Tanmatras, The “Hard Problem” of Consciousness and the New Physics

Richard Gauthier

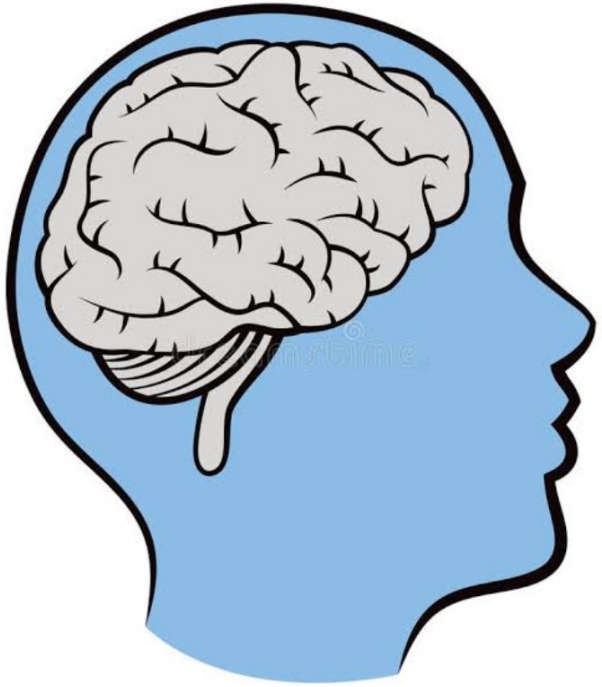
Ananda Marga New York Summer Retreat

June 29-July 5, 2026

Abstract

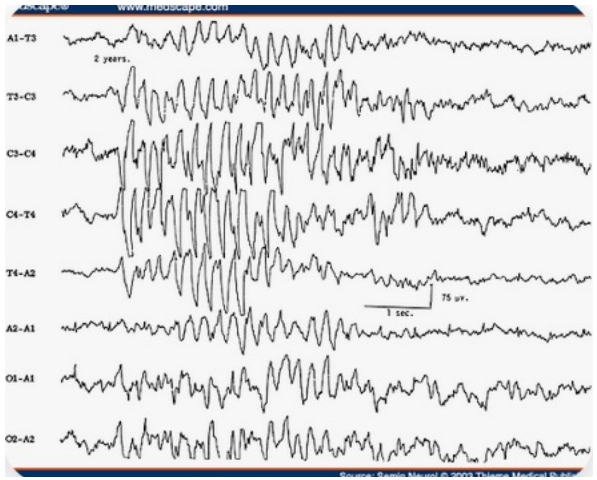
Neuroscientists, physicists and philosophers who believe in physicalism or materialism have no idea about how to solve David Chalmers' "hard problem" of consciousness—how to explain conscious sensory experiences or qualia by the physical activities of the brain. Philosopher and guru Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar combines an updated concept of tanmatras (sensory inferences or generic essences) with his philosophy of Cosmic Consciousness and the individual conscious self to resolve perhaps the most knotty problem in philosophy and science today—the "hard problem" leading to a new physics Tanmatron Field Theory (TFT) of Cosmic fields producing Big Bangs and psychophysical particles called tanmatrons.

What is the “Hard Problem” of Consciousness?





