oregon, 97232, USA.

Editor's note: From the Hindu point of view, miracle healing is but the application of long-known laws of the body and soul. The energy which passes between people is known in yoga as prana. It is through a deliberate transfer of energy-akin to the flow between mother and child-that healing occurs. Prana, though subtle, is powerful. Used properly, it stimulates the body's healing mechanisms so that it is able to heal itself.

Sidebar: Healing with Mudras

"Our body," explains Sreema, "is made of five elements: fire, air, water, sky and earth. Our five fingers represent that. When we are sick one of the elements is not in balance-that causes the sickness. So I have given mudras in my book to bring them back to level. It is self healing; you can do this yourself."

Apana Vayu Mudra, according to Sreema's book, "This mudra is helpful in improving a heart weakness. Join the tip of the index finger [the air element] to the base of the thumb [the fire element]. Then lightly place the tips of your middle and ring fingers [sky and earth] on the tip of your thumb. It is also claimed that this mudra can even prevent a heart attack."

In a typical healing session, Sree Chakravarti will pass her hand over the patient. When her hand starts to vibrate, she knows she has located a problem area. Continued vibrations from her hand can heal the problem.

Sidebar: Sreema On the West

Most reports on Sreema Chakravarti focus on her healing gift. But we were equally impressed with her power of observation and insight. Below she shares her thoughts on the "fast lane" of modern life in the West.

Lack of Introspection

There is too much intensity. People don't try to understand their own self-what for they have come, who they are, why they are here. These questions never come to them. They don't enter into themselves. They don't make the inner journey. God is within you. So why not realize Him? Just go inside yourself. From where have you come? What is happening to your breath? Where does it come from? Where does it go? What does it do? These I feel are much more important.

So Much Tension

I find people are so tense here. The moment I touch a person, my hand immediately reports back their tension. This is my point. I feel that in this part of the world people are running after wrong things in life. When people hear about something, they want it. In India, also, it is coming-the crazy madness for wealth and material comfort. We don't understand that all our material comforts are leading towards wrong things. The spinal problems are all due to this comfort living-sitting in soft chairs, no body movement, watching television, less and less physical movements. More things for the comfort of the flesh, rather than for the soul and the mind.

The Mother's Touch is Lost

Wonderful human qualities are getting lost in this process. Mother has forgotten to give love to her children. All those gadgets and all the costly things they will buy for their children, to make them happy. That is not "the mother's touch." Slowly, slowly the human touch is getting lost. Comforting your wife with your touch is much more important than buying her a piece of jewelry. It is much more important to be together. That companionship, that love between the mother and children is gone, between husband and wife, it is gone. They are divorced. Sitting at the dining table one day, next day divorced.

Children Need Love

I'm sure the children will save our world. They have to be given plenty of love. If they get love, they will not go and get addicted to drugs. Why are they taking all

those drugs? Because there is something missing in their lives. They don't have the feeling of a home.When they come back from school or elsewhere, there is no one there. Everybody is busy earning more money. Who has the time? By the evening you are so tired, you don't have any time to talk to your family. This is the thing which is paining me very much. That's what I feel is miserable. The home, where one gets comfort, is lost.

The Folly of Divorce

Why is there divorce? You go on comparing your partner with another one. You can't have in one partner all the best qualities. You have to accept somebody with weaknesses and strengths. You have to combine those things, then a human being is there. If you just try to see the weakness in that person, then you will go change your partner out of frustration. At the end of your life, there will be nobody to sit with you, nobody to talk with you.

No More War

Why cannot the world live like one family? Why is there so much hatred? There should be no war. We have to start. Now it is the turning point. Going away from hatred, it is the journey of love we have to make. All my writing is really meant for each and every human being. This is some sort of message from God.