

**14 DAYS IN PALM SPRINGS  
WITH U.G.**

**BY  
SABYASACHI GUHA**

## Translator's Note

The translation of the Bengali book *14 Days in Palm Springs with U.G.* by Sabyasachi Guha into English was the effort of Mukta Chowdhury, Subhasish (Bubu) Bhattacharya, Indira Panicker and Suchitra Chowdhury whose passion and commitment made it possible. I cannot read Bengali but when the opportunity to get this project going came to me, I could not ignore it. While my efforts were more towards coordination, editing and getting the job done, the entire translation work was carried out by the dedicated team mentioned above. The final editing was done by Nandini Kapadia, Julie Thayer and Tanusri Chatterjee. These are Guhaji's words and I am sure that every person who worked on it will be changed in some way.

It feels like the book just came to give a message, and that message has the power to turn us back "home". I can hear Guhaji's words ringing inside me, "As long as you have hope, the misery will perpetuate itself. Hope is dope." So there goes hope out of the window; no way out. There will be many more explosive statements to come in time as we have still not seen the immensity of what this life can unleash. This one amongst us, a true man, is going to shake our citadel of thoughts and topple our misconceptions, spiritual or otherwise. I sincerely hope that people from all walks of life read this powerhouse of a book and may it light a spark somewhere, someplace.

I am immensely grateful to Guhaji for what he offers to us - his life energy to wake us up from our slumber. Behind his laughter is a force of a thousand bulldozers. This is a call for revolution from a man who wanted to better the life of his exploited countrymen. The movement is not just a revolution in a country but an assault on human consciousness which is in crisis; there are going to be far-reaching effects which we will witness in time. The "human consciousness revolutionary" is on a roll. Watch out!

**Sanjiv Chowdhury**

*Mumbai*

*July 2015*

*In the world of conscious effort, it is important to understand what is possible and what is not, and in that understanding lies the essence of how life's effective energy can be properly utilized.*

- **Sabyasachi Guha**

*It is impossible to determine the ways of living by knowing how life works because one cannot perceive the true form of life as it exists. The process of knowing is a result of separation from nature, created by the sense of self. Discovering the illusory nature of knowledge and rejecting it continuously can lead to a way of life which is closest to nature's preprogrammed order in an individual. Any general description of such a state is impossible. Every individual's natural state is unique and incomparable.*

- **Sabyasachi Guha**

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## A Note From The Author

The idea for *14 Days With U.G. In Palm Springs* took root when I started writing letters to my dear friend Ramakrishna Chatterjee in Kolkata to describe my experiences with U.G. Krishnamurti. Ramakrishna's deep interest and enthusiasm in spiritual matters helped me to complete this work. My friends Swapn, Dipankar, Shankar, Rajat, Kamal, Utpal, Subhasis, Tapas, Sangita, Partha and Sunanda have all helped me in various ways. This book would not have been published but for Pinaki Chakraborty, who took full responsibility for getting it printed.

U.G. Krishnamurti is the soul and the prime mover of this book. His memory is my fundamental inspiration.

**Sabyasachi Guha**

*July 2007*

## About The Author

U. G. Krishnamurti replied directly, "No way!" A research physicist in New Jersey's Rutgers University, the forty-two-year-old Sabyasachi had searched everywhere for God, Brahman and self-knowledge, and had finally asked U.G. directly, "What is the way?"

This answer took him back twenty-one years to a secluded bank on the Ganges in the middle of the night in Varanasi. There while gazing unmindfully at the river, he suddenly saw the dead body of a young boy his age floating under his feet. He thought to himself that the turbulent time he was passing through because of his political involvement in the past few years could have also turned him into a corpse. He was surprised that he was still alive.

The eldest son of Dr. Ajit Ranjan Guha and Sulekha Devi, Sabyasachi started skipping school when he was in sixth or seventh grade. This prompted his worried mother to send him to her guru Paramhansa Durgaprasanna Brahmachari's ashram and boarding school in Palashi, West Bengal. There he organized a football team with the village boys, and they would begin their day with an early morning match before gathering to pay salutations to the guru. When his Socialist father was put behind bars during a national Emergency, he returned to Hindmotor, his hometown, after two years. Now he wanted to be a football star. Sensing his highly energetic son's lack of motivation for a suitable career, his father handed him two books - one on Swami Vivekananda and the other on Albert Einstein. Swami Vivekananda's impact was not felt immediately but Einstein made a huge impression on his young mind. In order to understand the theory of relativity, he taught himself Calculus in tenth grade and surprised his parents by earning a national scholarship and admission to the renowned Presidency College in Kolkata to study science. There he was soon drawn into the massive labor movement that was sweeping across not only Bengal but large parts of India and around the world as well. He traveled through villages and cities with almost no food or shelter, living amongst the most impoverished and exploited people. Exhausted and disillusioned, he had landed in Varanasi as a fugitive. He spent most of his time in the Banaras Hindu University library reading spiritual books and trying to figure out the meaning and purpose of life. All this reading did not appease his internal restlessness.

After finishing his studies in India, he married Bhamidipathy Lakshmi Rao, whom he had met in Rourkela, where he was completing his Master's degree. Soon afterwards, she moved to the USA as a post-doctoral fellow at Rutgers University, New Jersey. Guha then joined her and began working in the Physics department of the same university. Seven years later, through strange circumstances, he met U.G. Krishnamurti who shattered his knowledge about spirituality and practices, enabling him to approach his

most desirable destination, where emancipation is written all over the skies ... yet, according to U.G., it is a “No way!”

Sabyasachi Guha presently spends his time travelling and talking to interested friends. He is affectionately called Pradeep (meaning lamp in Bengali) by his friends from his hometown. They believe he has been lighting countless “lamps” tirelessly. Other close friends call him Guha, which means cave in Bengali. They say it is easy to enter this cave but impossible to measure its depth.

This book is an extraordinary and moving account of one of Guha’s early interactions with U.G.

- Rajat Paul  
- Swapan Majumdar  
*Kolkata*  
*October 2007*



Guha with Ramakrishna Chatterjee in Kolkata

## CHAPTER 1

### Arriving In Palm Springs

U.G. has decided to spend some days in Palm Springs, a beautiful city 100 miles east of Los Angeles. Julie telephoned to give me the news. I immediately noted down his telephone number in my diary. Later, while talking to her again, I learned that quite a few friends from India, Europe and America want to come to Palm Springs to spend some time with U.G. For Julie, it is a different matter altogether. At present, her sole aim in life is to be in his presence. U.G., however, always tries to discourage others from being dependent on him or making him the center of their lives.

U.G.'s full name is Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti. I first became acquainted with this name through a strange incident. I was then doing research in Physics at Rutgers University, New Jersey. In our research team was an Indian gentleman who was busy winding up his doctorate dissertation. As we sometimes worked together, a friendship developed between us and this led to personal discussions about our beliefs and philosophical concepts. He showed a keen interest in talking about spiritual matters and when he learned that I too was deeply interested in such things, that in fact, spirituality had become the most important part of my life, he informed me that he practiced meditation, followed the path of Raj Yoga and was also deeply involved with a spiritual organization. Afterwards, whenever we found time, we used to discuss spiritual matters.

This gentleman was keen that I meet his guru. My daughter Shilpa was then just a few months old and he and his wife invited my wife, Lakshmi and me to dinner one day, ostensibly to see our baby. The real reason was to have a detailed discussion on meditation, philosophy and working methods of their organization. In the evening, as soon as I entered my friend's living room, my eyes fell on a photograph. "If this gentleman is your guru, I have no objection to meeting him," I informed my friend. He said that this was Shri Ramchandra, who had passed away, and that Ramachandra's favorite disciple, Parthasarathy, was the current guru. I told him in that case I was not so eager to meet him; it was the photograph that had attracted me. But he began to explain things and showed us the mission's books. I was examining their book cabinet when suddenly my gaze was arrested by one of the titles. I took the book and began to turn the pages hurriedly. It was titled *The Unknown Man*. A chapter on Jiddu Krishnamurti caught my attention. I knew the subject well, but surprisingly the next chapter attracted my attention even more forcefully. I avidly read the chapter titled *No Way*. This was the first time



somebody had criticized J Krishnamurti. I finished the chapter in one shot. It was about U.G. Krishnamurti. This was the first time I had seen his name and photograph.

It took me another four years to be personally acquainted with this man. I first met him in New York, December 13, 1995, in Julie Clark Thayer's apartment in Central Park West. Julie has no siblings. She calls me her brother. That day after speaking to her on the phone I realized that she was very happy, the reason being U.G. had granted her permission to stay longer with him in Palm Springs. I too wished to spend a few days of my vacation with U.G. so I thought if U.G. consents I will go and spend two weeks with him in Palm Springs. Immediately after finishing my conversation with Julie, I phoned U.G.

Guha - U.G., I heard you have discovered an excellent place to stay in Palm Springs.

U.G. - You heard right. We have got it very cheap. The dryness of the desert makes me feel healthy.

Guha - If you have no objection and if you have no other plan, then I too would like to spend my holiday in Palm Springs.

U.G. - I do not say yes or no to anyone. Why should you simply come so far? You will not get anything from me. Why should you waste both your money and leave by coming so far? You are a researcher, your time is valuable. Besides, you have seen in New York how I roam around and spend time chit chatting with friends. That's how I spend my days.

Guha -Well, never mind. Let me spend some money just to have the pleasure of chatting as I am a Bengali.

U.G. - It is your money and you may spend it as you wish and I have nothing to say to that. However, later you should not blame me. Another thing ... I am staying in the desert. It is impossibly hot here in June. I wanted to remind you how hot it is here.

Guha - I have spent my life in Kolkata's hot and humid climate. The heat will not stop me from chit chatting.

U.G. - Not only the outside heat, inside too it is tremendously hot!

I was stunned at hearing his words. It was U.G.'s habit to sometimes speak in a way which gave a jolt. What did he mean by inside heat? In America there was no shortage of air conditioners. Of course, for those who were interested in spiritual practices, the words were very meaningful. But for a person who

did not believe in soul, spirituality and god what else could one think except that he must be talking of lack of fans and air conditioners? Still I told him, “I believe such conditions are most suitable for spiritual practices.”

U.G. - Till you give up this mystifying outlook, you will not be able to see anything clearly.

Guha - Never mind what happens. I am coming.

U.G. - Listen, your sister from New York, Julie, she is also here. She is well acquainted with this place. She will receive you at the airport.

The matter of staying with U.G. in Palm Springs for 14 days was now fixed. I arrived at Los Angeles airport in the middle of June. I had been living in America for the last seven years but this was the first time I had stepped into the heart of California. Julie was waiting for me in the airport lounge. As soon as she saw me, she greeted me with a hug and said, “My brother, welcome to California.” Eyes shining with joy, her cheeks were aflame with a rosy hue. I asked her whereabouts of U.G. She said that U.G. was resting in Hotel Cal Mar on the shores of Santa Monica. We had to wait at the airport for some more time because a lady named Tanuja Chandra was expected in half an hour. She would stay with us for about 10 days.

I was not acquainted with Tanuja Chandra but I made no mistake in identifying her among the passengers coming out of Immigration. Two glasses that looked like soda bottle bottoms seemed to be held in front of her eyes with the help of a thin black wire. Short and petite, this lady seemed to represent the urban, upper middle class, modern class of the society. Amidst the introductions, I realized that Tanuja was a writer; she had written a script for a Hindi movie and was also an upcoming director. She was associated with a few television serials. She had a film-making degree from an American university.

All three of us rode in Julie’s Swedish car, Volvo 840 and reached the hotel within half an hour. In the hotel U.G. and his Italian friend Mario Viggiano were waiting for us. As soon as U.G. saw me, he said that he had heard that Bengalis liked nothing better than to chat. But he wondered if crossing the heartland of America and traveling from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the shores of the Pacific Ocean just to chat was not a little bit too much! I pointed to Tanuja and asked what he would say to this lady who had crossed the seven seas to come to this place! U.G. said, “She has a suitable reason for it.



U.G. with Tanuja Chandra, Julie Clark-Thayer and Mahesh Bhatt in Palm Springs

She has decided to work in India but to save her American Green Card, which might be useful in future, she is here.” We chatted in the hotel till evening. Mario had accompanied U.G. nearly all over the world a couple of times. He will stay here for about 10 days and then go back to his workplace in Germany.

At present, in California, he has rented a white Japanese car – the Nissan Maxima. We then went back to Los Angeles Airport in two cars. Famous film director Mahesh Bhatt was to arrive from Switzerland. He would be staying for two weeks in California with U.G. Mahesh, with a black bag slung on his shoulders, came out much before other passengers. First class passengers disembark first. That’s the first time I realized how fast we can get out if we do not have to wait for the luggage to arrive. Mahesh’s nature was joyous and enthusiastic. There were no pretensions of any kind. His behavior on seeing U.G. reminded me of the song - *my heart dances like a peacock today*. U.G. too seemed to light up with joy but pretending to be disgusted, he wrinkled his nose and said, “How long will you continue this childishness?” I felt, if we all were not around, Mahesh would have given a physical demonstration of his love for the old man.

We were to travel in two cars to the palm desert, a journey of two-and-a-half hours. U.G. did not answer Julie’s query of who was traveling in which car and told me to travel in the car with him, if it was not troublesome. Then he glanced at Mahesh. “All are Indians, no problem,” shouted that gentleman! Mario and U.G. sat in the front seat, while Tanuja, Mahesh and I sat in the rear seats. Poor Julie followed us alone in the other car.

Everybody said Mario’s driving was extraordinary. I felt pity for a man who was used to driving on the Autobahns of Germany at 200 km per hour, who now had to crawl through the traffic of Los Angeles. He seemed crushed occasionally and smiled as soon as our eyes met in the rear view mirror. I had become good friends with Mario in this short while. His American girlfriend Lisa was so good looking that Mahesh called her Lisa Gorgeous. Lisa lives in Palm Springs, where we were about to stay. After about three hours we got off the highway.

This place is unimaginably beautiful. Sand dunes rise out of the ground in a way that I felt the wind god must surely be coming here every day to dance with joy and abandon, making new creations each day. This has not evaded the eyes of the human beings; they have used their intelligence to harness the energy of the wind god and installed rows and rows of windmills. The mad, drunken flapping of the windmills provides energy for cooking and lighting in many of the nearby villages and towns. Leaving all this behind we soon came on the outskirts of a luxurious small city. As soon as we entered, my eyes fell on the cable ropeway, which snaked its way to the top of a mountain. Quite a few cable cars were

swaying in the wind and going to and fro. We passed a few traffic lights and arrived in front of a beautiful lodge. Getting down from the car, I realized how the car's air conditioner had kept us cool.

Ocotillo Lodge. The name of the original residents of this land has become synonymous with the motherland of my dreams, thanks to a mistake in the direction taken by Columbus. 'Ocotillo' means a beautiful desert flower in the native Indian language. It is a single storied lodge. There are small flats with a kitchen, bedroom, living room and a narrow veranda. The whole thing is beautifully decorated. Rates differ on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Rates double around the time of the birthday of the carpenter from Nazareth. I had decided not to cook; hence to spend seventy dollars daily would be luxury for me. This is not for me, I told myself. Just on the opposite side of the road, a five-minute walk away I found a suitable place to stay for forty dollars. The room had a pair of beds and an attached bath. There was also a swimming pool downstairs but I preferred to take bath in my room itself. That night I did not sleep well. My mind was in a questioning mode. My mind is always eager to know the purpose of my work. Sometimes I am very embarrassed. This struggle between the one who questions the intention and the one who works is very painful.



Ocotillo Lodge – Palm Springs, California.

## CHAPTER 2

### Coffee With U.G.

I woke up early at five in the morning and had bath again. We had an invitation to drink coffee at 5.30 am. U.G. himself had invited me while I was taking his leave last night. I knocked at his door at the exact time; the door opened. Mahesh was also present. U.G. made some coffee for Mahesh and me. Nobody was speaking a word. The silence of the dawn could not wipe out the remnants of sleep from my head. The feeling of laziness made my voice heavy too. I made a sound and tried to make them aware of me; both of them were lost in their own worlds. Mahesh looked at me. I told him I had read his book *A Taste of Death* on the internet. That book has a unique attraction. I was inspired to meet U.G. personally after reading the book. Mahesh said laughingly that if that was the case it was worth writing the book. His laughter suggested that he was amazed that after reading an author like him, people would want to meet U.G.

U.G. always says that society has unnaturally created in us our religious and spiritual demands, and in order to fulfill these unreal demands it has created a vast religious and spiritual marketplace. It was his contention that if anybody had read books on him and understood anything, the proof of it would be that the person would never come to meet him nor go to meet anyone else for any reason. U.G. himself has never written a book.

Conversation would proceed through questions and answers whenever people came to meet him. Many people have taped and video recorded such conversations. U.G.'s close and intimate friends have compiled many such conversations in the form of books. I remembered a funny incident while enumerating the names of these books. U.G.'s grandson had gone for an interview at Siemens Company in Germany. At the end of the interview when asked about his family background, the grandson informed the interviewer that his grandfather was a famous philosopher. One of the board members enthusiastically asked him to encapsulate his grandfather's philosophy. In reply to this question, the grandson mentioned the titles of a few books like *Mind is a Myth*, *Thought is your Enemy* and *No Way Out*. The board member hurriedly stopped him and said, "I understand, I understand..." The grandson of course got the job and went to live in Germany. There are two more books, *The Mystique of Enlightenment* which U.G. calls *The Mistake of Enlightenment* and *The Courage to Stand Alone*. These can be read free on the internet at <http://www.well.com/user/jct>.

When I tried to throw some light on the differences in the viewpoints of U.G. and Mahesh, he evaded the effort. Mahesh asked me if I believed U.G.'s contention that we had in us whatever was operating in him. I said that at a very basic level there was no difference between all of us. The same life force which makes our body work every moment is Nature's most powerful process, yet it expresses itself in each one of us in a different way. Therefore, it is impossible to find two people of the same kind. There is no straight answer to this question. However, some fundamental change has occurred in U.G. which makes it impossible to comprehend this matter. The matter being that there are no more questions in him. Mahesh was quiet, U.G. was disinterested. I thought in my mind that probably U.G. had got the answer

to his last question or maybe no questions arose in his mind because he had realized that there was no end to questions or that it was of no use to ask questions. In spite of that, we keep on asking questions all the time. We demand detailed explanations; we want to establish a relationship between action and its cause, so that in future we can control it with the use of this knowledge. Through the whole process maybe we could learn the sole purpose of life one day. Surely life must have a core purpose; I have to find that, at least for myself, or else I will feel frustrated and suffer from a sense of worthlessness. I often feel helpless in front of this surge of desire to know the purpose of life.

The sound of the phone ringing prompted me to look at the clock. It was around eight in the morning. I answered the phone. It was Julie. She eagerly wanted to know what time she could arrive - she told me to ask U.G. He replied not before 9 am under any circumstance. He wanted her to ring up again at nine. After some time, quite a few people arrived. To U.G.'s question of "How good is the morning?" everyone gave different replies. If this same question was thrown at U.G., he would reply, "Could not be better." Anyway, by now the discussions had turned into informal chats and gossip on different topics. The talk turned to breakfast and where and what each one would eat. There was a general feeling in the room in favor of having breakfast in U.G.'s room. That was enough for U.G. to flare up. He, like always, snapped back and made it clear that he had not opened an ashram and everybody was expected to make their own arrangements for food. Food has turned into such an object of desire for mankind that Nature was finding it difficult to cope up with these demands. The destruction of humankind was imminent. Even before U.G. finished talking, the room was empty. Till then the thought of food had not entered my head but seeing everybody leave, I also prepared to leave the room. U.G. stopped me and said that I was to have breakfast with him. I was embarrassed and felt uncomfortable but must admit that at the same time I was touched by his hospitality. I was surprised at the way he made distinctions in his behavior, but the man himself seemed totally unembarrassed and undoubtedly comfortable. His demeanor was simple and natural.

I stood beside him in the kitchen and watched him prepare breakfast. He emptied a small packet of Quaker oatmeal in a saucepan and boiled it for five minutes. He gave half to me and kept the other half for himself in another plastic plate. On the oatmeal he poured a generous quantity of high fat milk available in the market. This milk is completely avoided in modern society. Doctors here, who influence doctors worldwide, have created such a fear of fat in the minds of people that they have totally given up drinking normal milk. On top of that, this had double cream, it was sure to make your heart fail just by looking at it. Then U.G. mixed some thick pineapple juice with it; here they call it frozen pineapple juice and it is very sour. Just a mouthful was enough to make me forget how to move my jaws. I swallowed the mouthful with the help of a sip of hot water and politely requested some sugar. He passed me the container of sugar and after putting a few teaspoons, it became palatable and tasty. After eating, I followed U.G.'s example, washed my own plate, spoon, dried it with a napkin and kept them neatly in their place.

At 10 am Mahesh, Tanuja, Julie, Mario and Lisa arrived. Mario cooks very well. Many a time he tried to open a restaurant but for some reason it never worked out. Whenever he gets a chance, he cooks for people to keep up his cooking skills. Today is the first day so U.G. gave Mario permission to cook, and said that if they all desired they could be Mario's guests. There was one condition - it was to be a single

dish, like for example our *khichdi*. Mario cooked an Italian dish. On hearing my enthusiastic praises, U.G. commented that probably I had not eaten such a preparation in good restaurants and was therefore praising an ordinary pasta dish. I realized that U.G. was probably unaware of a feeling called embarrassment.