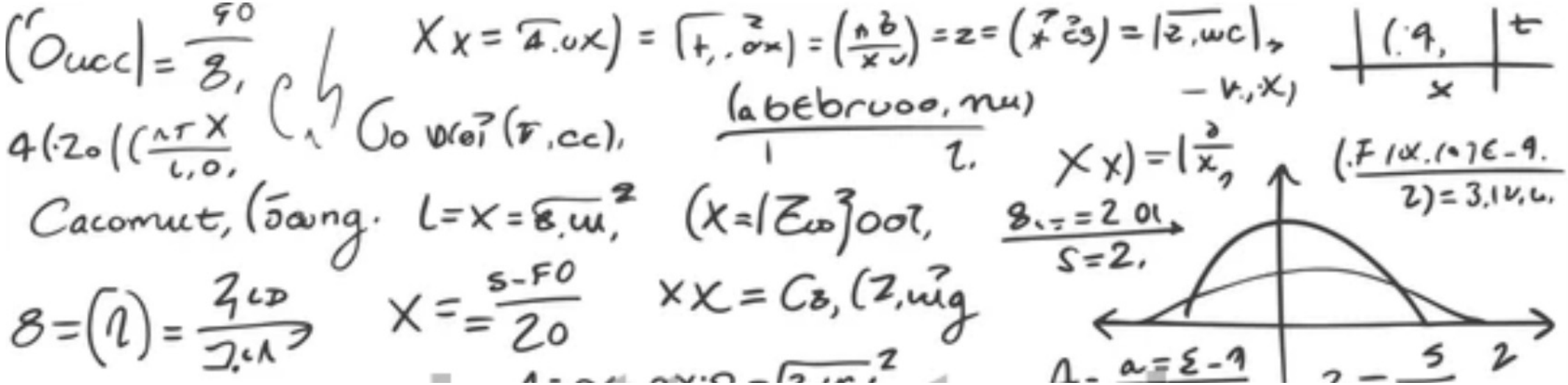




The “hard problem”: How do the activities of a physical brain produce conscious, subjective experiences, like colors, sounds, hotness, a sharp pain?

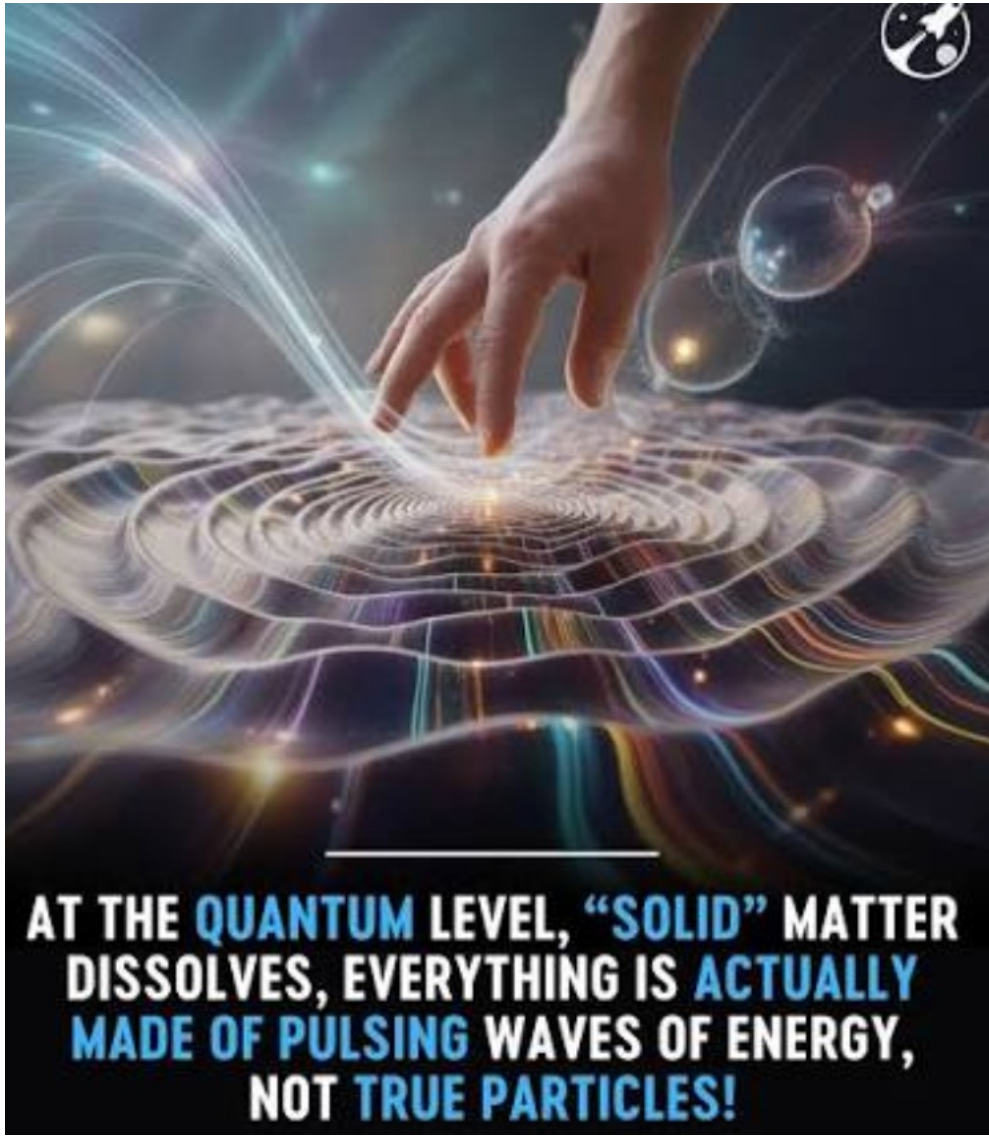
Why is there no subjective experience in physical theories?