After lunch we went back to our rooms. I lay on the bed and began to wonder why I had chosen to spend 14 days in this manner over here. Nobody had asked me to come here. I had literally forced myself on U.G. He had stated categorically, "If anybody benefits by reading my conversations, then that person will never approach anybody else for help."

If I acknowledge that I do not need anybody's help then why have I come here? Is there any logic to it? When the thought *I am not free from pricking my conscience* builds a home inside you, then the thinker becomes powerful. The pricking of conscience is a fight between two thoughts. Whichever wins is not free of other. And there is no thought of which there is no opposing thought. That is why thought is never free of conflict. When any expression is created by existence, then there are no consequences to that. They spread a mild fragrance like a rose, which disappears after a while. The thought through its expressions gives rise to the thinker. The thinker always wants something or the other, he tries to dominate and be victorious over others. In short, he is a fascist. On the other hand, the existential expression is the expression of life; it does not want anything except the intensity, duration and space needed for its presence. It does not accept anything more. There is no desire for anything else. That life which is free from the pressure of thoughts is an expression of the life force, and it is free from every desire other than food, clothing and shelter. Through his good luck if all these are arranged for, that man never becomes despondent, thinking what is it that he will do if he loses everything.

While these thoughts were flowing in my head, I felt as if someone with a coconut scraper-like instrument was creating havoc in my head, disturbing the thick crust of thoughts from the past. Sometimes when U.G. begins to participate in a battle of wits, he insults one terribly. It is as if he is saying that with your capacity of intellect, it is very painful for you to understand what I am saying. What is the use of wasting your time? So pack your belongings and go back to your society, work and family. There is a difference between what I think of U.G.'s real behavior and how he behaves towards me. He drove away everybody else but cooked food for me. He declared openly that only Guha will eat with him and everybody else will have to manage by themselves. Pride of the self is an obstacle. It is a cheap trick of the ego to keep the 'I' alive.

U.G. has an abundance of friends. The rich, the successful, the beautiful, and the wise are all eager for his companionship. Despite this he seems very pleased with me, and showers lot of love on me. I cannot understand the true state of affairs. Deliberately, I am humming a tune which goes, "There is nothing in me which is not in every other person...." I stopped the ever-flowing thoughts in my mind by thinking now that I have jumped into the water, I have no other alternative but to swim.



## CHAPTER 3

### Remembering J. Krishnamurti

Before coming to America, I was in Bangalore for seven years. I did my doctorate in the Indian Institute of Science for five years; after that I worked there for a few months as a project assistant. I later worked as a scientist at the Indian Space Research Organization. In my free time I used to read books by philosopher and spiritual teacher Jiddu Krishnamurti. His writings attracted me greatly. There was a strange intoxication in his writings, as if freedom beckoned me through the pages of his books. Strangely though, even after living in Bangalore for so many years I never met JK. After coming to Palm Springs, I kept remembering him. U.G. and many of his friends had spent a lot of time with JK. When the internet became widespread in America, while searching for JK's books, I came across U.G.'s book *Mind Is A Myth*, and I also found U.G.'s website. After this I learned more about him through an exchange of letters with Professor of Philosophy, Narayana Moorthy. The professor was the one to facilitate my first meeting with U.G. in Julie's apartment in New York. Thinking about the past in this manner, I reached U.G.'s room.

Today there were a lot of people in U.G.'s room. I was meeting quite a few people for the first time. Dr. Larry Morris and Dr. Susan Nettleton had come from Albuquerque, New Mexico. The doctors had been living together for quite some time. Dr. Larry Morris had lived in South Korea for some years representing the US Defense Department. He worked to help in America's attempt to finance South Korea and save them from the North Koreans. After returning to US, he completed his doctorate in English and taught in the university for many years. During that time he developed deep interest in spiritual matters and thus began his spiritual quest. He was deeply influenced by the writings of J Krishnamurti. In the end he quit his job in the university and came to California. He met Prof Narayana Moorthy and under his guidance began his spiritual practices. Both of them toured India and stayed at Ramana Ashram in Tiruvannamalai for quite some time. After returning to the US the doctor was associated with the church. At present, he is a minister in a church in Albuquerque and is a great devotee of U.G. Dr. Susan Nettleton is a clinical psychiatrist. Her interest in spirituality began after coming in contact with Larry. Slowly, she gave up her practice, divorced her teacher husband and drawn by her love for Larry came away with him to help run the church; this is her only work now. I became good friends with Larry. He has deep knowledge of western religions and spiritual practices. The funny thing is he had also come to U.G. through Narayana Moorthy. Later, we got to know about Larry's preaching in the church in a strange manner. One of the people who had attended a service in Larry's church told us that the Larry we were acquainted with was not the same person when he conducted services in the church. People queued up to embrace Larry. He was very popular. Yet, he was the epitome of humbleness, an image of devotion here. The funny part was, whenever U.G. got excited, Mahesh would bring Larry from wherever he was and present him in front of U.G. His humility and overwhelming devotion would never fail to mellow down U.G. and sometimes even make him laugh.

A gentleman named Andrew has come from Ojai valley in California. This contemporary of Julie has known U.G. since 1986. He first met U.G. in Saanen. He had gone there to discuss about J. Krishnamurti's

school. We became very good friends. Words are inadequate to describe the events in Andrew's life. Two more chapters would be added to this book if I start describing the strange events in his life. Andrew was a dear friend of Mahesh and both of them were involved in many a colorful event in the days of their youth. Mahesh met U.G. in Mumbai at a time when he was besotted with Rajneesh. Everything turned upside down after this meeting. All events connected to this are written in Mahesh's biography of U.G. Andrew was a witness to the events which are not written in the book. At that time U.G., Mahesh, Parveen Babi and Andrew were spending some time together in Mahabaleshwar. Mahesh was still wearing the meditation bead necklace with a locket of Rajneesh's photograph, which was put round his neck by Rajneesh himself. One day, U.G. was criticizing all the gurus and Parveen Babi got so excited that she jumped on Mahesh like a tigress and snatched the necklace and flushed it down the toilet! That was the end of the necklace forever! Anyway, the most important part of this was that Andrew used to stay in Ojai valley where JK achieved his enlightenment and in due course of time the valley became the US headquarters of the J Krishnamurti Foundation.

Some events of another U.G. friend's life were so eventful that they were published in newspapers. However, there is a deep sorrow in his life, although he himself does not think of it as sorrow. On the contrary, he said it only showed how generous and broad minded he is. His wife has a young lover. She openly conducts the affair with her lover. In fact, most nights he would have to sleep alone in another room. It is my firm belief that if any man does not get very angry or madly jealous if his wife is sharing her heart and body with another man then it means that there is something seriously wrong. Once, Mahesh asked U.G. about this matter. U.G. informed him that this friend's wife was a rich man's daughter and the friend was unemployed. So he was forced to bear with her infidelity. The question, however, was why did the wife put up with our friend instead of driving him out. U.G. replied sharply that the wife was aware that the young lover could disappear into thin air any day and it would be impossible to get a dependable man like our friend. I thought in my mind of Alexander the Great's exclamation when he entered India for the first time, "How strange is this country!"

Almost all those who are to participate in this journey with us are here in today's chat session. A general discussion was taking place on what we would be doing the next day. U.G. intervened and said that the next day's program would be decided the next morning while having coffee. I made the mistake of asking if tea was available here. U.G. declared that he rejected all things from the north of the Vindhyas. I thought to myself – *Is that so! But I also come from the north of the Vindhyas.* Of course, I did not speak up. U.G. continued to talk and said he did not like Hindi at all. He regretted that India's national language was such that it had no literary depth and had not produced any world renowned writer or philosopher. He praised Tamil for its stunning depth. U.G. hailed from Andhra Pradesh but had stayed in Madras for some time. U.G. also stated that in Europe nobody imposed their language on others. A naughty question popped into my mind and I asked him "You are such a genuine southern bred gentleman but how come your complexion is so fair?" U.G. answered in his usual unabashed manner, "Either the Aryans had raped someone or someone secretly had an affair with the Aryans!" By then we were all rolling on the floor with laughter.

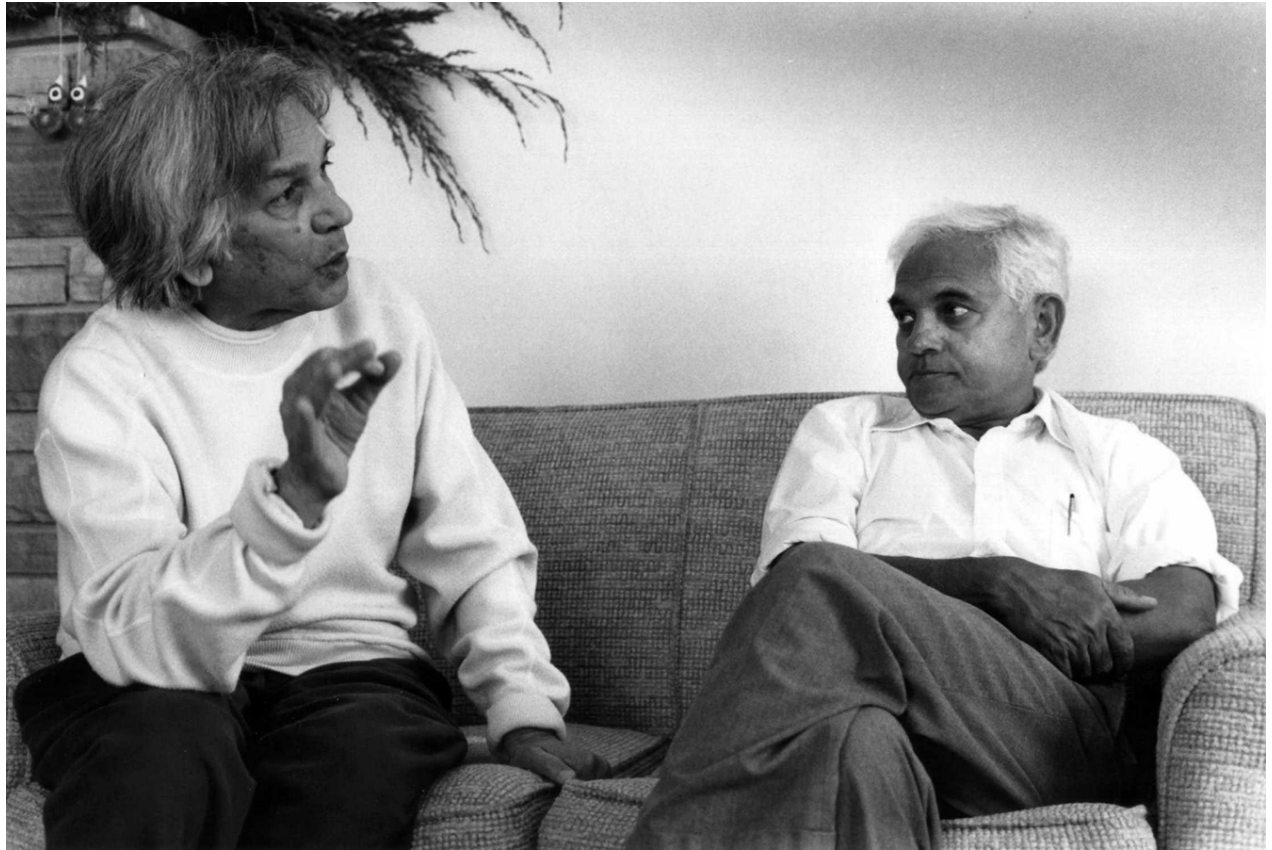
U.G. was still talking on the subject of languages. He mentioned how the Swiss had no language of their own and chiefly used a language called Swiss-German. However, if a native of Germany would hear the

U.G. was still talking on the subject of languages. He mentioned how the Swiss had no language of their own and chiefly used a language called Swiss-German. However, if a native of Germany would hear the language, he would find it unrecognizable. I thought to myself that the same would be the case if I heard someone from Chottogram (a small district in Bengal where their dialect is so different that one would find it difficult to understand) speak Bengali. Further, U.G. said that French and Italian were the other two frequently spoken languages in Switzerland. All the movies were dubbed in the three languages and then shown. Not subtitled. I thought to myself if Sylvester Stallone cursed and fought in the same authentic Borishal dialect of my grandmother what fun it would be! I expressed this to U.G. and he began to laugh. "What if Gregory Peck expressed his love to the heroine in Tamil," was his retort!

Only one person is absent in our chat session. That is the same Narayana Moorthy due to whom I met U.G. He has not been keeping well. Cancer has been detected in his leg. He is to be operated upon. While we were chatting, the phone rang. It was Moorthy calling from a place called Seaside which is near San Francisco, California. He was happy that I had come to spend some time with U.G. I expressed my heartfelt thanks and gave the phone to U.G. He assured Moorthy firmly that there was no danger to his health. He reminded him of his dream of U.G. drawing his last breath on Moorthy's lap. So there was no way that Moorthy could leave earth before U.G. After talking in this reassuring manner for some time, U.G. kept down the phone. Afterwards we talked about Moorthy for some time.

Narayana Moorthy was a teacher of Philosophy. I still haven't met him. He had done his doctorate in philosophy from Berkeley University in California. He was acquainted with J. Krishnamurti. He had toured all over India with Larry Morris and in fact could be termed as the initiator of Larry's journey into spirituality. It was he who had brought Larry and Julie to U.G. Once he was invited as a speaker at the 100<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary celebrations of JK. He chose to speak on 'Science and Spirituality' based on his own writing. I have written earlier that Larry had spoken at this celebration and was applauded. Moorthy, on the other hand, was roundly booed by the audience! I wanted to know the reason for this. U.G. replied that although it was JK's birth anniversary celebrations, Moorthy did not mention his name even once. On the contrary, he tried to analyze scientifically the condition of U.G. and other mystics.

U.G. tried to divert our attention from all these serious matters and started to narrate a funny story. "I was then newly acquainted with Prof Moorthy. I was coming from Switzerland and had decided to stay with Moorthy. He had invited many people to a dinner held in my honor. The most distinguished amongst them was his father-in-law. Moorthy's wife, who is an American, was one of his students. She came to learn philosophy, fell in love with the teacher and married him. Moorthy wanted to give his father-in-law a taste of Indian spirituality. The father-in-law was a star-studded retired general from the US Defense Department. After introductions and some light interaction, the conversation started in earnest. In a serious tone the father-in-law asked U.G., "So, gentleman, what do you do? U.G. replied smilingly, "I am retired." If he had stopped there, the problem could have been averted but the father-in-law continued, "Retired from what?" U.G. replied casually, "Lifelong retired. I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth. Then when I had squandered everything, many people began to feed me with a golden spoon. So I got no time to work at all." A new surge of fire seemed to animate the war-weary, brave soldier's frame. The abnormal pressure on his heart increased the blood flow to such an extent that he turned red and there seemed a danger of him bleeding from his nose and ears. The professor was a philosopher and his reactions were slow so he got no opportunity to salvage the situation.



U.G. with Narayan Moorthy at Seaside, California

The tall, gigantic American got up, put a hand on the shoulders of his diminutive son-in-law and said, "I cannot help but praise your luck. Hope you will be alright." With a sarcastic smile, he strode out rapidly as if creating a small tornado and destroying the peace in the room. After that he never again came to his son-in-law's house!

My thoughts took flight again. U.G. seemed like a harmless, elderly, spiritual person, like an ancient Indian rishi who seemed to have drunk the essence that emerged from the churning of India's ancient knowledge; he was an unimaginable and mysterious expression of consciousness. Nobody would ever believe the unrest that he could create inside a person unless he saw this with his own eyes or heard him speak with his own ears. Unknowingly, we are constantly creating various images in our own mind from childhood. Every person through his thoughts exchanges his feelings with society. Through these exchanges, our mind creates certain impressions about ourselves. We carefully nurture these impressions although they have no connection to the way life works in us. Thus is born mental suffering. Yet we are not able to realize that these impressions are based on false notions. When a rare man like U.G. tries to make us realize this we feel as if somebody is snatching away from us the very dear thing that intoxicates us. We feel deeply hurt and this is what he has been trying to show us constantly. I stopped my train of thoughts and asked U.G., "Ok, tell me, you are such a harmless, peaceful, joyful man, then why is there such a sense of harshness in your words?" U.G. replied, "Listen, I do not tell you anything. But whatever you listen to, acts on your insides like a drop of fuel added to the dying fire, and your inner being simmers and bursts into a raging fire. That is how Guha, your 'I' burns internally, feels afraid, as if everything is coming to an end. This inkling of self-destruction creates a burning feeling inside you, and you interpret that as rage, sorrow or deep disappointment."

In the evening quite a few friends have gathered here with many distinguished people being present and discussions of various kinds going on, yet my mind is turned inwards. I was listening although I could not assimilate many things that were being said, but as soon as I heard JK's name, my mind became alert in a complex way. I had noticed that a transformation came over U.G. at such times. A serious mien would descend on U.G. whenever he heard JK's name and it seemed as if a radiant sage had jumped out of the pages of the Upanishads and descended on us. This change was not to praise JK, but to destroy him; it was as if the sacred fire, a *yagna*, was being lit. It was indescribably theatrical; it was like Arjun, with tears streaming down, raining arrows with total determination on his most beloved and respected grand uncle Bhishma. My thoughts seemed to have no reins. They were running about as they wished, hither and thither. I soon reached Bangalore .....

## CHAPTER 4

### Shattering The Images

J. Krishnamurti appeared in my life at a time when I was doing my PhD in Physics in Bangalore. His writings had a profound effect on me. My love and respect for him had reached such a high level so as to replace Buddha, Ramakrishna, Rabindranath, Einstein and Mao Tse Tung. It was in the general section of the library of the Indian Institute of Science that my eyes first fell on JK's *Commentaries on Living*. I would be so absorbed in reading that I would not remember when and why I came to the library in the first place. His writings had a piercing light of truth and seemed to shake and awaken my almost lost discriminative faculty. I felt as if his writings were telling me, *Child, wake up, come out of the state of intoxication and question your actions with all your intelligence.*

That was the time when the days were spent immersed in research while nights were spent in chatting sessions with friends. Sometimes in a drunken state, we created a lot of hullabaloo and fell asleep senseless. The arrival of J Krishnamurti's philosophy created a new movement in my life. Sometimes I felt as if my inner self was asking me, *what are you doing? Why are you doing? Why this desire to be a scientist? Don't you know that there can be no greater cowardice than being frightened, becoming an ordinary salary earner, compromising with society and suppressing the voice of unrest forever in you? Nothing happens to a coward.*

One by one, I read all of JK's books. Although my intoxication with alcohol came down, it did not stop completely. In his books, I could not find the answer to the question of what I should do with my life. I was ready to lay down my life for the freedom of the exploited and miserable people of the country but when that revolutionary movement also broke down, the life inside me continued. JK says, "If you see a poisonous snake on the road will you wait for someone's advice or run for your life? In the same way, when you see the truth of something bad in society, there will be no need to ask anyone what to do. That truth will create inside you a process and that process itself will throw out an answer about what to do and what not to do." I thought what was the use of doing my doctorate? It would be better to take a job with the Krishnamurti Foundation as a teacher and spend the rest of my life in spiritual atmosphere. This would ensure that my quest for truth continued. The surprising thing was that I never understood how my future would turn out. That is why I often left my future in destiny's hand, but whenever I determined on a particular course of action, I jumped into it wholeheartedly and totally.

I decided that since I had already started working on my PhD, I would do my best to complete it and then join the Krishnamurti Foundation. The research work seemed like swimming in the middle of the ocean. I was swimming continuously, but had no idea how much farther I had to go. JK's philosophy made me despise the cheap political moves of my adviser who was brainy but narrow minded and played cheap games. Sometimes I would develop a feeling of intense dislike for him. However, I did realize that I would have to listen to this man if I wanted to complete my PhD. I completed my doctorate after working seriously and earnestly. But look at the irony of life. I never joined the Krishnamurti Foundation; instead I joined the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) as a scientist.

Meanwhile, discussions here are going on in full swing. U.G. as usual is discounting all spiritual experiences as unnecessary. The more he expresses his indifference towards the experiences of others, the more I remember the past. Just then, I suddenly remembered how I was cured of my habit of reading JK's books. Immediately I told U.G. that he had to listen to a funny dream of mine. More or less he did not want to listen to such things and was indifferent to it but seeing my eagerness he relented and agreed to hear me out. All eyes in the room rested on me.

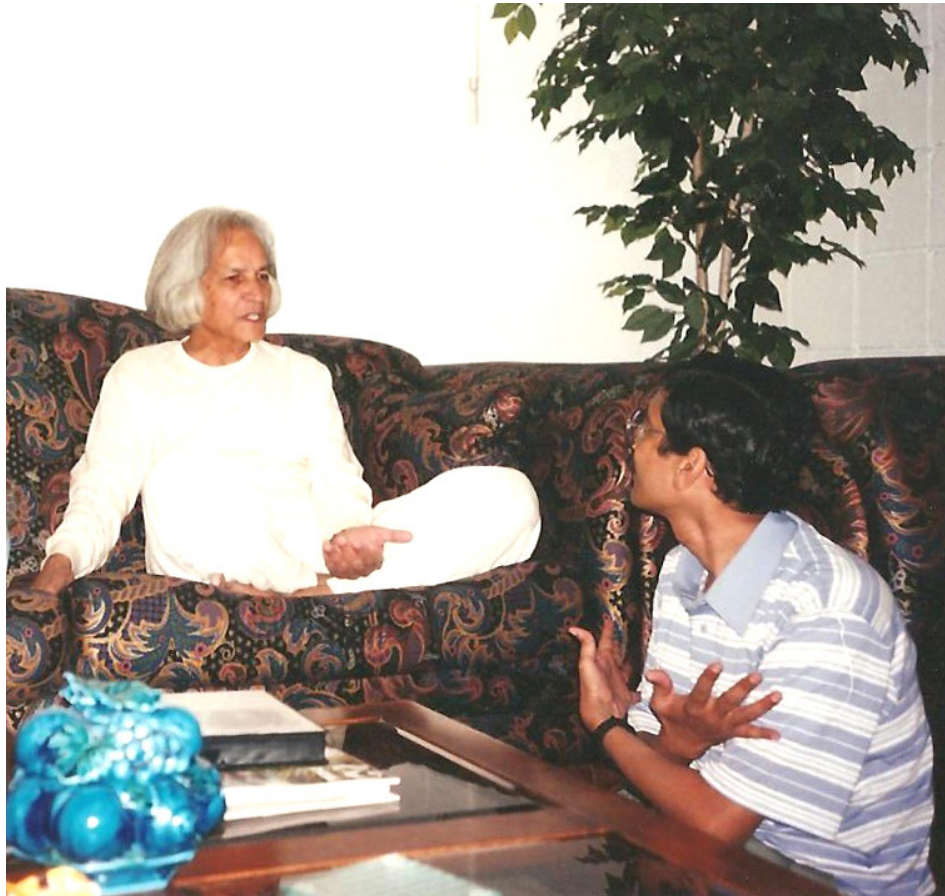
"After working in ISRO for a year, I came to America. But I still trusted JK's writings. I was sure they held a clue to my spiritual quest. However, my disappointment kept increasing. The ghost of the spiritual search for truth did not leave me alone, and my mind was in a state of unrest, especially at night. Every night I thought of such things before I fell asleep. Suddenly, one dawn I had a strange dream. I saw JK appear before me wearing a white long tunic and loose trousers. With a serious face he sat down on a chair next to me. He sat with his hands on his cheeks for some time, looked at me in the eye and then said in clear English, 'It is no longer possible for me to help you. You will have to make some other arrangements to help yourself. You search for something else and start working.'" U.G. heard me out and made a strange comment. He said that my dreams were much more meaningful and instructive than other people's spiritual experiences. I could not make out if he was joking or telling the truth.

JK was well acquainted with Andrew also but later there appeared to be a crack in their relationship. Andrew had suffered a lot at the hands of various women yet he could not totally free himself from their influence. In this matter he had a soft corner for JK since the whole world knew that JK was a lifelong bachelor. However, he was hurt when he later came to know that there was a woman in JK's life. That is why he joined U.G. in criticizing JK whenever the topic arose. Andrew eagerly asked U.G. why JK had tried to hide his private life. Why did he pretend to have won a victory over lust when it had now come to light that he had an affair with his best friend's wife? It was quite evident from his manner of speaking that this was one aspect that had hurt him.

U.G.'s manner turned fiery. His face was red, jaws clenched, spine erect and turning his left shoulder towards me he spoke so angrily as to leave us all speechless. "JK is the twentieth century's biggest spiritual fraud. Otherwise how is it possible that he speaks one thing and his actions are the exact opposite? Not just that, he is like a sailor having relationships with women of every kind in every port. People like you have read his books and put him on such a high pedestal that no sin is able to reach him up there. Such people with a desire to rule your heart create such a picture about themselves that it is not possible for anyone to understand their real nature. Yet, when we know them closely we realize that they have the same flaws as us or maybe more. These people hide their misdeeds by doing such work and are capable of telling such lies which are beyond our comprehension."

The house of cards in my mind had collapsed. I understood that U.G. was cruelly destroying the images that I had carefully nurtured in my mind. We try with all our might to preserve our own identity by associating ourselves with the images of these socially famous people. If somebody tries to hurt us there, then we understand the hurt of losing our saved treasures. That is why this process is so painful. Anger is the flame which succeeds in clearing all the garbage in our mind. In order to preserve the values of society, it has created great people. Society with great shrewdness has imposed on us the tendency

to follow these great people. The tendency to hero worship is such a disease that it destroys all individuality in society. By following the example set by others, nobody has been able to attain greatness. Still, all of us, consciously or unconsciously are trying to follow the example set by others. Maybe it was to teach us this lesson that U.G. began to shower on us fire-tipped arrows.





## CHAPTER 5

### A Vision

Franklin has been acquainted with U.G. for a long time. He was an eyewitness to many events in U.G.'s life. I felt he has come here in Palm Springs as a witness to U.G.'s physical radical transformation. When Franklin was 17 years old he had gone to hear JK's lecture in Sannen, Switzerland. It was there in the year 1966 that he first met U.G. He was also present in Sannen in 1967, when an extraordinary transformation took place in U.G. I found Franklin's presence here particularly meaningful and our friendship deepened. He knew both the Krishnamurtis for a long time. When he learnt that I had made a thorough study of J Krishnamurti's books, he became very enthusiastic. We decided that during this journey, no matter how angry U.G. got, we would not return home without knowing about the entire matter.

Franklin told me in private that U.G. was then 49 years old with unusual spiritual attainment. Added to this, his personal experiences were so deep and vast that there was no limit to his determination. At that time he did not criticize JK; in fact he would say that JK was Nature's expression of a new kind of power. He was yet to see a man who could ignore J Krishnamurti. He was an unimaginably strong personality. The two Krishnamurtis were like the two pillars of Indian spirituality. U.G. regularly attended JK's lectures in 1967. It was at these lectures which created such a strange state in U.G. that he felt it was a "calamity" and not a state of endless, infinite joy; only burning heat of extinction. Later, even the witnessing self was destroyed.

Franklin humbly requested everyone to stop talking and attracted the attention of U.G. towards himself. "I want to tell you one thing. You may object to it but still I feel you all ought to listen to it." U.G. respected his eagerness and said, "Okay, speak but I am telling you right now that I do not agree with you."

Franklin said, "If J Krishnamurti had not toured the whole world and propagated his philosophy, we would not have understood even one bit of what you are talking about today. We would not have been attracted towards you. It is not as if we can understand perfectly what you are talking about today but the foundation of our desire to listen to you and gain your companionship was laid by reading JK's books and listening to his talks. In this connection, I want to give a historical example. Before the advent of Christ, John the Baptist had created an appropriate set of conditions by spreading some ideas around. I don't know why but this thought always haunts me."

Mahesh shouted, "Come then everybody, let us kill U.G. Let us see if he rises from the dead." Everyone was laughing but all these contrary discussions were like pouring clarified butter on the flames in my head. I felt uneasy. I could not stay any longer. I thought to myself that I would feel better if I paced a bit, splash water on my face, cool down and then come back. I went out silently and began to walk absent-mindedly. The sun seemed to blaze over the Palm Springs desert. It was a desert made of not only sand dunes but also small shrubs, cactus, thorny bushes and barren landscapes. Some miles away, small mountains seemed to raise their chests to gaze at the sun. In the heart of cloud-free skies, modern

civilization has intermittently drawn white lines and these vapor lines slowly become broader before gradually merging away. Some palm trees grew tall in the sky in the area surrounding the lodge. It looked as if a few deep green leaves were spread out against the canopy of light blue sky.

I remembered the time in my childhood when in Rabindra Nagar, I had recited the poem 'Palm Tree' by Rabindranath Tagore and got down from the stage halfway through the recitation. Leaving the Rabindra Nagar of those times, after visiting so many places and overcoming the influence of so many people why is it that I am here after crossing the seven seas, in such a place, with such a man spending my days in serious contemplation, perhaps I will never understand. I do not know whether this is my good fortune or bad fortune. Who knows what will be the result of this? Where will this lead to? Thinking all this, I reached Julie's room. I lay down on the sofa. The mind kept on churning up the past. I kept thinking of JK and U.G. I remembered JK's instructions to me in my dream. I was so eager to search for truth, yet what was I doing about it? I had to do something. In this connection, I had seriously immersed myself in a spiritual organization called Ramachandra Mission. I was practicing Raj Yoga. I had so many experiences while meditating. I remembered it all now. Suddenly, my mind, which was racing, came to a particular place and stopped completely.

I had started meditating only four years ago and after six months of this practice, a certain experience seemed to give an indication of something special. When this experience took place I could make nothing of it, despite a lot of introspection. I could not understand the significance of this 'vision in trance' as it is called. Although I could not come to any firm opinion about its principles, still after this experience, meditation and spirituality seemed to engross me totally. All throughout the day and night I used to think of spiritual matters and regularly meditate for a few hours. With the passage of time slowly these experiences got buried. I don't know why but today suddenly the remembrance of that lively spiritual experience sends sensations of electric current through my body and I could clearly see goosebumps on my light skin. My body began to tremble with the strong sensations. I felt that I understood everything clearly.

I shot up from the sofa and ran towards U.G.'s room. Julie and Andrew asked me what the matter was. I replied, "Come as soon as possible to U.G.'s room." While writing of this incident, I was reminded of the famous scientist Archimedes; my run reminded me of what happened to him after his discovery. He had jumped out of the bathtub and ran out naked shouting Eureka! Eureka! on the road to the royal palace. He had discovered the solution to find whether there was any impurity in the gold crown without breaking it, and he was running to tell the king about it. Just like him, I ran towards U.G.'s room, barefoot on the black, burning hot road shouting, "I understand, I understand"! I thought I understood what U.G.'s real nature was and I was really eager to tell him that. Present in the room at that time were Larry Morris, Susan Nettleton, Franklin, Mario, Lisa Toronto, Mahesh, Olivia, Tanuja and Dr. Robert Palmist. I told U.G. to listen carefully to an incident and he had to listen to it. I told Franklin, "You too listen carefully to what I am going to tell. Maybe you will find proof of your theory." Meanwhile, Julie and Andrew had also arrived. Breathless, I narrated the entire incident briefly. U.G. heard me out silently.

"After seeing JK instruct me in my dream, I got involved with a spiritual organization called Ramachandra Mission. The first guru of this mission was a man from Uttar Pradesh called Shri Ramachandra. After meditating for some days I learnt by reading one of his books, that the best time for meditation was at 2 am. His prime disciple was also called Ramachandra and hailed from Shahjahanpur in UP. It was this disciple who had founded the organization. He too used to tell the disciples that a true meditator was someone whose sleep broke naturally at 2 a.m. for meditation. That was it! I too decided to meditate at 2 in the morning. After a few nights of meditation, an astounding incident took place. One of the rules of this organization was to write daily in a diary the experiences garnered during the meditation sessions. That particular day I was sitting in the dark with my eyes closed and thinking about the sensations which had risen, about which I could write in the diary. Suddenly, I felt something inside my head and a strong sensation ran through my body. I felt as if something was separating me from my body with a force. I felt lighter as if I was ready to take flight. I was not dreaming- I was awake- I felt as if I was going somewhere but where I did not know. Every moment was breathtaking, thrilling!

"I saw clearly that I was taking flight like a bird and leaving US soil, rising upwards. The trees and houses down became smaller and then totally disappeared. I flew much above the clouds. I kept on flying endlessly and after sometime I began to descend. I flew over the tree tops like a bird. As I flew over small villages and grain fields, I realized that I was in India. But I could not make out which century it was. Flying thus, I passed over a small water body and a beautiful garden. I landed in an open courtyard. In front, on a small raised platform was a sage, sitting upright, lost in meditation. I took off, made a few circles around the top of the sage's head and flew ahead. Again I passed fields and a small river. Then I arrived at another village. I saw a small structure, like a house, made of bamboo. On the verandah of the house sat a very pretty lady with her legs folded on one side and holding a naked baby in her lap. She was breastfeeding the child. I was staring at her in surprise, when I discovered that the child was wearing a big precious stone-encrusted golden crown on its head. I was speechless with surprise, almost breathless. The mother did not seem bothered at the naked child wearing such a big golden crown and feeding from her breast. After watching the scene for some time, I returned to the place where I saw the first sage. When I saw the sage again he had stopped meditating. I stood before him. Seeing me he said in a divine voice very clearly, "This child will completely transform your world one day." Then I came back flying back into my own body, here in America, to New Jersey."

By this time the depth of stillness in the room had reached such a stage that even the sound of people breathing seemed disturbing. Everybody was staring at my face in astonished surprise. Only U.G. was smiling. I waited for some time and then told them about my discovery of this vision (jagrat darshan) which I had totally forgotten and subsequently remembered, so that I could tell it amongst this company. Now I realized who the sage and the child were. The sage was J Krishnamurti and the child was U.G. Krishnamurti himself! Franklin was flush with joy as if he had finally found an irrefutable proof for his theory. Finding courage I asked U.G., "What was the significance of the baby wearing that dazzling gem-encrusted crown on the head?" U.G. was smiling mischievously, Mahesh was smiling too while looking at U.G. Now U.G. opened his mouth but not to give a proper answer to my question. Instead, he said, "Whatever you saw may be right but that child was nobody else but you." I don't know what the others in the room thought but I could not be satisfied with this answer, the reason being that

I never thought there was any significance or meaning to my life. I thought U.G. had changed the topic by using his presence of mind. He could change the situation in such a wonderful manner that nobody would believe it unless they had spent time with U.G. Whether Franklin had heard all this, I do not know, but he was happy about JK and U.G. Displaying excessive happiness he looked around and told U.G. "Sir, JK has created problems all around and generated a lot of garbage. I do not know how the responsibility of clearing it has ended up with you." U.G. however was not someone who would compromise. He told Franklin that he could stay imprisoned in his world of illusion if he wanted, he just did not care.

The afternoon chat session was over, but my own knowledge combined with U.G.'s words had given birth to a strange thought in my mind. U.G. kept denying and confessed to being puzzled that we thought there were points of similarities between his and JK's teachings. I kept on thinking what was the essence of all this?

Man does not need to change. The human body is a superb specimen created by Nature. The creation is so perfect that the problem begins when we want to bring about some change in it. When we seek to bring about a non-existent imaginary *sacchidananda* state in that structure, which is the basis of deep and limitless peace then man creates in him unbearable hell and life becomes painfully miserable. The senses become weak and their sensitivity is lost when we forcibly employ them for our continuous pleasure and enjoyment. Man is exiled by separating himself from Nature and this conflict creates deep mental agony. To be one with Nature the body's demand is to live harmoniously and for that it is necessary for the senses to be naturally active. Any attempt for mental or psychological oneness is an illusion. It is like running after a mirage. If somehow man gets freed completely from the burden of thought then the glands of the body will begin to function normally again and the senses will become highly sensitive. Such a man will not be accepted easily by society and will be termed either as a mad man or will be worshipped as God.

## CHAPTER 6

### Quest For Truth

During the evening chat session, U.G. asked everyone how they would like to spend the rest of the ten days. Different opinions poured in and there was an exchange of views. At last it was decided that we should pay a visit to Nevada's famous casino city, Las Vegas. We would also visit Hollywood in Los Angeles for a day, and spend another day at Idyllwild on the mountain above Palm Springs, and visit other smaller places of interest around. That particular day before coming out of U.G.'s room, everybody was sitting scattered around, lost in their own thoughts. I was feeling desolate. I could not see the way ahead. There is nothing to be done. Why do human beings have so much brain power, so much memory power? Perhaps we have ourselves created the need for these unconsciously and that need is increasing steadily. U.G.'s voice broke my trance. Everyone's attention turned towards him. U.G. then spoke, "I feel the need to speak to you on a certain matter. You need to consider this seriously." He looked at everybody and then spoke again clearly, without any hesitation, "The invaluable physical changes which have occurred in my body, which I term 'Calamity,' I see no possibility of that occurring in you. If there was a possibility of it occurring even in one of you then there would be no need for you to be present here." I could not believe my own ears. What was it that he spoke about, why did he speak thus?

The mystery engulfed me. How was I to know if what I had just heard was also heard by others? I tried to exchange glances with them, I was so perplexed. I did not see any reciprocation. What seemed so significant to me, the others did not seem to be bothered about at all. They did not seem to realize its importance. I began to ponder on what U.G. wanted to say, why did he often make such statements which I found profoundly spiritual? Was I making a mistake in understanding him or did he make the statements for me alone? Mahesh said that U.G. believes that whatever is in him is also in all of us. I thought perhaps my bent towards spirituality was making me "hear wrong things" but the next second the direction of my thinking changed. I thought maybe he is saying that as he could not tell us straightaway what was in him or not in him, he wanted us to find this out by ourselves. To find out we would have to have an open mind. Since it was not possible for us to achieve anything on our own, maybe being in his company would help in the quest for spirituality. While lost in my thoughts, I heard the good nights being said. Gathering myself back together, I heard a mildly stern voice say, "Do come for coffee tomorrow morning at 5.30." Feeling deeply emotional, I assented and walked away silently from the room with my head bowed.

Before going back to my room, another round of chatting took place in Julie's room, which was directly behind U.G.'s room in Ocotillo Lodge. This is where Julie and I started the tradition of having vanilla ice cream with Alphonso mango pulp, an absolutely delicious combination! Before I returned to my lodge at 10.30, Julie told me, "Look, I do not have permission to go to U.G.'s room before 9 a.m., so if any important discussion takes place before that, do let me know about it in detail. Also, if you get any indication that I am permitted to come, phone me immediately! I am ready by 5.30 every day." I

consoled her and left for my lodge. There was a bit of empty ground between Ocotillo Lodge and my dwelling and I walked the distance.

Over my head was a clear, cloudless sky filled with stars. The desert cools down rapidly at night. All around the small bushes, different kinds of insects were busy in their nocturnal activities. I have heard that scorpions and rodent-like creatures would come out at night to feast on these insects. Reptiles like Rattle Snakes and Russell Vipers come out to eat the rodents. Of course, I had not laid my eyes on anything big up till now. Crossing the ground, before I entered the gates of my lodge, I wondered if I should buy a packet of cigarettes. I felt some kind of unrest today. Sometimes I would smoke a cigarette before I went to sleep. I felt like having one today but ultimately decided against it and returned to the lodge.

I was tossing and turning on my bed, unable to sleep. I remembered U.G.'s words that a dog uses his memory power to recognize his master and find his way home. Again he had also said that the 'Calamity' would never occur in the lives of people who were in his company. Even if there was a possibility of the same, it would be destroyed. So many thoughts arise in my head. I was thinking if one observed Nature, then from an insect to the entire world of living beings everything was working like a machine, as if every animal had a programmed computer inside him. Each animal functioned as per the order given by the computer. There was no possibility of conflict, hesitation or sorrow, only the programmed order written by Nature. Throughout life one had to function according to those orders. Man, on the other hand, is besotted by inner conflict, suicidal tendencies, burning envy, jealousy and other passions. This conflict-ridden effort of action leads to the destruction of the fine balance of Nature. Man is not functioning according to the laws of Nature; therefore Nature is tortured by man. If man discovered a computer that would hesitate to obey his orders, would man feel the need for it? Perhaps man is just a disobedient and injurious creation of Nature.

Will I ever know if there is any order programmed by Nature inside me, obeying which would mean obeying Nature's command to the last letter? Maybe no one can ever know such a thing so the question of telling others does not arise. But still my eagerness to know about such things never seems to end. U.G. never replies to such questions either by a yes or a no. He only says that such questions are meaningless, hence the whole effort is bound to be wasted. Then what am I doing here? Sometimes I feel I should go back home tomorrow. All this is my madness. Those who have no other work to do can afford to spend money and pass their time. The very next minute I thought that maybe it is my lifelong quest to attain Truth that brought me here. So leaving here at this stage would be idiotic. I must stay here for a few more days, patiently. It also could not be denied that there was truthfulness and purity in all that U.G. did. He was the kind of person who could not harm anybody and about that I had no doubt. So I decided to stay and went to sleep.

Next morning, I reached U.G.'s room at 5.30 sharp to have coffee. I saw that Mahesh had already arrived. God knows what time he came. Wearing a black tunic he was pacing about. He looked like a Christian priest who was in trouble and had come to the Father of the World seeking his help. U.G. prepared the coffee and called us. We took our cups and sat on the carpet. The three of us had our coffee in total silence, then washed our cups, patted them dry, kept them in their proper place and sat

down on the sofa. There was an unwritten rule if you were with U.G. - no one had to be told about it but all knew that things had to put back in their proper place in U.G.'s living room, kitchen and balcony or verandah. If there was a pencil in the pen stand on the table to the right of the sofa then everybody knew that after using the pencil it had to be returned to the same place, the reason being if anybody asked for a pencil, U.G. would mechanically reach out for the pen stand. He would come to know if somebody had forgotten to replace the pencil! Whenever he did some work, one would think that except for doing that particular work he had no other worldly feelings or thoughts. How could this 78-year-old man function throughout the day in this manner? It amazed me.