Since Galileo started mathematical physics around 1630, scientists have left out subjective qualities from their theories to create mathematical physics theories, with the goal of fully describing the physical universe mathematically, but not explaining subjective qualities.



What do most physicists and neuroscientists think today about the world outside of their senses?

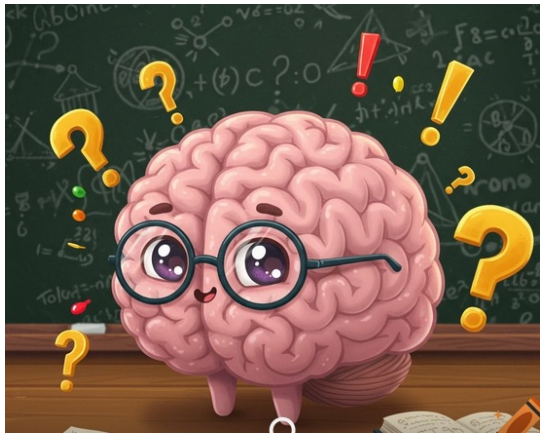
Today, most physicists think that the physical world consists of waves, matter, energy, space-time, quantities and abstractions like quantum fields, without sensory qualities. Most neuroscientists think conscious subjective experiences like color and sound arise from the activities of the physical nerve cells or chemicals in the brain.



How to Solve the “Hard Problem” of Consciousness?



Philosophers, physicists and neuroscientists who support the philosophy of physicalism or materialism DON’T HAVE ANY IDEA OF HOW TO SOLVE IT.

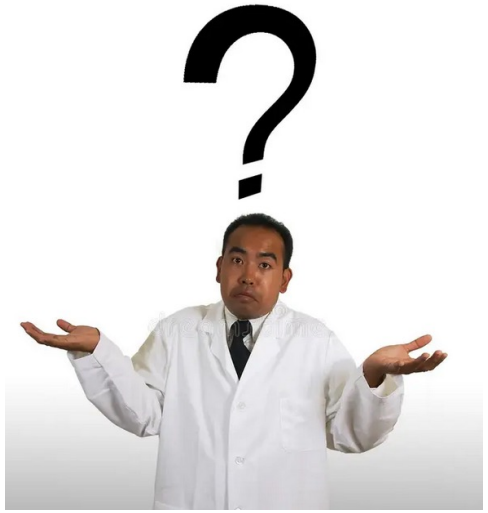




It required a spiritual guru with a new theory of Supreme Consciousness.







Enter Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (a.k.a. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti)



“Wherever there is any semblance or sign of existence there is bound to be a corresponding vibration or wave, and that vibration must be associated with some inferential expression (tanmátra) or the other. Do you understand? A vibration is always dependent on an inferential expression. Different tanmátras are associated with different vibrations. That is how from these vibrations, inferences such as sound, touch, form, taste and smell continue to saturate the universe. Since they are associated with the tanmátras, sound, touch, form, taste and smell emanate from their respective vibrations and permeate the universe.