The stillness of the morning could be felt deeply in this room. My thoughts and feelings could not spoil it. I tried to break this immense silence of the dawn by asking Mahesh, "I have heard that after you left the Rajneesh Ashram in Pune, you flushed down the toilet the mala with medallion that he himself had put around your neck. When this news reached the ashram what was their reaction?" U.G. replied, "When Mahesh left the ashram and cut off all relations with him, Rajneesh was furious. He sent word with Mahesh's dear friend Vinod Khanna that either Mahesh should come to the ashram and return the necklace himself or he would destroy him. Not only could he not do that but he himself is a dead ghost. Today Mahesh is considered one of India's top directors." Mahesh said, "The same Rajneesh who always propagated free love and said that there is no lust in godly love, that expectations are impossible, could not stand the rejection of a minor disciple like me. He only proved that like all ordinary mortals, he was also prone to jealousy and envy."

"Rajneesh left for America a few days after this and in America his situation became pretty serious. On charges of possessing drugs and unlicensed arms, the American police handcuffed him, put chains on his feet and put him behind bars with thieves and evil men. When he came back to the country, I came face to face with him once." Mahesh spoke rapidly. "When I met him the last time, he spoke to me in a condemning tone and tried to break my mental strength by saying so many things. But I felt that his arrow-like words fell lifeless even before they touched me. But never mind this, why are you asking me all these questions?"

I then informed him about my involvement with a spiritual organization. I told them about the man who was the current head of the organization. I had stopped meditating totally. That is why friends in the organization were pestering me to meet the President, Shri Parthasarthy Rajagopalachari at least once. He was coming to New York in a few days' time, so it would not be possible to avoid him. I had firmly come to believe that no guru could give others god realization. Totally impossible. So I was not desirous of meeting the current guru of the organization. Not only that, I knew very well what he would tell me to do if I came face to face with him. If I rejected his suggestion, the effects would be such that I would dislike it intensely. This was my headache currently. Mahesh listened patiently and said, "I can understand your dilemma thoroughly. I have no idea what your relationship with your guru is like. But I used to be afraid of Rajneesh. I used to consider him god. Therefore, I cannot give you any advice regarding this situation. But I can tell you one thing: you have come to play with fire so how can you be afraid of heat?" How is that possible?

There is one thing that gives me a lot of courage and the strength to continue with my efforts and that is my sole motive is quest for Truth. Since there is no other motive mixed up in this, I know through experience in my life how strong this motive can be. I have had proof of this many times. I may not be able to prove it to others but my conscience knows it and that is why that Truth will disappear along with me one day forever.



U.G. in Palm Canyon, Palm Springs, California



## CHAPTER 7

### Reading U.G.'s Palm

U.G.'s straight, long salt-n-pepper hair covers his ears. That day he must have surely shampooed his hair. With his smiling face and bright shining appearance, he resembled some strange divine figure. He was looking so good, dangerously attractive with dreamy eyes seemingly fixed on infinity, lost in some unknown place. The more I looked at him, the better I liked him. He had beautifully shaped hands and feet. Suddenly, looking into my eyes, he laughed and said, "Do you know why I have kept my hair so long?" I was taken aback and it took some moments to come around. With wonder I answered, "No, I don't have any idea." When he moved his hair from the ears, two unnaturally large ears came into my view, similar to the ears seen in statues of Buddha. "To cover both ears, I have kept the hair long. As it is, people draw different conclusions about me and if they see these two ears, their blind beliefs will consolidate further." I did not say anything to that.

Why blame these people? Slowly, I also began to feel that the way he talked, his demeanor, appearance, philosophy, the signs on his physical body, the lines on his palms, his ears and his eyes seemed to express without doubt a divine personality. On that day, especially, U.G.'s appearance and the posture of his limbs brought to mind repeatedly the various mudras of Lord Vishnu. When he stands in his normal posture, the palms of his hands completely face backwards, as if something has turned his hands from his elbow towards his body.

U.G. strongly dismisses all these views and says, "Every man is Nature's unique creation." Then devotion and reverence towards him increase more and more! I wondered to myself, if this feeling worked inside a human being all the time, how would his life be? On this earth, no man's importance and ability can be more than that of any other ordinary person in any way. Excessive pride makes man believe that in the world of living beings he has been created for some grander purpose. This arrogance will be the first step towards an extraordinary disorder and will lead man to engage himself in super destructive activities.

Whatever science has done or not done, it has made it clear to us that compared to the vastness of the cosmos, our abode, this planet is the smallest of small, a miniscule dot. On this earth, since millions of years, billions and billions of creatures have taken birth and died; so for every life, what greater or grander purpose can there be? Apart from this basic identity, is it possible for knowledge to have any other fundamental objective? Thoughts are only thoughts. Without thinking, how will human life work? Thinking about that and with mixed emotions I was lost somewhere.

In the morning, soon after the coffee session, Julie and Tanuja presented themselves. U.G asked me, "Guha, since yesterday all are talking about something new, only I am kept in the dark." I was surprised and asked what news is that? I did not know anything.

U.G. said forcefully, "All are saying that Guha knows palm reading, so can you read my palm once?" I was relieved and told him, "Oh! That I can definitely do, but do you believe in all this?" I don't believe in

astrology or palmistry that much. In my younger days, I had read St. Germaine and Cheiro's books and learned all this. I still remember some things even now; whatever is in the books I can relate to - other than that, I do not have any knowledge or opinion. U.G. looked at my face and said, "All my life, this one thing has left me surprised. So many strange incidents have taken place due to which I cannot say with certainty that there is nothing to this. When I was 12 or 14 years old, my grandfather took me to a famous astrologer in Madras. His prophesies for my future tallied word for word with what came to pass, though whatever prophecies he made for my grandfather, none of them came true. He had studied my horoscope and predicted much earlier that when I reach 49 years of age, there would be an extraordinary transformation and in reality, that happened; my death took place. Therefore, in the truth of palmistry and astrology, my opinions are still suspended."

I remembered my own experience in astrology. I had left my home and was leading a dangerous life. Every moment and everywhere death and imprisonment followed me like a shadow. With a dream of providing food, clothing and shelter to millions of poor and destitute countrymen, I plunged into revolutionary activities. Day by day, half-hungry, with hardly any rest, in this weak and suffering body, only the two eyes were shining with the hope of turning the seventies into a decade of truth and freedom. Somehow the heart was barely able to keep the body functioning.

This news reached my parents and they were devastated; there was no end to their dreadful thoughts. At such a time, a strange patient came to my father's clinic. My father looked at his face and diagnosed his illness. This man told my father, "Just as you have surprising ability in diagnosis, I have great ability in one subject, and that is astrology." My father, though a long-time communist, still, like most Bengalis, had great reverence for Sri Ramakrishna and also a weakness for astrology. He became quite excited and immediately drove everyone out from his chamber. The man sat with his eyes closed for some time and then said, "You are very worried about your son who was born in 1953. He is passing through a bad time now, but there is no need to fear, his good time is coming, everything will be all right." My father had hid the fact that I had joined a banned political party and had left home, and apart from that, my birth certificate shows the year of birth as 1954. Father was very surprised but he concealed his excitement. Later on, when the future predictions came true, my father invited him and his family to our house and my mother took care of him like her own brother. He became a member of our family. We subsequently found many other proofs of his special talent. All these events greatly inspired me and after that I began reading these books and learned palmistry myself.

U.G. put the lights on and spread out both his palms before me. Julie and Tanuja, like me, were also leaning over looking at his open palms. Pink-colored soft palms, having very beautiful lines, captured my mind in such a powerful way that all the nearby places, the earth and every other object disappeared from my consciousness.

Ascending from the bottom of the palm, close to the wrist, a strong line about three fourths to the left of the Moon mount, dividing Saturn into two halves, goes from the center in such a way as though the goddess of destiny has ordered Vishwakarma (Hindu god of Architecture) himself to create the line. Parallel with this line of fate, another line touches the Sun line and then stands alone, anonymous. Many more lines go upwards from the lifeline to different fingers. I truly felt that day that some divine

sculptor, as per the order of the Almighty, had etched the lines of this palm. One word to describe that hand - beautiful.

Some time passed in this manner. Such was the silence that it felt as if one could hear even the sound of a hair falling. I ended the silence by declaring that till today I had never seen such a hand in my entire life. Somebody in the room told me that it is said that Lord Buddha had such beautiful lines on his hand. "I cannot give any opinion on this, as I have never seen Lord Buddha's hand," I replied. U.G. looked at everyone and nodded as though he agreed on this point. All the rest of them started laughing.

Now I started relating my findings and announced, "Your headline is very strong and at the end there is a clear star. This means in the mental world an explosion has occurred. Your headline has crossed the star, and because of this you were able to keep the explosion in check and lessen the impact on your psychological world. Also, the strong Mercury line saved you from going insane. Lines rising from Jupiter and Mars prove that an inner primordial creative force is manifesting in your awareness. You have boundless luck and incomparable success."

I took U.G.'s two palms in my own and concentrated deeply to sense where the similarity and difference lay. Suddenly I felt as though a strange heat was emanating from his hands. I fully experienced the warmth. I grasped that a faint, warm current was flowing through my hands and into my heart. In my life many times I had experienced electric shocks. This felt somewhat like that, but very gradual, a pleasant tremor, not uncomfortable. I was looking at U.G.'s face, surprised. Tanuja and Julie asked me what had happened, why was I staring at his face like that. Without replying to them, I directly asked U.G., "What are you doing? Why am I experiencing this?" I felt as if a dose of some intoxicant had been injected into my arteries. Gradually, my mouth, throat, windpipe, esophagus, became very dry, just like the dryness you feel after taking marijuana or *bhang* (beverage made with cannabis in India). I had never felt like this in my life before. My eyes were drooping and I was feeling very sleepy; this was happening in the morning when usually I feel most awake and alert. U.G. evaded my question but he surprised me by saying, "Drink a glass of water and study my palm lines carefully and tell me if I will get money." I told him that Goddess Lakshmi herself is following him in case he needs anything. After this, the hand reading session ended.

I was completely alert. Suppressed feelings of excitement were shaking me intermittently. My flow of thoughts, concepts, motivation for work and relationships became directionless. However much I tried to avoid thinking of this experience and return to my normal self, the more it seemed to gain a place of importance in my thoughts. All thought flows changed course. Just when I had agreed to everything that he said and accepted that there is nothing supernatural, that all these feelings are a result of my mind and my longings, that they create a certain experience in me, and the foundation of that belief is strengthened ... suddenly why then did I have such an experience? Maybe unknowingly I had harbored a mindset for something like spiritual transmission. I could not understand what is truth and reality. Just when I started thinking my concepts about spirituality and meditation were illusory, and with the help of U.G.'s comments and point of view, I was beginning to see the light of reality. This incident today took me back to the same darkness from where I started my journey. Just when I began to think that I am

able to understand what U.G. is saying, an incident occurs which makes my understanding look like child's play.

Deep frustration gave birth to little emptiness in a strange way. When the thoughts touch this emptiness then everything seems to be false, only my body and its relationship to its surroundings is one inseparable existence, the only truth. Everything else is an illusion. Colorful dream images and thoughts are devoid of any relationship with Nature. They are the illusion of the mind. Whenever I bring myself back to the world of usual thoughts, my center as the ego tries to link up all incidents and tries to create an inference; as a result my faith gets a solid foundation along with my ego. In other words, it wants to turn the belief structure into something infinite, and along with that even the self. This state of duality made me remember the story of the swan with two heads, one head had consumed poison to punish the other head and the end result was the death of both. It is only death that can end this state of duality. This realm of duality is extremely painful, it is only the desire to understand, the desire to know that is keeping the "I" in me alive. Without the existence of this, there may not be any pleasurable satisfaction – and pain is connected very intimately with this. The apparent understanding of this fact is not producing any result in me either.

Taking a deep breath I interrupted my flow of thoughts.

## CHAPTER 8

### Life Is Mysterious

Prof Narayana Moorty is suffering from cancer in his leg. He is to be operated on in a few days, so U.G. and Mahesh have decided to go and see him in Seaside, near San Francisco. We all will go to the Los Angeles Airport to see them off. We drove in two cars and arrived in Los Angeles from Palm Springs. After they left we went to an Indian restaurant for lunch in Hollywood. The topic of discussion was how we would pass our time in the coming two days. I soon realized that there was no consensus on how to spend the next two hours, let alone the next two days!

Julie wanted to take me to a spiritual bookshop while Tanuja wanted us to go to a movie. I told Tanuja that for the last 21 years I had not entered a movie hall. Tanuja looked stunned and holding her head in her hands slid down the chair. She said in an unbelieving tone, "I myself don't know what I am doing here. Some event is surely going to take place." The reason for saying all this was that Tanuja was trying to become a film director. In the meantime, a script written by her for the movie *Tamanna* was given an award at a film festival. Here she was amongst people whose background she just could not understand. I told her not seeing movies must be in my blood. I had never seen my father enter a movie hall. Julie asked me in a surprised tone if I had never taken my wife Lakshmi out for a movie. Lakshmi was a researcher in an American university studying the structure of proteins. I said, "No, we have never, ever gone to a movie together!"

By now all desire had died out in these people. All were feeling gloomy and directionless. We decided to go back to Palm Springs and rest in our rooms. In the meantime, Mario and Lisa had finished a few bouts of fighting -- hence they were grim. Julie said that whenever U.G. went somewhere, those who were left behind often faced this kind of desolate sadness. I thought this was really strangely funny. Everything here seemed straight out of a storybook.

I felt this day was a holiday from spiritual sadhana. We could get up as late as we wished, there was no hurry. For me the whole day seemed to pass in a light-hearted mood. I phoned New Jersey in the night and spoke to Lakshmi and my two daughters, Shilpa and Sumedha, for some time. They were feeling my absence, especially Lakshmi.

I was remembering the past while lying on my bed at night. In 1971, I was a mere freshman at Presidency College in Calcutta, but due to my ability to play soccer, I rubbed shoulders with the big goons. Besides, I gathered more friends due to my predisposition for politics. Either I was to be found at the Coffee House on College Street or on the sidewalks searching for books in the bookstalls the whole day. Slowly, a thought had become firmly rooted in my mind that in return for what I got from society every day, I had to give something back. The tendency towards emotionalism in my younger days combined with the desire to "do good for others" led to this kind of thinking. *Just think that what you eat, the clothes you wear and the house you live in are all due to the blood and toil of others. Yet a majority of them are the very people struggling in life without an opportunity to get food, education and*

*treatment. The main providers of luxury in your life are these people. How, after knowing this, can you blindfold yourself like a farming bullock, focus on the tip of your nose and concentrate only on making your career? Who is your driver? Where is your conscience? The people whose story of valor brought reverential tears to your eyes ... were they any less capable than you? Did they lay down their lives to create this society for selfish people like you? Oh Sabyasachi, who gave you this name with hope in their hearts? If you ever call anyone selfish again then know that there will not be a bigger fathead and blind person than you on this earth.*

With great difficulty I slept a little in the last part of the night.

U.G. and Mahesh have returned after visiting Prof Moorty. Julie, Mario, Lisa, Tanuja and I went to receive them at Los Angeles airport in late afternoon. When they emerged, I noticed a peculiar thing. U.G. was looking at me yet it felt as if he had not recognized me. His eyes pierced mine but it seemed he was looking at something far beyond them. I waved my hands in front of his eyes and called out U.G., U.G. to him. He seemed to come out of the trance; he smiled and said, "Hello, hello, when did you all come? Our flight landed ten minutes back." He went on like this. On being asked about Prof Moorty, he said that he was fine. He was mentally ready to fight against the cancer. U.G. said, "He is a philosopher, yet seeing me he said that an unusual courage had arisen in him." Moorty had an astounding dream, that U.G. breathed his last on Moorty's lap in California. U.G. reassured Moorty that his dream would come true and hence he, Moorty, would survive for a long time. At present, Prof Moorty is completely healthy.

U.G. got into our car and sat in the front seat, Mahesh and me in the back. Julie was driving the car, and after sometime I could not keep my eyes open and lost myself in sleep. When I opened my eyes, I found we were coming off the highway. Julie said she needed to put petrol in the car so she wanted to stop at a gas station. We filled the tank and had a cup of coffee. When it was time to return to the car, Julie took me aside and whispered, "Guha, the gas was only an excuse. I can barely drive. I cannot keep my eyes open. It's as if somebody is forcibly drawing a curtain in front of my eyes from inside. Will you drive for some time?"

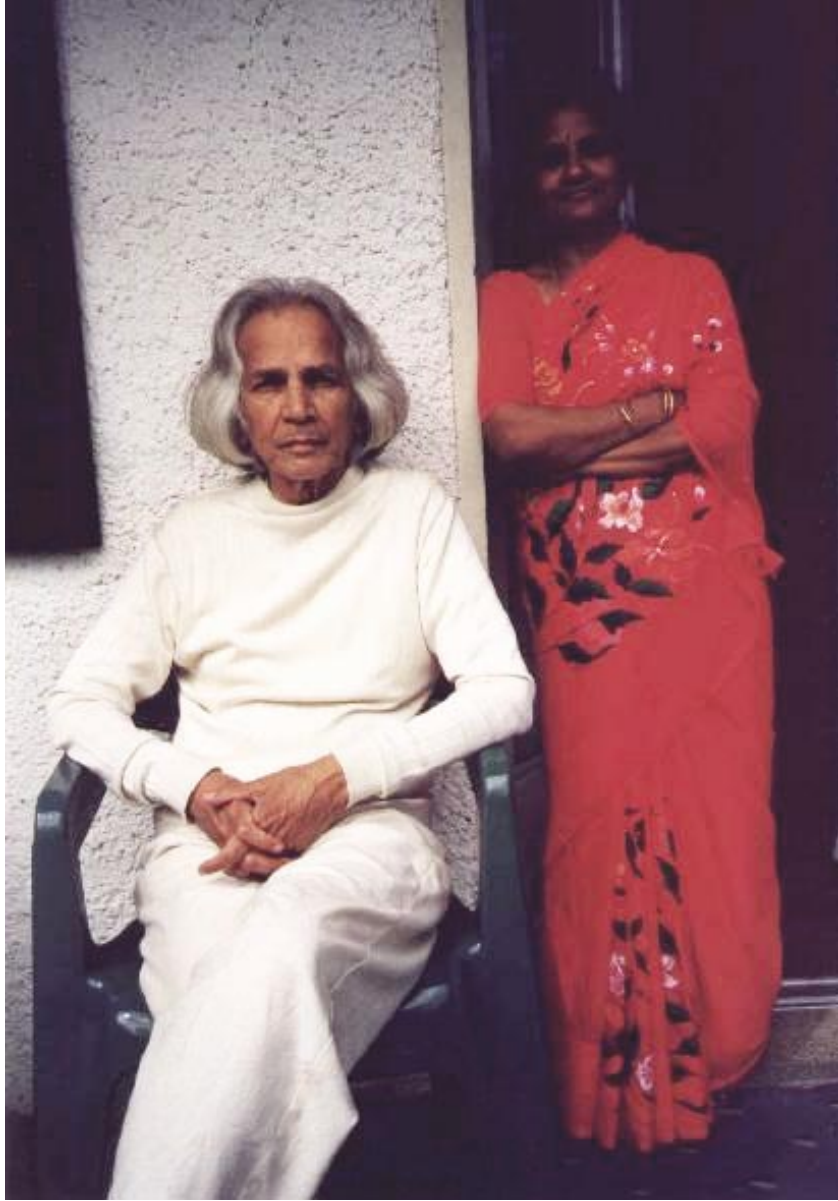
It had always been Julie's dream to drive the car with U.G. sitting next to her. Anything greater or more joyful than this is beyond her comprehension and thinking. Julie would have found it easier to hand over her loved ones than to hand over the driver's seat; surely something must have happened today, otherwise she would never ask me to drive! I replied that it was okay, I would drive but wasn't her drowsiness better now after drinking coffee? Julie replied, "No, I am still not able to keep my eyes open." At last, I told U.G. that Julie was tired and since Mahesh would not drive in America, I would have to drive now. I had never driven a car with them. None of them knew what kind of driving ability I had and this would be the first time I would be driving in California. And the passengers were the "born great" U.G. Krishnamurti, Mahesh Bhatt and Julie Thayer. U.G. asked me if I had my driver's license with me. I replied that I did. "Then what else, you drive and let Julie rest," he replied.

I started my journey with U.G. in the seat next to me. Nobody spoke throughout the drive. When we reached the lodge, I stopped the car and everyone got down. U.G. announced, "That's it. As long as

Guha is here, he will drive me around.” Although Julie was fond of me, right now her expression was sad and she was finding it difficult to forgive her great desire to sleep.

In the evening it was decided that early next morning we would leave for Las Vegas. So everybody departed to their respective rooms early. I kept on feeling everything was turning upside down in my head. Events in the past felt as if they had taken place recently. I must have slept for some time when an explosion in my dream woke me up. I once again remembered events in Presidency College: *One day as usual I got out of the Coffee House, crossed College Street, passed through the iron gates of the college and after walking for some time I climbed the stairs on the right and went straight to the third floor verandah. I looked down at the iron gates towards College Street. Barely one or two classes were going on as there was a boycott of classes by students. There was suppressed excitement all round. There was no direct information but it was known that there were preparations being made for a “big action”. Maybe that information had also reached the nearby police station; otherwise why should two black police vans come and stand near the gates? Many policemen got out. All were having guns in their hands. Nobody was either entering or exiting the gate. The atmosphere was silent and gloomy. Suddenly, there was an earth shaking, ear splitting bomb explosion. I peeped out and saw a ball of smoke come up to the second floor from the area near the iron gates. Before we could understand what was happening, there was another sky piercing explosion. There was now a lot of noise and chaos below. Trams, buses and cars had all come to a stop. Maybe some policemen were injured. By then the police had lifted their guns and passed through the iron gates and entered the college.*

*My friend and I were against the wall, hiding behind a pillar on the verandah. I heard someone say that nobody should stay on the verandah. I peeped out. Immediately a bullet whizzed past my head. Before I could understand anything, I saw someone fall down about ten feet away from me, probably hit on the shoulder. I ran to the office and asked them to get an ambulance as soon as possible. While returning I saw the policemen running up the stairs, like you see in Hindi movies. In a nearby classroom a professor was still teaching math to a few students. My friend and I entered without permission and took our seats in front of a table. The professor must have thought that it was we who had thrown the bomb and came here to hide but still he carried on as if nothing had happened. Just a few minutes later, an official of the college accompanied by a senior police official asked us come out of the class in a line. We saw that many others were also standing in lines in the verandah. The injured boy was carried away on a stretcher by the police. Small droplets of blood showed the path taken by the unconscious body. A senior officer spoke angrily and with a gesture displaying intense irritation said, “If you want revolution why come to college? See, he has been hit by a bullet. A brilliant boy, his parents are dreaming of big things. Now the unfortunate parents will have to claim his body from the morgue. I thought in my dream, life is so mysterious.*



U.G. with Lakshmi Guha



## CHAPTER 9

### Going To Las Vegas

At dawn we started for Las Vegas. U.G. sat in the front seat of Franklin's expensive Japanese Infinity car. Larry Morris and Olivia (Franklin's wife) and I sat in the back. Julie had hired another car, a milky white Nissan Maxima. Mario sat with Julie in the front while Mahesh and Tanuja sat in the back. Right at the onset there seemed to be a difference of opinion between U.G. and Franklin about which route would take us to Las Vegas in the shortest time. Franklin was driving and kept saying that this was the wrong route. We seemed to be going towards Los Angeles, yet I knew that Las Vegas was in the opposite direction to Los Angeles. After hearing this for quite some time, U.G. got angry. He literally shouted, "If you have no idea of the correct road, either you have to trust others or stop at a gas station and enquire. If you are still not sure, you should buy a map and see where you are, where you want to go and how to get there. There is no point in disturbing others by talking of the same thing again and again." Franklin stopped at a gas station. Julie's car also followed us. Everybody got down except U.G. and made enquiries. The absence of U.G. from our midst made Franklin bold and he began to grumble. He said, "There is such certainty in all matters in this old gentleman and I cannot bear it!"

Both the cars were filled with petrol. After asking around and some discussion it was decided that Julie's car would lead and we would follow. Without any further words being spoken everybody went back to their cars and we began to follow Julie. We were still going in the same direction as earlier, towards Los Angeles. Nobody was speaking, and there was such an uncomfortable silence in the car that all the senses seemed to have become alert, particularly the sense of sight. Everybody was staring avidly at the road signs. After traveling for about ten minutes two huge green road signs showed us our situation. The highway split into two - one towards Los Angeles and the other towards Las Vegas. It became clear that we were on the right road all along.

Franklin's face turned red with humiliation, his pride being broken. He could see in the rear view mirror that I was smiling mischievously. He turned back towards me while driving and asked, "This road is quite counter-intuitive, isn't it?" His tone implied that the people who had made this road had very little intelligence. There was no reflection of the past events on U.G.'s face. In a very casual tone he said that in four hours we would reach Las Vegas, depending, of course, on the speed of driving. I asked Franklin if he drove very fast like Mario or carefully like Larry Morris. Olivia spoke up for the first time and informed us that Franklin liked to drive fast but in the recent past he had been pulled over by the police for violations quite a few times. Hence, he was careful now. Franklin said that while driving from San Francisco to Los Angeles to meet U.G. he collected two speeding tickets in a single day. Every ticket came with point and you had to pay a fine every time you were caught speeding. Now the points on Franklin's license were so high that retaining it was doubtful. The more points on your license the heftier the premium during renewal of car insurance. To reduce the "points," people took Safe Driving courses, which again cost money. The main thing is violating the law costs money and time. I asked what happens if a person has both time and money like, say, Julie Thayer. Larry Morris said if you get 12 points your

license will be suspended. U.G. replied that if you commit some terrible crime you will have to pay with your life or go to jail.

The car was running at 80 miles an hour and our discussions after covering many topics came to our favorite subject - spirituality and J. Krishnamurti. To me JK was a unique personality. I had read his books and had such a soft corner for him that my thinking would change even if I heard his name being mentioned. I once again remembered my days in Bangalore. My colleague Jayalokhi used to tell me, "You are so mad about JK. Why don't you go and meet him one day?" That opportunity never arose, and now of course I don't regret it. Earlier, when I used to hear of the chat sessions of Sri Ramakrishna, I used to think I had been born at the wrong time but now I no longer have even that regret.

The talk was now about the two Krishnamurtis. Franklin liked this very much, because he considered himself a witness. As a youth of sixteen or seventeen Franklin used to listen to JK's lectures in the mornings and listen to their explanations from U.G. in the evenings. Due to these experiences, Franklin tried to explain that he had a better insight into the mysterious connection that existed between the two Krishnamurtis. I loved listening to these discussions. I supported Franklin and seemingly flattered, he immediately began to enthusiastically enumerate where the similarity lay in the thinking of both. In a fit of excessive joy he began to compare the two Krishnamurtis to great historical figures.

He said, "You know, Dr Guha, I think JK was like John the Baptist. Before the arrival of Jesus, John informed everybody that the protector was coming and baptized many people. Just like that JK also spoke aloud to spread his philosophy to the world. And U.G. is like Jesus, he is the essence of that philosophy. I have met both a number of times and this I know and witnessed with my own eyes." During that time everybody would come to U.G. to discuss what JK was trying to say. Most took for granted that U.G. had a much deeper understanding of JK's teaching than an ordinary listener. During all these discussions U.G. took a royal nap as if we were talking nonsense.

We got off the highway to have lunch. Ever since I turned vegetarian, eating out in this country has become a problem. I disliked eating raw leaves and vegetables known as salad. I love fried stuff, especially French fries. But how many days could I eat just that? They stuff mutton patty in bread to make a burger. Nowadays they do have burgers with vegetable patty but they are not available everywhere and could not be found here. I swallowed two pieces of dry bread with a coke. U.G. ate an apple pie and drank a glass of hot water. Franklin ordered a few different dishes and sat down comfortably at another table with his wife. They had ordered at least four times more food than we did. U.G. looked at me and reminded me how Franklin had made fun of J Krishnamurti's eating habits.

A few days back U.G. had requested Franklin to tell us in detail about his experience of having lunch with JK. I am going to tell what Franklin said that day. When he first met U.G. in Switzerland, Franklin had asked him for advice about the search for spirituality. U.G. had advised him to personally meet JK. JK's fame had by then reached Himalayan proportions. It was easy to listen to his lectures but meeting him in person was a difficult matter. After a lot of pleading, Franklin finally managed to meet him for two minutes. JK told Franklin, "I am going to India. If you come there, there will be plenty of opportunity for discussions." Franklin immediately agreed. Moreover, he informed JK that he also had a great desire to

learn hatha yoga. JK had himself learnt hatha yoga from a yoga teacher called Desikachar in Madras. So from whom Franklin could learn hatha yoga was also decided then and there.

For the first time in his life Franklin stepped on Indian soil, the sacred land of spirituality. Franklin began to learn yoga from Desikachar. And whenever JK gave a lecture, Franklin would sit very close to the stage, in the front row so that JK would not be able to forget him. Whenever the opportunity arose Franklin would meet JK for a chat. One day, JK invited him to the mid-day meal and Franklin accepted with supreme joy. From here begins an interesting tale.

The American Franklin was then a tall, well-built youth of seventeen. And JK was a slim, elderly, gentleman of 73, a teacher of Indian spirituality. Both sat facing each other at the dining table. The first plate to arrive was a western style salad - various green leaves, raw cucumber, broccoli, red cabbage, lettuce, carrots and red tomatoes cut into slices. The lunch began with a tasty Italian sauce. Franklin thought that having salad for lunch was terrific. When he had polished off his plate and was mentally preparing questions to ask, JK asked the cook to bring the next dish. Next to arrive was South Indian style thali. Fried papads, rasam, sambar, vegetables, buttermilk, curd and small mounds of basmati rice. Along with all this came three small stainless steel bowls containing ghee (clarified butter), mango pickle and coconut chutney. Franklin was stunned. JK, however, proceeded to finish off the entire thali and then sat back with his spine erect as in *Vajrasana*. Franklin ate everything very slowly like a Marathon runner and looked up with a pitiful expression at the expressionless face of JK. Like an expert player, JK said, "Young man, to look after the body is an art form. After lunch it is essential to have some sweets, what is known as desserts in your country."

JK asked the cook to clear off the plates. Franklin thought thanks be to heaven, at last the meal is over! However, even before he could take a breath he saw an unbelievable sight and as if from far off he heard the faint tones of JK's voice saying, "These are Indian sweets." The desserts consisted of big bowls of rice and milk sweet called *payesh or payasam*, some *rasmalai* and a bowlful of *gulab jamun*. Franklin thought he would not survive and there was nowhere to run. There was his American pride too. This 165 pound American could bow his head in front of a 125 pound elderly Indian gentleman for spiritual knowledge but to acknowledge defeat in the matter of eating was akin to death, Franklin felt. However, he was not sure of getting up from the table with his self-respect intact, if he ate anymore. His body also seemed to have rebelled internally. A feeling of dislike seemed to be gathering at the sight of food. His very pores seemed ready to announce a great desire for renunciation. His eyes too were thankless. Just half an hour ago if they had seen this sight, they would have been feeling inspired, feelings of well-being would have been generated, thus creating ripples and forcing this instrument called the body to produce secretions in the various glands and creating oneness. It would have felt as if the palate was eager for the taste of each morsel of sweets. But now he felt just leave me alone to my misery! Nature's behavior was like the waves of the sea. It took you up only to drop you down with a thud! While Franklin was busy thinking all this, JK had already finished off the bowlfuls of sweets. Franklin was eating slowly and staring at the door of the kitchen.

The cook was now the God of Death. Even if he arrived empty handed, he could carry off his dead body peacefully and the desire to see the cook empty-handed seemed to be his last wish. But our will power

is not like the sages of yore whose wishes came true each time. In this instance the opposite happened. The cook strolled in a leisurely manner with two enormous bowls of ice-cream. And like the tolling of death bells could be heard the divine voice of Jiddu Krishnamurti saying, "This is the dessert of your country."

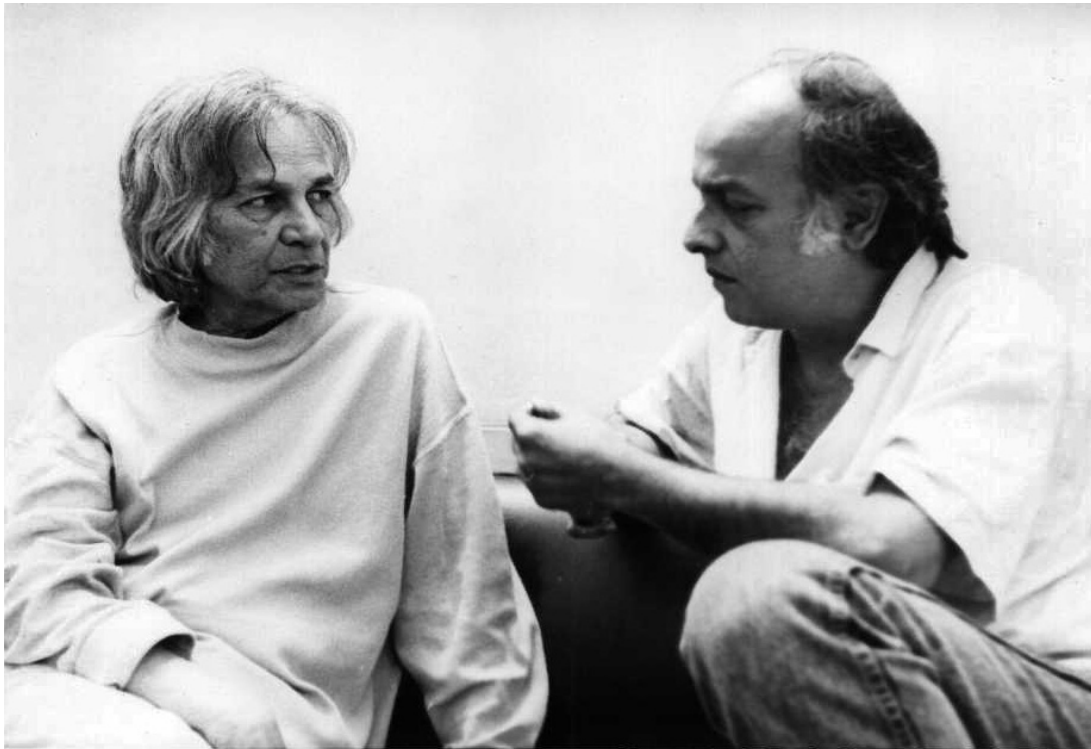
U.G. took some hot water and went to the rear of the restaurant to finish off his meal and ablutions. There was an enormous garbage drum there. I began to pace about and looked at the desolate landscape of the desert. U.G. donated 95 parts of his entire food to rats, flies and scavengers. Everybody returned to the car. Franklin made a few critical remarks about the quality of the food. I gave him a piece of chewing gum. I heard a soft, "thank you" and after that nothing more than the noise of his jaws. The car proceeded, piercing the chest of the Nevada Desert on the black road. I turned my neck and saw Julie's car following us like a loyal white horse follows his Master. Next to the driver's seat was Mahesh. Like the hero of a cowboy movie, he lifted his right hand and pointing his finger gestured as if pointing a gun at us. He took aim and pretended to shoot us thrice.

We have arrived in Las Vegas. It is such a dramatic place that one can hardly believe one's own eyes. You can gamble openly, hire bodies and intoxicating things are to be plentifully found in this city. Its lascivious beckoning has lured big and important people into losing all before returning home. But nobody seems to be bothered about it. The city's main work seems to be gambling and surrounding this has been created an entire society to serve millions of people and help them enjoy themselves to the utmost before they return home.

Looking at the lifestyle of the people here, the extraordinary houses and buildings, huge hotels and the dazzling lights, I had forgotten about the people around me. I looked back to see that there was no sign of Julie. After trying for some time to find them, I told U.G. that Julie's car was lost. We had not decided where we would stop. U.G. replied in his calm and certain tone, "Where can they go?" A discussion began on what we should do. We nearly entered two different parking lots only to change our minds. U.G. advised us to go ahead a little. Franklin swore not to give any more advice, because whenever he gave advice, everybody agreed to it only for U.G. to change it when it was just about to be implemented. The main problem with Franklin is these events seem to hurt his ego. We roamed around a few other places and finally entered the parking lot next to the MGM Grand Casino. In such a crowded parking area it was nearly impossible to find an empty slot and when we finally found one, it was to suddenly see Julie, Mahesh and Tanuja along with Mario dragging their travel weary bodies towards us. The minute Julie laid her eyes on U.G., she cried, "Oh My God! This is absolutely impossible. This is the result of U.G.'s divine intervention!" I said it must be just a "coincidence". Julie scoffed at me and said mockingly, "Coincidence! There are thousands of places to park cars and hundreds of hotels in Las Vegas. I thought we had lost you. Not one of us has a cell phone to connect with others. How is it possible that after debating three times about where to enter we end up entering where U.G. has also just entered?"

Seeing Julie's firmness, I remembered the scene in Michael Madhusudan Dutt's poem where Pramila enters Lanka: Crossing the mountains and rivers towards Sindhu, who has the gumption to stop her way? In front of U.G.'s abnegation, all this just blew away like dried leaves.

We all have a tendency to mystify things and this tendency makes us remember certain specific events. This has a profound effect on our mind and it is then not possible for us to observe even insignificant events in a casual manner. Julie has a background of five years of Freudian analysis and five years of Jungian analysis. U.G.'s point of view is that all psychiatrists have the same disease. The people of our country, the Indians, suffer from superstitions and blind beliefs, and there is really no difference between that and Western beliefs. We humans have eyes, nose, ears and tongue and other parts of the body, but do we have anything called "psyche?" Ordinary men are made to understand it in this way: Just like there is a process to take care of other parts of the body, psychiatrists have decided how to take care of the 'psyche'. Our sages dismissed it as illusion five thousand years ago. U.G. has a negation there also. According to him all these ideas came into their heads as a result of imbibing soma juice. Julie brushed aside all these logical arguments, "Let your logic work in *your* life. This is what I want and I know what works in my life. Your philosophy is useless for me."



U.G. and Mahesh Bhatt

## CHAPTER 10

### Lakshmi Panchali

We entered the MGM Grand Casino. There was loud noise all around, dazzling lights and a huge movie screen spanning an entire wall. Standing amidst all this, I felt as if my senses had been kidnapped by something outside, that I had lost my identity surrounded by this frantic human activity. A thirty foot wide and a hundred foot tall screen displayed images of a man playing the guitar. Like a tiled motif the same image was being shown in 30 to 40 pieces simultaneously. We began to inch forward. There was a thick carpet underfoot and both sides of the passageway were lined with slot machines. To play on the slot machines, you have to buy special coins and insert them in a slot in the quantity prescribed. Then you have to either pull a lever or press a button. A series of pictures or figures would start scrolling before stopping in a particular sequence. If it stopped at the highest possible sequence, a siren would start blaring and various lights would begin to blink and vibrate. Coins would start to rain down with a loud jingling sound and you can collect them in the metal tray underneath.

This mixture of light and sound combined with the joy of winning something creates a limitless desire, what we can term as intoxication. A few get it sometimes and the feeling that it may be in my destiny too, this hope raises the intoxication level. I am thinking what is intoxication? The sound of the coins jingling probably sends a message from the nucleus of the hypothalamus to the pituitary gland. This pituitary gland which the sages of ancient India called the “Ajna Chakra” was called by the western scientists the “Conductor of the Endocrine Orchestra”. A good many things are happening in our body due to orders given from here. Even if we do not accept this, it’s working does not stop. The conductor may get some news by telegram, for example, become excited and tell the surrenal gland to mix adrenaline in the blood stream. When the blood stream reaches the head such a feeling of joy is created, such intoxication, that all other thoughts or considerations seem insignificant. This feeling of utter joy creates with the help of synapses a map in the neurons of the brain. This map somehow falls in love with the sound of jingling of the coins. The results of love! Everybody knows that. The gold chain worn around the neck, the Rolex watch, all go into the slot machines. The desire to see the dazzling lights and to see the mountain of coins at least once more in the tray lights a fire in the blood. A king can forget the responsibilities of ruling his kingdom here. Take the example of Yudhisthir from the *Mahabharat*, who was the epitome of *dharma* (righteousness), and was wise in his karma but whose knowledge simply did not work when it came to gambling. Man does not back down even from destroying the only wealth he really owns - his own body.

We came and stood in front of the slot machines. The scene was quite amusing. A nearly seventy year old gentleman wearing gold framed glasses and smoking a long cigarette sat in a chair in front of the machine. In front of him was a big box of coins. I gestured to U.G. to look at the scene and asked him if he wanted play a round. He looked into my eyes and said, “In this life you and I will not be able to gamble.” Seeing me startled he changed the topic towards himself. “Why should I gamble? Even if I don’t want money, it comes to me. Maybe you don’t believe me. Then see something quite amusing.” Saying this he stretched out his hands. The gesture looked as if he was telling God, “Give me money or I

will open my third eye.” Suddenly, in order to save her Master’s self-respect, Julie put quite a few dollar bills in his hand. U.G. waved the money in front of my eyes and said, “See, how easy it is to earn money.” He kept five hundred dollar notes in his hand and returned the rest to Julie.

Mahesh always tried to make people understand what the reason behind their actions. In this effort, he would sometimes involve U.G. too. As soon as this matter of money settled down, Mahesh whispered in U.G.’s ears but in a voice loud enough for us to hear since that was his intention, “Why do these people give you so much of money?” U.G. answered in a straightforward manner, “Why ask me? Ask those who give me the money.” Then Mahesh asked Julie, “You are thinking that by giving money to U.G. your wealth will increase in manifold ways, aren’t you? Just like people give money at Tirupati, Vaishnodevi or Kalighat temples? Even if you are not so business-minded, probably you are thinking that if you make U.G. happy you will gain a lot in spiritual terms?” By now Julie was embarrassed. Mahesh then shouted, “You all are mistaken. This machine called U.G. is like a black hole. It will swallow everything but not give back anything in return.” U.G. began to laugh and said, “Mahesh is telling the truth.” Although she was close to him, Tanuja sprang like a tigress on Mahesh and said, “Why do you always keep a dollar note given to you by U.G. in your wallet? Answer me?” Mahesh answered in a dramatic, serious tone, “I had stolen that money from U.G.’s wallet. I had kept it as a souvenir of my tendency to steal. Besides, everybody wants to give money to U.G. while I want to take it from him.” Everyone was silent. Mahesh looked at U.G. and said, “Sir, all around us is the play of money.”