So, wherever there are vibrations, there must be sound, touch, smell, form, taste, and they all come within the scope of perception.

--P. R. Sarkar,“Parama Puruśa – the Primordial Cause”, 12 April 1979, Kolkata

What is a Tanmatra?

TANMÁTRA. Literally, “minutest fraction of that,” i.e., of a given rudimental factor of matter. Also translated as “generic essence” or “inferential wave”.

Ananda Sutram by P. R. Sarkar

Example: A photon of light producing a particular shade of red has a particular physical frequency (number of vibrations/sec) and a particular tanmatra or “inferential wave” for red. The tanmatra is called “red” because it creates the conscious sensation of red in your experience. But most physicists and neurophysiologists don’t yet know about tanmatras and how conscious experience is produced in the mind.

Are Tanmatras Physical or Psychic?

"**If we regard the tanmátric entity**, whose inferential comprehension takes place only internally, **as purely psychic**, then we have to term the organs, the crude bearers of that **pure psychic entity**, as psycho-physical. The organs are psycho-physical, hence the amount of crudeness in them is more than in the **psychic inferences**."

--P. R. Sarkar, "The Chariot and the Charioteer", Jyaeśt́ha Púrńimá, 1956

Tanmatras, being purely psychic, can easily enter the mind from the sensory nerves at certain places called Piithas or "appropriative points".

The Five Fundamental Physical Factors Emit Tanmatras

Etherial Factor (space) gives off sound tanmatras

Aerial Factor (like air) – gives off sound and touch tanmatras

Luminous Factor (like fire)—gives off sound, touch and form (& color) tanmatras

Liquid Factor – (like water) gives off sound, touch, form and taste tanmatras

Solid Factor (like a rock)– gives off sound, touch, form, taste and smell tanmatras

Tanmatras vibrate the mind's citta (mental plate) to produce sensations and perceived objects

"All that is comprehensible and graspable in the world is but a vibrational play. Just as the tanmátras of sound, touch, form, taste and smell are creating vibrations in our nerves by coming in contact with the gates of our sensory and motor organs, **so our mind, being also similarly vibrated by these vibrations or waves, goes on transmuting the citta (mental plate) into the same forms of these waves. As a result, we "see" elephants and horses, "hear" Puravi and Bhaeravii rágas, "touch" hot and cold, "taste" bitter and sweet and "smell" shiulii and rajaniigandhá flowers"."**
–Source: P. R. Sarkar, Vibration, Form and Color, Jyaeśtha Púrńimá 1956 DMC, Bhagalpur, India