I remembered that in childhood I had heard a song, “Round and round, this world is revolving due to money.” Is there anything that money cannot buy? It is difficult to understand if those who tell us to sacrifice this are truthful or not. What a thing this money is! Even a person like Gadadhar Chatterjee (Ramakrishna Paramhansa) became scared after drowning all his possessions in the Ganges. If Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) stops her blessings, what will happen? The truth is man has conquered and taken everything for himself. If a man is hungry it is not possible to pluck a fruit from a tree and appease his hunger. A salaried guard earning a paltry sum will either beat him till the spine is broken or put him in jail. There also you cannot eat without working. I thought man did a terrible thing by starting farming. But does man need more money than what is needed for food, clothes and shelter? If man understood that, what would happen to Las Vegas? It is no use thinking about all this. But what are we doing here? As soon as Julie took out her video camera, Franklin came running to stand before the camera.

I don’t know if I heard what Franklin was saying about Las Vegas but something like this was going on in my head. I felt as if a news correspondent was giving live commentary, “You can see this small group. They are the army of U.G. Krishnamurti. They have come on a pilgrimage to Las Vegas. They are a terrific group. Just like Vegas is standing on the chest of the desert, ignoring the rules and regulations of civilized society, creating a new way of life, just like that this group is sowing the seeds of creating a new identity in the desert of society. This group is not interested in light human experiences. They have set their sights on sowing extraordinary seeds to create a new identity in their body - this awakening will change the programming of their head, it will force them to live in harmony with Nature.” Just then I heard Franklin shout, “Beware! Beware! Beware!” Suddenly, looking at Franklin I remembered my father’s card-playing cronies. Before playing each would boast as if he was an Olympic champion.

Mahesh snatched the camera from Julie's hand and focusing on U.G.'s back, began to follow him around. Both of U.G.'s hands were clasped behind his back. He was clasping his right hand with his left hand and three fingers of his right hand were holding crisp five one hundred dollar notes which were swaying in the air. After a few minutes, U.G. realized that he was being captured on camera. Immediately he turned back and said, "Why from the back? Come in front!" We said we wanted to capture for posterity his efforts to earn money.

When a man dies everything is over. Whether there is anything called reincarnation it is not possible to know. But through the medium of celluloid it is possible to bring alive for the dear ones the people who are gone. U.G. now attacked head on. "You people are laughing at my indifference to money; do you people have your eyes and ears open to your deepest desires? If you truthfully dive down to your core and examine yourself, you will only find preoccupation with money. And that which is remaining can also be bought with money. Yet, the fun is you will not be able to buy me with money. A famous astrologer once predicted that even if I give a kick to Lakshmi, she will not stop following me around." As soon as he finished saying this we all surrounded him. I told him, "Teach me some mantra-tantra to come to such a state. All my troubles will be over. There will be no need to flatter anyone or to bow my head in front of anyone." We could not believe our ears what U.G. replied to this. "There is a way to do this." I looked at him with such concentration that all external sounds were blocked out. The whole universe did not exist for me. I only concentrated on the tremors of those lips from which issued these words: "When you don't have any more money, when you have no means left of earning more money, when you have no idea what you will eat tomorrow but still you have no trace of regret in you, then all things will appear in their place like magic. As long as this last sentence is in your head, nothing will happen!" I understood these things cannot be learned, they cannot be done through effort. I suddenly thought that if one could become like Noren Babu (Swami Vivekananda) just by closing eyes and sitting, then there would be no lack of spine in the motherland of my dreams. I have no idea from where these weird examples come into my mind.

We have no idea if we are going to stay here or go back to Palm Springs. After spending a couple of hours at MGM we returned to the parking lot in front of our cars. We began to discuss whether we would stay or go back. The last word would of course belong to U.G. He said, "When we have come so far it would not be a good idea to go back without seeing Las Vegas at night." That was it! Immediately Julie went to the reception counter to book a big room for us. We all began to walk towards our room on the 22<sup>nd</sup> floor. We reached there by the elevator. Getting out from the elevator we found ourselves in a broad carpeted passage. There were rooms on both sides. After every three or four rooms there was some empty space where slot machines were installed. If a sudden desire to gamble arose in any guest, he wouldn't have to go far. Because there was a chance he could change his mind if he had to walk far. We came and stood in front of our room. A plastic card with a lot of holes was our room key. In place of the lock there was a square metal plate in which was a three centimeter by three millimeter narrow slot. Mario had the card in his hand. He inserted the card in the slot and tried to open the door. The door would not open. U.G. immediately remarked, "They know the Italian mafia very well here." Mario said in a tone begging for pity, "If you had said such a thing three years ago, maybe it would have meant something. Now I am not able to fill my stomach even after doing sheer manual labor; it has



become difficult for me to live. Why are you saying this to me now?" Franklin came forward to take the key. His attitude was that he was about to perform a difficult task. He inserted the card in the metal plate and waited for a few moments, he then took out the card and turned the knob and the door opened.

We examined the room. U.G. would rest here for some time. We also would shower, eat and rest at night before leaving the next morning. This was the general plan. U.G. sat on a chair in the drawing room. Franklin gave a ten-dollar bill to U.G. to meet the expenses of eating and staying. Contributions were being taken. U.G. said that he had only twenty six dollars in change. Larry Morris immediately gave him some much folded notes which were bundled up, just like truck drivers in India give money secretly to the traffic police as a bribe. That's how it looked to me. U.G. began to count the money given... 20, 30, 45, 50, 51. He laughed loudly and said, "This is called a calculative Jew." I pretended to be surprised and said, "Exactly double!" Larry was embarrassed and laid the entire wallet with its credit cards and debit cards at the feet of U.G., who carefully returned the wallet to Larry. He looked at me and said, "This is called transformation!" This Larry Morris until two days ago would put his hands in the pocket to give money but then would change his mind. I thought that the tips of Larry Morris's fingers had a brain of their own. Even if the hand reached inside the pocket, the fingers disliked the money intensely, the brain would force the hand to come out of the pocket without any money. Now U.G. threw down all the money and pushed it away with his feet. I immediately sat down on the ground in front of U.G. "Since you dislike and ignore it so much, then okay, Mother Lakshmi, please come to me." I carefully smoothed out the notes and put them in my pocket. I remembered that back at home, mother would read the *panchali* in praise of goddess Lakshmi every Thursday. That was for money. U.G. only said, "What comes easily, goes away easily too."

We are going to stay the night at Las Vegas. This was the only room available. Even if it was big, everybody could not stay in it. So we decided that we would stay elsewhere. While coming away from the hotel, I displayed the dexterity of my fingers, which were used to doing scientific work and restored all the money that I had picked up into U.G.'s pocket. U.G. had extraordinary awareness, his remark, "I cannot gamble in this life, I cannot touch any intoxicating substance, do not feel like spending the night with someone, what I would do with the money? Let the words of the astrologer come true. Maybe Goddess Lakshmi has no other option but to take shelter under your care." While walking down the passage, I saw Mahesh pick up something. This did not escape the eyes of Tanuja. She shouted, "U.G., U.G., Mahesh has again taken your money!" While keeping the money in U.G.'s pocket, a dollar might have fallen out. Mahesh like a falcon swooped down on it and took it away. He was proud of this matter. He puffed out his chest and said, "Finders keepers, losers weepers!" The saying seemed mysterious to me. I looked at him, there was a strange victorious and joyous smile on his face. Maybe the personality called U.G. – he is like this. He is roaming about among the people pretending to be just like everybody else and nobody knows that he is an incomparable, great man. Maybe Mahesh has realized that this is Aladdin's lamp. Maybe it was my thoughts and my liking for U.G. that forced me to see this in Mahesh's words. Meanwhile, U.G. had moved on to other matters. Right now the most important topic was where to put up and how many rooms were needed. We were standing in the parking lot, surrounding U.G. He asked who needed rooms. I replied that I would like to stay alone. Julie, Larry, and Mario all

wanted a room to themselves. Franklin and Olivia would share a room and Mahesh was agreeable to sharing a room with Tanuja for the night. U.G. suggested happily that if we take so many rooms we might get one room for free. He pointed at himself and said that the free room was for this orphan. I crinkled my brow and said, "Orphan! Oh God, please make all my countrymen orphans like him!"

We booked many rooms in Holiday Inn. Everybody was scattered around. My room was just opposite to U.G.'s. It was decided that we would meet in the balcony after half an hour. Everybody went to their own rooms. Except for a handkerchief and a wallet, I had nothing. Everything was available in the hotel. All I needed was a comb, tooth paste and a toothbrush to be self-sufficient. I closed the room and came to the balcony. I was first. After that arrived Julie, Mario, U.G. and Larry. There was no news of Mahesh and Tanuja. Knocking on their door had no effect. There was not a sound to be heard. Mario informed that they had told him that they were very hungry, maybe they had gone somewhere nearby to eat. U.G. said, "Let us go out for some time. We will go out again together at night." We left for Caesar's Palace.

## CHAPTER 11

### New Food For Thought

Dr. Larry Morris, Mario, sister Julie, U.G. and I began to walk on the hot sidewalks of Las Vegas from Holiday Inn to Caesar's Palace. Today is June 20. It is my wife Lakshmi's birthday, my father's death anniversary and my wedding anniversary too! Julie must have informed U.G. for he said, "I heard today is your wedding anniversary!" I replied, "What wedding anniversary in my old age! We were not together even on our first wedding anniversary. And there is no significance to all that now. But I have to wish Lakshmi on her birthday tonight." U.G. said teasingly, "You should not have done this. You are a householder. You should have spent the day with your wife. Instead you are roaming and enjoying yourself with a bunch of nomads in the gambler's place of pilgrimage." I did not know what to say. I smiled and said, "What is written in my destiny, who can wipe it out?"

My head began to burn in the hot sun. Everybody was wearing sunglasses except U.G. In order to alleviate his suffering I asked him, "Shall I buy a pair of sunglasses for you?" U.G. immediately replied, "I do not need all that. Your mental determination is so weak that you listen to whatever others say. Actually, the eyes know how much to open in how much light."

I thought this old man was tough. If Ray Ban and Oakley experts were here with us, they could have overpowered this old fellow by using examples from case histories or statistics from their research about the usefulness of dark glasses in strong sunlight. But for me to convince him was beyond the impossible. The only proof that counted for U.G. was his own eyes. Even at the age of 78, his eyesight is as sharp as a falcon's. Leaving alone the idea of making him agree with me, I decided to do the opposite. To sympathize with him, I removed the brown colored attachment from my glasses.

Walking down the road, I felt a different sensation in my body. I thought due to the intense heat my skin was itching. I touched the railing on the side of the road and got a tremendous shock; this happening was troublesome. While entering Caesar's Palace, I caught the door handle and got another shock. My whole hand jangled. I felt as one feels when knocked on the spot next to the elbow (funny bone).

The minute we opened the door a different world was in front of us. The casino was huge, with hundreds and hundreds of slot machines. The door closed behind us. It took some time for my senses to adjust to the atmosphere inside. U.G. had said that casinos were like a bowl of rice, if you pressed one grain you could make out how the rest were, i.e. if you have seen one, you have seen them all. There were the same slot machines, the same throwing of a Ludo's dice-like object on the table, Blackjack, a big table rotating around, and you wait to see where it stops. Still the atmosphere in Caesar's Palace was different. We passed by well-decorated shops on both sides and came to a novel place with blue sky overhead. A few pieces of cotton wool, like clouds, floated about with no rush to reach anywhere. I felt as if a town from Julius Caesar's time had jumped out of the pages of history. It was autumn and a fair was taking place in the streets; statues of Roman men adorned the terraces of nearby houses, seemingly watching the street scene.

The shops were like New York's famous Saks Fifth Avenue, and inside, the expensive costumes were designed by Italian designers such as Giorgio Armani or Donna Karan. Some shops had arranged for magic shows to attract customers and others were selling food. U.G. spent time in the shops selling good quality cotton and silk clothes.

My eyes fell on a photo studio that I found amusing. I entered the shop and everyone else came in after me. Here they would click instant photographs. But there was a peculiar characteristic to it. Outside the shop there were life-like cut outs of males and females. The males were all muscular, well-built handsome fellows like Greek heroes, Roman warriors or present day men from the entertainment industry. The female figures were even more life-like. A scrap of cloth was draped across their breasts as if by mistake and another scrap was draped below the waist as a token of modesty. They had beautiful bodies like the legendary princess who had bruises on her back because she had slept over a pea underneath twenty mattresses. All the cut-outs had one characteristic in common - they had no heads. They click a photograph of your face and then put it in on the body of your choice so seamlessly that even your nearest relative would not recognize it. Someone said jokingly to U.G., "Sir, your face would really suit one of the bodies of the beautiful ladies." U.G. replied without hesitation, "You can put my face wherever you wish." "Then shall I click a photograph," asked the friend. "When you click mountains, the sea or the trees, do you ask their permission," U.G. replied. The gentleman's face was suffused with deep respect, and even though he was smiling, two sparkling drops at the corner of his eyes could be seen.

We came to a crossroads. The crowds were increasing. At the top of the road was a round raised platform. On that were many figures. One figure was sitting on a throne, with a scepter in his hand – probably Julius Caesar. There was to be a trial on the road in front of the people. The king himself was present. Slowly, slowly the lights dimmed all around, darkness descended in the skies. Sharp lights were focused on the statues. Bright laser lights rose to the skies and remained stationary at various places. The entire pathway of the light was colorful. With a sky-splitting sound the drama of the trial began. The sculptures seemed to be talking and moving strangely. Suddenly the king's chair turned 180 degrees like a contemporary swivel chair. As soon as the stone statues gained the ability to move, the laser lights emitting from them presented a beautiful display of colorful lights. We watched this ever-changing spectacle of beautiful lights.

Some of us had already bought coins for the slot machines. The habitual gamblers could sniff out the lucky machines of the day. Mario was standing in front of a huge green board and playing Black Jack along with five others. He took a dollar out of his pocket, bought a few tokens and said "seven" to the guy conducting the game. The conductor shuffled a pack of cards and threw some here and there. After a few more processes, I saw Mario looking very happy. Julie too was excited. Within a few minutes Mario had transformed one dollar into a hundred. Now he sat down comfortably to play the game like a tame lion. Julie ran to tell U.G. that Mario had won one hundred dollars. U.G. said, "How long will the hundred dollars last? Surely he will lose now." Julie came back and saw Mario had reverted to his former sad self. There was an unrest in Julie. There is an ancient intoxication in gambling. So a desire arose in her. She went to U.G. and asked, "Shall I play a few rounds?" U.G. replied, "On one condition, if you agree. You can play as much as you like. You can lose as much as you want, I don't care. But whatever

you win is mine!" Julie's expression said clearly, "Oh Master! How can I tell you that I am crazy to see you happy?" Julie was delighted to agree to this condition. Enthusiastically she poured money like water into the slot machines. Every now and then she would win something and run to U.G. and give him two dollars or four dollars. U.G. like a gleeful child would snatch the money from her hand and put it in his pocket. Now I understood how U.G. wins every time. He always said, "For someone to win, many have to lose."

We came out of Caesar's Palace. In front was a fire mountain emanating smoke. From time to time a loud explosion could be heard as it emitted fire. Far away, I saw a pyramid and next to it "The Sphinx"- an enormous statue of the lion man. I heard that when archaeologist Howard Carter excavated the tomb of child king Tutankhamen, he made a list of all the artefacts he found and those discoveries have been copied in the same manner to be displayed in the King Tut tomb and museum. Modern craftsmanship had created such a false world all around us but after spending a few hours all this seemed like a brick and mortar reality to the mind. Man's efforts have created such a state of mind that he has to constantly discover new food for thought for that all-encompassing gluttonous mind. The proof of this can be found in Las Vegas.

Back at the hotel, we found Mahesh and Tanuja who had made great efforts to find us and being disappointed they were waiting for us down at the casino next to the Holiday Inn. They had discovered a good restaurant on the opposite side of the road and we all ate there. In the meantime, I found the opportunity to buy small toothpaste and a tooth brush. After taking some rest we all went out to see Vegas at night.

## CHAPTER 12

### Julie's Las Vegas Tale

There were huge signboards with dazzling neon lights blinking on and off at different intervals. The effect was an animated spectacle that could be seen from far away. This reminded me of the Durga Puja festivities in Kolkata. Of course, the thinking behind the depicted scenes was quite different; here in Las Vegas the blinking colorful figure of a man wearing a hat with a bottle in one hand and holding a youthful lady on his other arm was an advertisement for liquor.

We passed time roaming the roads in a leisurely manner, looking at the lights. Nobody displayed any eagerness to gamble but at U.G.'s urging we stopped at a casino for an hour or so; it turns out this is a bit of a Las Vegas ritual between U.G. and his friends. The tradition is that we buy rolls of coins and sit with our boxes in front of the machines. Whenever somebody "wins" – no matter how much or how little – the coins go directly into a box earmarked 'U.G.'s winnings'. All winnings, no matter how small, are handed over to U.G. and all losses are our own. The idea is that everyone always wants U.G. to win. U.G. calls Las Vegas his "pilgrimage site" because it seems he enjoys seeing the raw greed in people who come here, the greed that is usually covered up; greed is reality.

Before returning to the hotel we bought some essentials for the night in a supermarket. Back in the hotel we chatted in the lounge, learning who had won or lost. More or less everybody had lost, but U.G. had won. I had neither won nor lost - not once had I touched the machines. (I thought something like this is always happening in our lives too. For example, most predictions made by astrologers do not come true. The few that do come true, we store in our minds. If we carefully study the wishes made in temples, churches and mosques the result will be the same. On my mind's eye I saw scores of people in endless queues going in a procession to Kalighat, Dakshineswar, Tarakeswar, Tirupati, Vaishnodevi and various other places.) I remembered that in my own country on *Shivaratri* night dedicated to worship of Lord Shiva, or Kali Puja day, people gamble all night long.

Julie said that the last time she was in Las Vegas with U.G. she had an amazing experience, stranger than fiction. Seeing my eagerness to listen to her story, everybody sat quietly. Julie began to tell the story:

"We were at the airport about to leave for San Francisco when U.G. pressed a quarter into my palm and told me to play at a particular machine across from where we were sitting, waiting for our flight. There were perhaps 10 to 20 machines lining the wall. I did as I was told, put the quarter in the indicated slot machine and pulled down the silver colored handle with all my might. There was a brief silence and a pause. Then suddenly music began to blast out of the machine like musical notes from a jal tarang (an Indian percussion instrument), lights started flashing wildly and then – miraculously -- coins began to rain down! I collected them in a daze and handed them all to U.G. who started counting the coins with great attention. A smile played across his face as he announced the total - exactly five dollars. 'It is just what I needed to make a win of \$500 for this trip. I was five dollars short,' U.G. told an incredulous crowd."

Julie added another gambling anecdote. "One night on another Las Vegas trip, U.G. had gone to bed and Mario and I were wandering around the casino playing this table here and that slot machine there. Mario put down some money on a Black Jack table and instantly won a couple of hundred dollars. We left the hall with cash in hand and made a beeline for U.G.'s room. It was 2 am by now but we knocked at his door. After some time the door opened a crack. U.G. extended his hand out of the door, his fingers dancing. We put the cash into his hand. The hand disappeared instantly! The door closed and there was stillness all around, no trace."

U.G. laughed at the memory. We all went back to our respective rooms. I put on the television but did not feel like watching it. I was finding it difficult to keep my tired eyes open so I put off the TV and went to sleep. My chest was paining, there was a strange pressure and occasionally I felt a novel kind of twisting pain in my insides. I got the shock of my life when I tried to understand the matter better. I saw a dead body lying on a rope bed with a white cloth covering the body up to the neck. When I looked closely, I saw U.G.'s face, calm with eyes closed. A wave of sorrow seemed to crash on my chest. The twisting pain in my chest increased so much that my whole body began to tremble. The pressure seemed unbearable. After some time I screamed loudly and loud sobs racked my body. I woke up from my sleep in a few minutes and regained my balance. I noticed that the pillows were wet with my tears. I got up from my bed and splashed water on my face. Looking into the mirror I found my eyes were blood red like a hibiscus flower, as if an ant had bitten me. I changed my clothes and came out of the room.

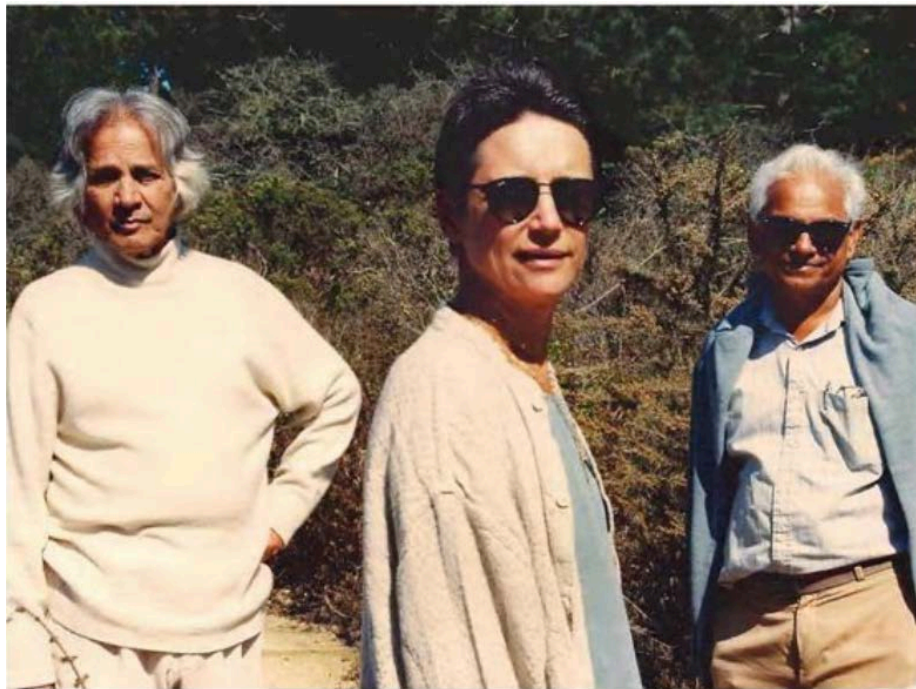
It was five in the morning. U.G.'s room was nearly opposite to mine. I tapped gently on his door. After some unbearable moments, I heard some noise from inside. After a few moments more, the door opened slowly. U.G. straightaway told me, "No need to worry. I am fine. Tell the others we will meet in the lounge at 5.30." Keeping my intellect and understanding at the ultimate limit, U.G. Krishnamurti slowly closed the door. I do not know how long I stood there immobile. Hearing Julie's voice, I came out of my trance. She asked "Why are you standing here? Is U.G. not opening the door?" I replied that I already had a word with U.G. and he would come down to the lounge at 5.30.

Later, in the lounge, ready to leave, we deposited our room keys at the reception. This time Mario was driving Julie's car. U.G. sat next to him, with Mahesh and Tanuja in the rear seat. Franklin was driving his Infinity with his wife, Naomi by his side and Julie, Larry Morris and I were in the rear seat. Larry Morris began to question me. He himself writes poetry, the characteristic of which is each line consists of one word. In one poem he addressed U.G. as a "Cosmic Naxalite". Formerly he used to teach in school, after completing his doctorate in English Literature. Thereafter, his interest in spirituality and quest for nirvana made him travel to India with Prof Moorthy. Slowly, he started writing poetry and giving lectures on spiritual matters. After returning to the US, he founded his own inter-denominational church, where he is presently the minister. Whenever he has time to spare, he spends it with U.G. His friend and associate, Susan takes care of church activities if he is absent on Saturday or Sunday. Larry's opinion about U.G. is if you want to know him, you must have devotion and love. Larry asked me, "You are a researcher of science, so how did you meet this bunch of nomadic, half-mad people?" I replied, "That is a long story. There is no short answer to that." He then asked, "Do you like spending time with U.G.?" I answered him that if I did not like U.G., would it be possible for me to spend these joyful days with all of them?

U.G. is not in this car. Franklin discussed music and its future with his wife. Since Julie's daughter is a singer, they took some advice from her. Naomi is also a singer. She was looking for a producer for her album. There is a lot of competition in the market, and a lot of money in the field of entertainment. Those who hold the keys to the industry try to exploit the power they have.

Franklin had suddenly become rich, through some investment. The availability of money improves everybody's standard of living. There is no stability of income, but once you are used to a luxurious lifestyle, to put a limit on it is as troublesome as curing an addiction. The savings get depleted and within a few years you start worrying. Franklin and his wife Naomi were afraid that in the future they would become poor. The main fact which was troubling Franklin was the mental suffering which would be caused by living in poverty in front of his relatives and friends. The thought for which he had the most concern was that those who were not in the same economic league as he was now would one day in the future show sympathy to him because of his lack of money. I thought of Kazi Nazrul Islam's song, "All days are not the same for everyone."

My insides are drying up rapidly. Sometimes a great desire to sleep overtakes me and seems to make me disappear from my own body. I drank some water and closed my eyes. I thought the events that had taken place in Las Vegas in the last 24 hours were like an invaluable gem in my life. Is my mind only a storehouse of memories?



U.G. with Julie and Narayan Moorty in Palm Springs



## CHAPTER 13

### A Spiritual Heir

Today, Parvathi Kumar, an astrologer from Hyderabad, is coming to Ocotillo Lodge as U.G.'s guest. U.G. has two close friends in Bangalore, Chandrasekhar and Major Dakshinamurthy. The Major succeeded in turning all his friends and relatives into U.G. devotees. The chief of this band of devotees is a well-known industrialist from Madras, Malladi Krishnamurthy. Generally speaking, there is a presence of sages, saints and astrologers in the homes of wealthy devotees and U.G. was introduced to Parvathi Kumar in the home of Malladi Krishnamurthy. Parvathi Kumar is Malladi Krishnamurthy's personal astrologer and at present, has many clients, some of them living in Europe and America. In return for some slight monetary compensation he advises them in spiritual matters. His clients believe that he has an exceptional gift in the rules and regulations of counteracting the effects of malefic planets and prescribing remedies for difficulties in birth and/or marriage. Because of their belief his clients treat him (Parvathi Kumar) as their guru and offer him enormous respect and devotion. He is a retired accountant and a talk with him revealed that he is much busier now than he was during his working life. Moreover, at the persuasion of his clients, he has crossed the seas several times; their welfare being his only aim. Probably it is due to one such client that he is now in California. He is coming for lunch here accompanied by two friends from Los Angeles and others from Europe.

U.G. decided to offer the guests angel hair pasta and asked Julie to cook. After some time, not being able to totally trust her efforts, he himself took over the job. He asked me to wait in front of the main entrance of the lodge so that the guests would be able to find him easily. In this country not many Indians are seen in such lodges so mutual recognition was not difficult. Parvathi Kumar stood out in the group. He had an everlastingly sweet smile on his face. I greeted him in the Indian style. He said he liked my name and asked if I knew its meaning. After an introduction to the others, he informed them that Sabyasachi was another name for Arjun. While walking towards Julie's room he questioned me on various things and then informed me that spending time with an avatar like U.G. would not be possible unless the effects of my good karma were very powerful. I thought in my mind that probably he is ignorant about U.G.'s negative words and indifference towards sacred or religious matters.

The guests had brought along various South Indian dishes and we all had a hearty lunch. Parvathi Kumar's companions took many photographs; there seemed to be a special effort to immortalize their meeting with U.G. On our side, Julie was also capturing the moments with her video camera. In due course of time, U.G. stretched his hand towards Parvathi Kumar and asked why the lines on his palm changed so frequently, meaning the palm Parvathi Kumar had seen in Madras was not the same now. He requested Parvathi Kumar to examine it carefully. I observed that Parvathi Kumar's presence of mind served him well to save the situation all round. He said, "It is difficult to say anything seeing the hands of a rare-born great man like you. It is not possible for ordinary people to recognize the depth of such a personality. Moreover, whether the lives of such people are governed by planets is also a matter of debate in the Hindu scriptures. Such people can function by making the flow of their karma devoid of the effects of planets. One who is in unity with the primal force of Nature need not bother about such things." Such comments don't touch U.G. He again asked, "So how do I know all that? I cannot see any

money.” Parvathi Kumar said, “A foreign lady will donate a huge sum of money to you.” The lunch was of course held in Julie’s room that day. U.G. replied, “Looks like I will have to visit China because I have heard that they have one million (ten lakh) millionaires, many of them women. I don’t think the people of Europe and America will give me anything.”

“U.G. had once gone to a famous astrologer in Tamil Nadu with his friends.” Thus, Parvathi Kumar started telling us a story. “That astrologer normally opened a stack of palm leaves and began to talk about the client. In ancient times some sage had written on these palm leaves predicting the future of each individual that would ever visit the descendants of this sage. It was written in a language that only that particular astrologer could read. The current astrologer had learned to read these leaves from his father who in turn had learned from his father; this is how the ancient sage had left the knowledge for his descendants. The knowledge of astrology was a family inheritance. The book is written as if Lord Shiva is describing the client to his consort, Parvathi. That day the astrologer was startled to read what came up for U.G. It said: Lord Shiva is telling his consort that today such a man will come here whom I myself have taken to the peak of the mountain and there I laid before him the whole treasure of Divine Knowledge for which Man has been madly searching for thousands of years. For such a ‘maha punyavan’ person to come here and want to know his destiny is just a superfluous activity.” U.G. now responded by saying, “Can these things ever be proved? For example, if you have money in a Swiss bank account, that can be proved. But my thing is completely mystified.” Parvathi Kumar with his quick wit replied, “The future is going to prove that.” Then U.G. answered, “The thought of what is going to happen in future never enters my head. At present, whatever is in my pocket is my only yardstick.” Now Parvathi Kumar spoke as if god was speaking through him, “Those who are making every effort to become immortal are wiped out from the pages of history but those who are not bothered by such things are immortalized by man.”

Parvathi Kumar repeatedly told his disciples that today was a day of great significance in their lives. They should never forget this day. In the future when they would read books on U.G. written by famous and talented people, they would always remember this day. Then pointing to Mahesh, he said, “This man that you see here making all kinds of jokes is one of India’s most famous directors. Everyday aspiring actors, actresses and directors line up in front of his house to showcase their talent to him. He has written a biography of U.G., which has been published by Penguin. It was a best seller in India for many months.” U.G. always told Mahesh, “You think you know me very well but in reality you do not know much about me.” According to Parvathi Kumar, there are very few people in the world who can understand U.G. Today Parvathi Kumar is U.G.’s guest. Maybe that is why in order to honor the guest and his friends, U.G. did not comment on Parvathi Kumar’s statements. Ordinarily, after making such statements, a person would unknowingly display their ego and greatness and in order to show that clearly U.G. would firmly cut down such statements. U.G.’s pleasant behavior with Parvathi Kumar and his disciples proves that he knows only too well how to responsibly handle the duties of a host!

Now it was time to see the guests off. We all walked towards the hotel parking lot. Parvathi Kumar told me a lot of things - he uttered my name Sabyasachi many times. In the end, before getting into the car he said, “One whose charioteer is god himself is certain to be victorious in the battle of life.”

Whenever our mind finds something significant, it tries to relate something that was considered very significant in the past. In general, the past that has been considered repeatedly as great, that in our brain establishes a deep relationship between the Amygdala (the emotional center) and the New Cortex (where the information is being processed). As a result, it creates a profound feeling inside us. The feeling is a very special state and creates a very special map in the Hippocampus. Whenever a current event feels great then unless you use the old map the emotions don't feel powerful. If some event produces strong emotion, then the way to express it is to compare it to the old. For profound reflection you need tremendous concentration, courage, discrimination, and a high degree of motivation. In most people you see none of these. The result is when something new appears, its usefulness is recognized only by a handful of people. Parvathi Kumar's car slowly vanished in front of our eyes and merged into the horizon. I don't know if I will meet him again in future.

U.G. had to eat South Indian food today. That day Parvathi Kumar's disciples had made the offerings given to God with oil and spices in true home-cooked style. U.G. did not reject the food but I know that this regional cooking causes him suffering. So I asked him, "Why did you eat that hot, spicy food?" U.G. looked at me in a strange manner. Then nodding his head he said, "You will not understand that. I am helpless." I remembered what I had done when I was first acquainted with U.G. His favorite dish is moong dal pancake, called *pesarattu* in Telugu. Once when I was going to meet U.G. in New York, my wife herself made *pesarattu* along with tomato chutney to give to U.G. After U.G. ate those, I felt from his expression that he may have found the chutney bland. Next day, I told Lakshmi to make the chutney more hot and spicy. I felt a jolt to my chest as I remembered how he could not ignore my request looking at my excessive joy. I know he suffered a lot afterwards. Thinking of all this, my chest pain seemed to take a round form and coming close to my windpipe, seemed to be blocking my breath. My head bowed low, I walked silently by U.G.'s side till we neared Julie's room.

At present, only U.G. and I are standing in front of Julie's room. I said, "Many of the educated and modern members of the organization that I am associated with, that is Ramachandra Mission, say that the present head, Shri Parthsarthy Rajagopalachari, has brought about an invaluable change in their lives. Some of my closest and intimate friends have got proof of this." U.G. immediately turned to look at me and asked me clearly, "Has any event occurred in your life, from which you have gained and remembering which you can say unhesitatingly that you too believe this like your friends?" I thought for some time and came to the conclusion that no such event had taken place in my life for which I had to ascribe miraculous powers. I got my answer as a, "No". I looked into his eyes and said, "No, I haven't seen any such thing." U.G. went into the room and came out immediately with something in his hand. We two began to walk again. I do not know how certain memories, without any connection pop up in my head and then I question U.G. Just like that I asked U.G. about a friend of mine whose maternal uncle was well acquainted with U.G. The friend travels to Ramana Ashram whenever he can. U.G. was not speaking at all. I was the one who kept yakking. We revolved around the lodge one full time. Now we are in front of Julie's room again. "I have heard that Ramana Maharshi had not left behind any spiritual successor. However, one Poonjaji (many call him Papaji) had firmly claimed that he was the successor to Tiruvannamalai's Arunachala Shiva, Ramana Maharshi."

U.G. stood still. He gazed into my eyes and said in a very significant tone, "Look into my eyes and say what you just said." I can expect everything else from U.G.; there are no words or behavior of his which can at present surprise me. But at this moment, what I am trying to understand, what I think in my mind I can understand is just not entering my head. It sounds unbelievable! What was the role of the Maharshi in the life of U.G.? Why did he try to scoff at the fact that somebody else could be a spiritual heir of the Maharshi? I was lost in thoughts while thinking of all these matters:

U.G. was then about 24-25 years old, a student of Philosophy in Madras University. His attitude was one of disbelief and irritation towards India's religious traditions. While studying Philosophy he was feeling that somewhere the whole thing was fraudulent. At this time he became friends with a Brahmin youth. His friend's simplicity and truthfulness in religious matters used to console U.G.'s hungry mind. One day, during the course of their conversation, the friend said, "A Maharshi lives in Tiruvannamalai. Everybody calls him the Shiva of the Arunachala Hill. His name is Ramana Maharshi; he is the real thing. I find a lot of peace there. The truth is Ramana Maharshi is a shining example of the *sanatana* (eternal) Hindu religion. How true the promise of Hindu religion is can be understood by following the Maharshi." The friend often used to try to persuade U.G. to visit the Maharshi for darshan. After a lot of discussion and debate, it was decided that both friends would visit the Maharshi in his ashram. The friend told U.G. many stories of the Maharshi's extraordinary influence. By that time Paul Brunton's book, *A Search in Secret India* had become quite popular. U.G. bought the book and read the chapter on Ramana Maharshi. Talking to his friend and Brunton's book seemed to imply that by sitting in front of the Maharshi, all thoughts and worries would be removed. U.G. of course was not ready to believe all this. He had far more belief in the validity of his own observations and results thereof. Anyway, they arrived at the ashram in Arunachala and sat in the silent room in front of the Maharshi.

Though there were many people in the Maharshi's room there was silence. Whenever somebody would put forth a question, the Maharshi would give the briefest answer possible. U.G. looked around and carefully studied the surroundings. Then he looked inwards and tried to find out if there were any changes; he could not find any such signs. In his own mind he started thinking, this man who is wearing a loin cloth and cuts vegetables, then he will cook and eat and everybody will stare at him breathlessly. How will this elderly gentleman help me? U.G. could not sit patiently any longer. He straightaway asked Ramana Maharshi, "Are there any levels to God realization?" No sooner the question was expressed, Ramana Maharshi replied, "No, there are no levels to spiritual realization. Either you have realized or nothing has happened." Again there was silence all around. The inhalation and exhalation of breaths was the only sound to be heard. U.G. sat quietly for some more time. Everybody says there is an unbelievably peaceful atmosphere in Ramana Ashram, the mind becomes thought free in such an environment. But U.G. could not find any such sign in himself. U.G. again questioned him, "I do not know what is there in you but if there is anything special, is it possible for you to give it to me?" Now the Maharshi looked into U.G.'s eyes. For some moments the nearby people, houses, temple, mountains all disappeared into the womb of silence. Then with compassion in his eyes the Maharshi said, "I could give it to you but do you have the capacity to accept it? I can give it, can you take it?" U.G. became extraordinarily determined that day. He did not say anything verbally but only looked at the Maharshi. He thought to himself that if there was anyone on this earth fit to accept it, it was he.

That was their only meeting. U.G. never met Ramana Maharshi again. He was trying to tell something else to me today. U.G. never tells anything in a straightforward manner, especially in such matters. At all times, he tries to make us understand that what we hear and what we understand from his behavior, actions and talk is what we have created ourselves. Just like we can never ask such things, similarly you cannot make someone else understand all this. I realized that U.G. had not rejected Maharshi's spirituality but had denied without saying that Poonjaji alias Papaji was Maharshi's spiritual heir.



## CHAPTER 14

### Two Dogs Barking

Tomorrow all will leave for their own destinations. I don't feel like going back at all. The discomfort in my chest that started at dawn in Las Vegas is gradually increasing; I have trouble breathing. Something is creating an abnormal pressure from within. Last night, I kept thinking that after so many years I have come to the right place. Whatever was my objective in meditation, my knowledge, my dream, undoubtedly it is all evolving here. I am deeply involved with a person whose life itself is an exquisite reflection of spiritual flowering of man. A deep joy is playing through each cell of my body; the intensity is so unsettling that sometimes I feel I will faint. Is this exceptional feeling the last part of Satchitananda (existence, knowledge, bliss)? Who knows?

The desert patch between the Ocotillo and Bermuda Lodges is pitch dark at night. I felt like taking off my clothes, waving them round and round above my head and dancing while returning to my room! My social identity is such that I hesitate to even write of such things, but it is the truth. This is the real state of my mind now. Today itself I have to pack and pay for the room. Tomorrow I will go alone to U.G.'s room at five in the morning and then all of us will go to Los Angeles.

I could not sleep that night. I was wondering who this U.G. Krishnamurti is, how within less than a year's time he has stamped such unnatural authority on the workings of my conscious waking state. It was just seven months ago that I met U.G. for the first time and three months prior to that I had started reading his conversations on the internet. After reading his books, I had come to the conclusion that my own personal experiences seemed much in sync with what this gentleman was saying, especially when compared with what the spiritual organization I was involved with was expressing. Though I was immersed in spiritual practice, the questions that plagued me could not be discussed in that atmosphere. Those questions found a presence in U.G.'s words; I understood there was an extraordinary true courage in this man. Originally, I had concluded, after reading U.G., that even if there is something to spirituality, it is impossible to get true help from anyone. That is the reason I did not feel like seeing anyone regarding this matter. As a result, no desire to meet U.G. had at first arisen in me.

Whenever I had spare time I used to read U.G.'s conversations. In the meantime, Mahesh had written a diary about the month he had spent with U.G. in Switzerland, published as *A Taste of Death* on the web. After reading that book, I began to think of U.G. again. A surprising seed of curiosity took root in me. One day, while working alone in the laboratory, suddenly a voice in my head said, *"If you came to know of someone like Shri Ramakrishna around, would you not meet the person at least once?"* I felt a lump in my throat. I came back to my office and from the internet took the webmaster's address from the site. I wrote a brief letter to this gentleman, Prof Narayana Moorthy, whom I have already mentioned. I wrote to him, introducing myself and asked some questions about U.G., the last one being where he was at this point in time? Narayana Moorthy replied nearly instantaneously. U.G. had no organization. He was a completely independent man. Nobody could say where he would go or where he would stay. In short,

he did not travel according to any pre-organized plan. I could not get a clear reply on how I could meet him.

I replied to the mail, thanking the professor and not asking any more questions about the matter. I was quiet again. The days went by due to pressure of work, yet the mind was seeking something. My busy work and personal life seemed to be flowing normally, yet there was a deep sense of disappointment lurking in the background. Nearly three weeks later, I was driving to the university, when suddenly such a sharp desire to meet U.G. Krishnamurti arose in me that it would be impossible to explain it to anyone. On reaching office, I sent another email to Prof. Moorty. This time, however, I straightaway questioned him on how I could meet U.G. Moorty replied promptly, and my heart lost its rhythm; probably it also stopped beating for some seconds with surprise.

He told me that the very next day U.G. was supposed to arrive in New York and the person in whose house he was to stay was called Julie Clark Thayer. The lady had a flat in Manhattan and her number was also given to me by Moorty. I almost immediately phoned Julie Thayer. She was not at home. But the message on her answering machine assured me that this was the correct number. I did not leave any message. I again phoned after some time. She was still not home. This time, I left my name, telephone number and a brief message, asking her to let me know when and how it would be possible to meet the respected U.G. Krishnamurti, if he had no objection. Sitting before the phone I saw the hands of the clock move rapidly. No answer was forthcoming. I began to ring up every hour. At last, after returning home, at night nine o'clock I had a telephone conversation with Madam Julie Thayer for the first time.