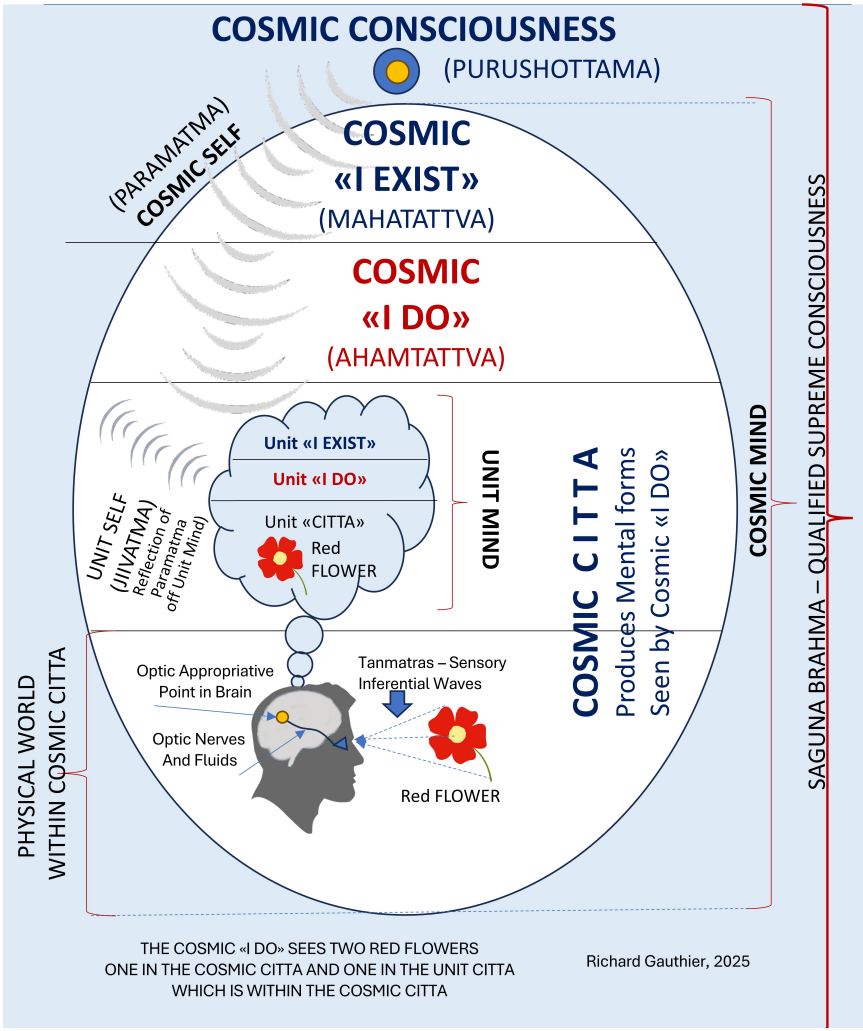
The real knower and witness of the mind is the individual consciousness

"But is mind the real knower? If not, who is the real knower? "I exist", "I do" and done "I" are functional forms. There is another entity who is the master of functions and who witnesses that these functions are performed. We thus come to the entity witnessing mahattattva ("I exist"). **This witnessing entity is the átman, or the unit consciousness. The knower of the mind itself is the átman. Hence the ultimate knowership (jiṇátrtva) lies in the átman and not in the mind; the átman, or the reflected (Cosmic) consciousness on the unit psychic plate, is not only the active element; the knowership lies in him as witnessing entity. The átman knows because it is an active participant in the function of the mind**."

–Source: P. R. Sarkar, Life, Death and Saḿskára", 1959, Jamalpur, India

THE UNIT MIND WITHIN THE COSMIC MIND
(Solving the «Hard problem» of Consciousness)

NIRGUNA BRAHMA
(Non-Qualified Supreme Consciousness)



Enter the New Physics

In order to resolve the “hard problem” , photons, sound vibrations, touch, taste and smell particles have to have 1) a physical vibration which can be measured and described mathematically and detected by physical instruments, and 2) a particular psychic tanmatra carrying the inference of the quality that will be experienced when the tanmatra enters the mind.

A Sound vibration (phonon) = physical vibration + sound tanmatra

A Light vibration (photon) = physical vibration + color tanmatra etc.

… Touch vibration, taste vibration, smell vibration

New particles in physics need new names. **What should these physical vibrations explicitly carrying tanmatras be named?**

Enter the Tanmatron -- a physical vibration associated with a tanmatra

Are all fundamental physical particles (photons, electrons, protons, quarks, neutrinos, Higgs bosons) actually tanmatrons? YES, because they are all physical vibrations associated with tanmatras.

Tanmatras are associated with all physical vibrations whether we can experience their tanmatras consciously as qualities or not.

Is a word a tanmatron? Is a gravity wave a tanmatron?

Is a mantra a tanmatron? Is a person a tanmatron?

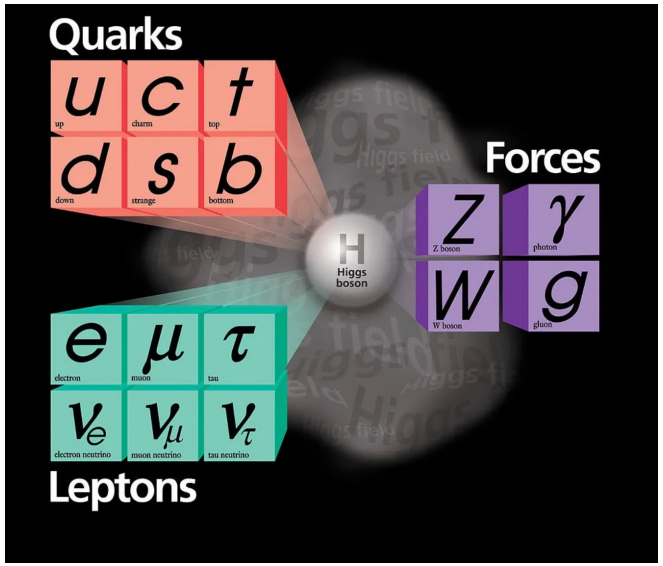
Can thought vibrations (like dreams) have tanmatras?

Prediction: Quantum Field Theory (QFT) Becomes Tanmatron Field Theory (TFT)

Quantum Field Theory (QFT) is the foundational framework in modern physics that combines quantum mechanics and Einstein's special relativity. It states that the universe is made entirely of invisible, fluid-like quantum fields permeating all of spacetime.

QFT replaced by Tanmatron Field Theory (TFT), which produces psychophysical particles and the Big Bang with their tanmatras from tanmatron fields in the Cosmic Mind. **There is no such thing as pure physicalism.** All vibrational matter has proto-mind (tanmatras).

Tanmatron Electrodynamics (TED) produces photons carrying tanmatras from physical objects to the eyes to help produce conscious perception of colors and forms.



Tanmatron Field Theory

How to Experimentally Test the Tanmatra Hypothesis in Conscious Perception?

Tanmatras and the appropriative points or Piithas in the sensory nerves will have to be demonstrated scientifically before scientists will accept them. Experiments could be done with local anesthetics in the brain's sensory systems. Such anesthetics could alter a person's sensory consciousness in a way that supports the existence of Piithas, where tanmatras pass between the sensory nerves and the mind to produce conscious sensory experiences.



How Tanmatras and the Mind's Individual Consciousness Can Resolve the "Hard Problem" of Consciousness

Tanmatras and the mind's conscious self– the reflection of Cosmic Consciousness on the mind – can resolve the "hard problem" of consciousness, because the origin of conscious sensory experiences of physical objects is not from brain activities themselves. It is from physical objects emitting tanmatras that pass through sensory organs and then through Piithas to the mind. Qualities, like the color red, that are created by tanmatras vibrating the mental plate, are experienced consciously because they are witnessed by the mind's conscious self, which witnesses all the activities of the mind. Sensory memories (cerebral memories) can be stored in the brain (as on a phonograph record or a hologram), but their tanmatras must be reactivated and passed to the mind in order to be consciously remembered. Extracerebral memories (such as memories of past lives) are stored in the mind.

Bibliography

1. Chalmers, David. (1995). "Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness." *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2(3), 200–219. Introduces the “Hard Problem” of Consciousness.
2. Gauthier, R., (2026), Tanmatron Field Theory Resolves the Mind-Matter Divide through Unified Dual-Aspect Reality, https://richardgauthier.academia.edu/research.
3. Gauthier, R., (2026), Tanmatras -- the Missing Link Between Matter and Consciousness, https://richardgauthier.academia.edu/research.
4. Gauthier, R., (2025), P. R. Sarkar’s Yogic Philosophy Dissolves Descartes’ Mind–Body Problem and Chalmers’ “Hard Problem” of Consciousness, https://richardgauthier.academia.edu/research
5. Gauthier, R., (2020) “Who Was Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar or Shrii Shrii Anandamurti?” https://www.academia.edu/attachments/65284031/download_file?s=portfolio .
6. Sarkar, P. R., (1962), *Ánanda Sútram*, https://www.academia.edu/attachments/66573981/download_file?s=portfolio.
7. Sarkar, P. R., (2026) *The Electronic Edition of The Works of P.R. Sarkar* – V9, https://eledit.net/.

Website: https://richardgauthier.academia.edu/research