Julie had been roaming in Europe with U.G. for quite some time. While in London, U.G. suddenly decided to come to New York within two days. He had sent Julie a day earlier. She had arrived this morning. The apartment had been lying empty for some days, so cleaning, running around and buying necessities had kept her so busy that she had not found the time to return my call. Besides, not only I, but many others had also left messages to phone them. She had thought of calling up everyone one by one after finishing all her chores at night. The next afternoon U.G. was arriving from London. Julie said if I phoned her the next evening, I might get the opportunity to speak directly with U.G. She seemed eager for me to meet U.G. But all this was dependent on time, place, and the personal whims of U.G. Until now Julie was not sure when U.G. would say 'yes' and when he would say 'no'. Julie was now of the opinion that U.G. was indifferent towards whom he met or did not meet. U.G. was like a huge river, a river swollen with the rain water and flowing swiftly. Who drank water, or which tree broke and fell into the river had no relation to the swift pace of the flow. Still, before saying goodbye over the telephone, Julie gave some advice on how to speak to U.G. so that it might give me the desired results. "Don't take no for an answer!" She told me not to give too much importance to his unwillingness to meet, if that was the case. If the deep desire to meet U.G. had really taken seed in me, then this all-seeing, great man would surely discern it and he himself would tell when and how to meet in the best possible manner. If all this did not work, that is, if U.G. said that he would not be able to see me, then I should not be disappointed. I should phone again in a couple of days. Seeing my eagerness, U.G. would surely agree. I thought who is this Julie Thayer, who wants with all her might that I should meet U.G.?

Next day I phoned her again. Julie answered the phone after it rang twice and told me, "Hold on. I will ask U.G." I could hear clearly their conversation. My excitement had taken my senses to an awakened level. Julie was politely asking U.G., "I had told you an Indian gentleman from New Jersey wants to meet you. He is now on the phone. What shall I tell him?" U.G. said, "Ask him to hold on. I am coming." Julie came back on the phone and asked me to wait. No noise could be heard on the other side. I held on to the phone and waited with bated breath. I heard U.G.'s voice for the first time.

U.G.: "Hello, U.G. Krishnamurti speaking."

G: "Hello, Namaskar sir, my name is Sabyasachi Guha. I am speaking from New Jersey. I have read your entire conversations on the internet and in that connection I contacted Prof Narayana Moorthy. I got Julie Thayer's number from him. I will be very happy if I have the opportunity to meet you. I would like to meet you as soon as possible."

U.G.: "I have come here today only. Tomorrow I have a booking to be done at the airlines office. Can you come day after tomorrow?"

G: "What time shall I come which will not inconvenience you?"

UG: "You will surely come after finishing your office work. How much time will it take to travel from your home to Manhattan?"

G: "I am a researcher in the university. So I am not in a hurry as such. Besides, I have no problem taking leave and coming. I live in East Brunswick, a small city in New Jersey. It will take me maximum one hour to come from there to Manhattan."

U.G.: "I get up very early in the morning and Julie never sleeps after two in the morning. If you want to take leave and come, come as early as possible."

G: "Then I will come day after tomorrow. Innumerable thanks, sir."

U.G.: "You hold on, I will give the phone to Julie. She will be able to give you the directions to this place."

It was quiet for some time. Then Julie's voice could be heard on the phone. She said it was my lucky day. Otherwise she had never seen such a thing. Before this a friend of Julie's had become impatient to meet U.G. after reading his books and watching his videos. At last, when she phoned U.G., he said, "Do not waste your money in coming to see me." Anyway, Julie gave me detailed directions to her house. I would go by bus. The bus stand was very near to my house. The bus would go up to Port Authority. Then from 42<sup>nd</sup> street by underground rail, boarding the uptown train to 59<sup>th</sup> street, then to Columbus Circle and then from there, walking along Central Park West till 64th Street to the Number One West apartment building. I liked this simple, casual conversation very much. I felt as if I was talking to a long lost friend. I did not see any signs of Julie's numerous warnings while talking to U.G. and my eagerness to see him increased even further. The plans to meet U.G. for the first time at 8 am on the day after were fixed.



Although I regularly get up early in the morning, still I set an alarm before going to bed. If I could not reach on time what would U.G. think? Punctuality is the result of deep eagerness. This I wanted to show clearly. I did not want any misfortune to push my eagerness for spirituality into insignificance so I took adequate precautions and then went to sleep. Still I was awake from two in the morning, watching the clock. I could not ignore the possibility that I might not hear the alarm in deep sleep. Anyway, I arrived at eight in the morning at One West 64<sup>th</sup> Street, at the corner of Central Park West. There was a guard at the main door of this huge complex. I told him I was supposed to meet Julie Thayer at 7-A, and how should I go there? There was a room for the guard on the left, immediately after entering the iron gates. In the room was a telephone, a table and chair, a notebook and a small monitor to see the closed circuit television. The guard phoned 7-A.

He asked my name and then showed me where to go. Then, crossing an open small paved courtyard, I stood in front of a big closed door. The guard pressed a switch in his room and gestured towards me to go inside. The electric lock had been opened. I entered, took the lift to the seventh floor and rang the bell of apartment 7-A. After a brief moment, the door opened. Standing in front of me was a lady, the same height as me with her hair cut very short, just how the growth looks two weeks after shaving the head. She was wearing a long skirt. She came forward and shook my hand saying, "Julie. Julie Thayer." I introduced myself as Sabyasachi Guha. I entered the apartment and took off my shoes. I hung my jacket on the coat stand and went inside towards the living room. I noticed two bedrooms on either side of the passage. The living room was huge. A table tennis table could easily fit in the empty space. As indicated by Julie, I sat on a white sofa on which three others beside me could be accommodated. In the corner was a grand piano, a few flower pots, a big black Shiva lingam and then the balcony overlooking Central Park west side. On the other side of the park was east side where there were huge skyscrapers of various designs. One had a wonderful view of New York City from Julie's living room.

Other than Julie, I could not see any other living being. On the left were two doors. Through one the kitchen could be seen, through the other a long dining table. In this house probably no cats or dogs dwelt. I sat and thought about where I was born and how I had now come to meet a rare-born who has no enemies. I am an Indian, he too is an Indian but we are meeting in New York City in the house of an American lady. My excitement kept mounting. At last, through the kitchen door entered U.G. My first glimpse of him! Small in stature, about five feet five inches in height, fair, long hair, clean shaven and modernity stamped all over his face. A welcoming smile lit up his face. He came forward to shake my hand. I got up as if magically charmed. He sat down on the sofa and indicated that I should sit next to him. Julie also joined us. She sat on the sofa opposite to us. U.G. asked by what name he should address me. I said, "My name is Sabyasachi Guha. In America the tradition is to call everyone by their first name in the work place. But my name is difficult to pronounce so everybody calls me Sabya." Julie asked if I had any objection to be called Dr. Guha. I replied, "There is no need to add doctor or mister. Just call me by my name." Now U.G. said, "Then we will address you as Guha." From that time onwards, I was "Guha" to U.G. and all his friends and acquaintances. Indians call me Guhaji.

U.G. and I sat face to face and started our discussion. By this time Julie has gotten up and left. I felt U.G.'s face was glowing even more and had a reddish hue. My whole concentration was getting lost in the words issuing from his mouth. One by one, the words expressed ideas and tried to show different

views of a thought, where there is an unseen connection in the words. If that connection gets scattered in the world of self-consciousness then the sound of sentences does not find any meaning. That was my state, I kept on feeling this repeatedly. With great effort, I came back to the discussion. This was a golden opportunity to understand and know my personal experiences. It was the effort to internalize the valuable opinions of U.G. that would free me from my great expectations. What I really wanted to know was the meaning of my extraordinary meditative experiences and what U.G. had to say about that. I patiently and slowly tried to tell U.G. everything I had been doing - yogasanas, meditation, and other spiritual practices from childhood. For the last four to five years I had been regularly and enthusiastically carrying out sadhana under the guidance of a spiritual guru. While meditating I had many extraordinary and strange experiences. The more I was gaining experiences the more I was losing desire to do anything else. I thought in my mind that now U.G. would want to know about my experiences in detail and then judge them.

But there was no such response from him! Displaying an attitude as if these experiences were mere child's play, U.G. declared, "It is my firm belief that what the mind does not know cannot be experienced." I could not accept this sudden pronouncement. This had to be thought over deeply. By giving examples for and against, a discussion should take place. U.G.'s statement had logic, surely. But I understood that he was not eager about it and I was, of course, a little disappointed. There was no significance to these surprising events in my life! I suddenly remembered that there were many extraordinary experiences in U.G.'s life, recounted in *The Mystique of Enlightenment*, and I wondered if there was no significance to them either. I asked with great enthusiasm, "The extraordinary experiences in your life, is there no meaning to them?" U.G.'s demeanor completely changed. He suddenly became a different person and said very clearly, "The physical transformation that has come into my body cannot be brought into the realm of experience. So I do not call it an experience. Actually, all the events which have taken place in my life and are taking place now are acausal, they cannot be brought about by any effort." I, of course, had not thought about it in this manner. My knowledge of science is based on the principle of cause and effect. When I do something, I can envisage the next step because of this knowledge of causality. So I tried to counter argue. I said, "Whatever has happened in your life is straight out of a book, a classic example. Your uncompromising attitude, ability for hard work, concentration in spiritual practices, quitting family life, not running after happiness, your encounter with death and coming back from it ... and, after all that, the unimaginable physical transformation. This may be the effect of your rigorous spiritual practices." I noticed while I was talking that U.G.'s face was infused with a new energy. His fearless certainty peeped out from behind his strong jaws. Such was his confidence and determination that it seemed that fear and suspicion would never be able to touch him. His main mantra was that there was no connection between any two events in his life, meaning they were just randomly happening events.

Now I became quiet. It would be sheer childishness to ask such a man, a man who had such a firm opinion of the insignificance of his own experiences, considered in my mind as the greatest experiences, the significance of my petty little experiences. I did not express any more opinions. Seeing me become silent so suddenly, U.G. looked at my face. Then he turned his face away and said slowly, "We are like two dogs barking. There is no significance to our conversation other than that." Can there be anything to

discuss after this! I felt like there was an effort being made to slow down all mental activities. I was feeling drowsy.

U.G.'s biography is written by Mahesh Bhatt. When I asked U.G. where I could find the book, he called out to Julie to bring the book immediately if it was in the house. Julie brought a copy of the book. U.G. opened it and showed me a few pictures. He gave a detailed explanation of his relationship with a few other people whose photographs were in the book. Besides photos of his wife, son and daughters there were photos of Valentine, Parveen Babi and Mahesh in the days of his youth. Julie came in and reminded him that he had wanted to see a jacket and the shop was now open. Today was a big sale. If they did not go early, they would not find anything worthwhile. U.G. explained the whole thing to me in detail. Barney's was a famous store in New York. A jacket costing \$700 would be on sale for \$350 or less. U.G. and Julie would now go to the sale. I thought in my mind that maybe the time for my meeting was up and I should make preparations to leave; I shouldn't overstay my welcome. Just as this thought cropped up in my mind, U.G. looked at me and asked if I was in a hurry to go back to the university. I replied, "No, no. I have taken leave to come here. I am not in any hurry." U.G. seemed happy and asked Julie, "Do you have any objection if Guha waits here while you and I go to see the jacket? We can come back and have lunch together." Both Julie and I agreed happily to this proposal. I am now alone in this huge, luxurious flat. In a short acquaintance of two hours, U.G. and Julie have gone shopping leaving me alone. I am a little surprised. I began to read Mahesh biography of U.G.

Mahesh had written many things about himself. Just some time back U.G. had commented that many of his close friends were of the opinion that it would not be wrong to term the biography as a small version of self-introductory writing by Mahesh. It was clear from his writing that U.G.'s life was very mysterious and the more time you spent with him the more the mystery deepened instead of clearing up. The incidents that he mentioned and the reactions of U.G. reinforced this in various ways. It so happens that when you listen to U.G. express his opinions, it all seems logical and balanced yet if you try to repeat it to others, something does not seem right.

I was feeling an uncomfortable pressure in my head for some time. Soon this pressure turned into pain. I stopped reading and tried to immerse myself in myself. Nothing but my headache seemed to find a place in my consciousness. Meanwhile, U.G. and Julie came back. They had seen a very good jacket for U.G. They would buy it in the evening or the next day. I secretly asked Julie if she had any headache medicine. She gave me a bottle of Tylenol. I immediately swallowed two tablets. With this kind of headache it is uncomfortable to listen, leave alone talk.

Julie brought a small plate of idlis for U.G., which is dear to him. Seeing me surprised, U.G. clarified that Julie had not made the idlis. His grandson Kittu had brought them the night before. Julie had only heated them in the microwave and poured ghee over them to serve U.G. After a minute my plate also arrived. While eating I told them that my wife was from Andhra Pradesh and could make delicious idlis, dosas and uttapams. Now U.G.'s enthusiasm increased. He asked about my background. I said, "I grew up in Hindmotor, a small town in Hooghly district, near Calcutta. I completed my schooling there. The town was named after the Birla Group set up the Hindustan Motors factory, which manufactured Ambassador Cars. After this while studying in Calcutta's Presidency College, I became involved in a

political movement." U.G. stopped me and said, "Calcutta is my favorite city and it was also dear to Valentine. I had met Rabindranath Tagore personally. He had presented me with his book of poems as a member of the Theosophical Society. When my wife was returning from America, her luggage was lost and along with it many of my books, letters and important papers were also lost. In that package was this book."

Then he asked me where I met Lakshmi, my wife. I answered, "I was introduced to her while studying in the Rourkela Engineering College. After this I completed my Ph.D. in Bangalore and she completed hers in Bombay. That was the time we got married. Lakshmi belonged to a Telugu Brahmin family while I was from a Bengali Kayastha family. Lakshmi learned to cook fish and lamb curry from my mother. She cooks very well but has never tasted a morsel." U.G. gazed at me in utter surprise. Then he said, "Your wife must be a saint. Otherwise how can she bear such torture?" I laughed and said, "Love makes people do many things. I am, of course, completely vegetarian now." U.G. asked how come, being a Bengali, I did not eat fish and lamb. I said, "Under the tutelage of Shri Ramachandra Mission, I started my spiritual practices four and a half years ago. After meditating for three months, I realized that I did not enjoy eating eggs, fish or lamb. Slowly, I could not even bear the odor of these things. At last, the need for non-vegetarian food entirely disappeared from my life. There was an even more surprising event at that time. I used to occasionally drink beer, whiskey or wine with my friends. At a party I discovered that the smell of beer was causing me to feel nauseous. I tried two or three times but could no longer drink it. That was it. Alcohol disappeared forever from my life. People try so hard to be cured of this habit yet I, despite my efforts to drink it, could no longer stomach it. Whether it was anybody else's headache or not I don't know but my wife definitely heaved a sigh of relief. Maybe she had prayed to the gods secretly and was feeling supremely happy at her wish being granted." U.G. smiled gently.

Lunch was over. U.G. had three idlis. I also had three. We three sat down to chat. I had read the book *Mind is A Myth* thoroughly. In the course of our conversation I mentioned a specific sentence in the book. In the beginning of the book it is written, "If U.G. cannot help you in spiritual matters, then nobody else can help you." U.G. seemed absolutely stunned hearing my statement. Julie too asked, "Where is this written?" I opened the book and showed them. I said, "I would like to hear what you have to say about this statement." U.G.'s reply that day really pleased me. He said, "See, I cannot have said such a thing. The person who has written this, if it is his personal opinion then I cannot do anything about it. But I myself could never make such a statement."

U.G. noticed that my tendency to discuss spiritual matters had vanished. Maybe to spend time in a light hearted manner he told Julie, "Why don't you bring the book, if it is nearby, in which you have compiled all the predictions made by astrologers, psychics and palmists about me? Maybe Guha will enjoy it." Then he turned to me and asked my opinion. I faltered at first. Then I recovered and told him, "I have seen all this from childhood. Sometimes when some extraordinary event takes place then I feel there might possibly be an element of science in it. Then when I see that their predictions are not coming true I feel it is nothing but intelligently throwing stones in the dark. Of course, in people's opinion even if there are some predictions which come true it means to them there is something to it." I was now eager to hear U.G.'s views. Till now whatever discussions had taken place, his viewpoint was neti, neti, (not this, not this), so I wanted to hear his opinion on astrology. Seeing my excessive eagerness, U.G. said,

“This matter of reading horoscopes or reading the lines of palms has surprised me in such a manner that I have reserved my judgement. Listen then, I will tell you of some events in my life. Then the responsibility of judging is on you.”

“I was then studying in college. The same friend who took me to Ramana Maharshi came and said excitedly one day that he had come to know of an extraordinary astrologer. His predictions were like writings on stone. Many people were witness to it. ‘Come, let us go and get our horoscope read by him.’ I was at that time passing through a peculiar dilemma, whether to marry or not. My maternal grandparents were pressurizing me to get married to such an extent that I felt I was going crazy. So listening to my friend I decided to go the astrologer, taking our horoscopes. After a good many calculation, he said, ‘If this is your horoscope then you will get married within three months.’ When I returned home I tossed a coin. There too I found the goddess of destiny was in favor of my marriage. The next day I sent news to my grandmother to look out for a match; I am getting married in three months. My grandmother was surprised and told my grandfather she suspected that I had myself chosen a girl and therefore was behaving crazily. Marriage in three months! My grandfather said, ‘I know Gopal. If he had chosen a girl, he would have brought her home and presented her to us. That is nothing. Come, let us see a girl.’ You won’t believe it but within three months I was married.” I smiled and nodded my head. U.G. continued to enthusiastically tell other events.

“When I was very young, my grandfather, Thumalapalli Gopal Krishnamurti, a renowned lawyer, took me to a famous Nadi reader in Madras -the Koumar Nadi. These Nadi astrologers can read the past, present, and future written on a kind of a palm leaf-Talpatra. That is not all, hundreds of years ago, a learned sage had written the future of all those yet to be born on the palm leaves. The present astrologer is a direct descendent of that sage. The gentleman held a sheaf of palm leaves in front of me and told me to choose one and on that would be written my past, present and future. I chose a leaf and gave it to him. First, he mentioned the name of my father and mother. In the leaf the Tamil script looked different from the script that is in use now. I said the name of my parents was correct. Then he said that means the future written on this leaf is without a doubt yours. What he said that day was this: This child is a *yoga brashtha*, meaning in previous life he did not attain salvation due to some minor reason. So he had to take birth again and in this birth he will definitely attain salvation. When he will be 49 there will be exceptional, radical transformation in him. From then on he will be engaged in spreading his message to the four corners of the world.”

Julie presented herself in front of us with a big book. It was a compilation of predictions made by different astrologers and palmists about U.G. Chandrasekhar, U.G.’s friend in Bangalore, had helped Julie compile this book. U.G. read out a few amusing writings. One in particular caught my attention: U.G. will never create an organization. He will never give initiation to anyone. His spiritual powers will be so high that even gazing into his eyes will be equivalent to getting initiation. His death will be by his own wish, just like that of Pitamaha Bhishma in the *Mahabharata*. This is called The Yoga of ability to die at one’s own wish. My head could not make any more space for information on U.G. My headache seemed to have worsened twice as much as before. I was nauseous. I went to the bathroom and threw up. I splashed water all over my face and then swallowed two more Tylenols. I waited for five more minutes in the bathroom. I saw that my eyes were red like a hibiscus flower. When I came back, I found

U.G. had gone back to his room. I lay down on the sofa. Julie came and asked me if I wanted to have coffee. I readily agreed. The coffee and tablets helped to ease the headache.

It was nearly four in the afternoon. Julie said, "Many friends have phoned. They will probably come one by one now." First to come was a lady called Luna Tarlo. She was much older than Julie. She introduced herself as a writer. While conversing, I learned this lady had gone to India with her son in search of spirituality. Her son's name was Andrew Cohen. He was now an American guru. Julie had practiced meditation as a disciple of Andrew Cohen for some months. I had, of course, seen the name of Andrew Cohen over the internet but had not read his books. This Andrew had made his mother his disciple and he called her Luna. Anyway, as soon as Julie and Luna, along with others, came to know of U.G., they all left Andrew and joined the U.G. camp. This lady, Luna Tarlo has written a book, *Mother of God*. Then came another lady named Ellen Chrystal. She was younger than Julie. She had been the disciple of another American Guru, Da Free John. The funny thing was all these American gurus were disciples of Indian gurus, Andrew of Poonjaji who in turn claimed to be the successor of Ramana Maharshi. Since Ramana Maharshi had not indicated his successor, Poonjaji proclaimed himself as the successor. Da Free John was a disciple of Muktananda although he claimed to have gained a lot in terms of spirituality from Muktananda's guru, Nityananda. He claimed this despite the fact that Nityananda was dead when Da Free John took initiation from Muktananda. Da Free John's disciple, Ellen Chrystal, had left the spiritual organization and worked as a legal assistant in a New York law firm. Whenever she got time she spent it with U.G. She is the editor of the book, *The Courage to Stand Alone*. Some of U.G.'s conversations had been compiled from a series of audio tapes, under the name "Give Up" by a Dutchman from Amsterdam, Henk Shonewihl. Among the people who had come that day was a famous American novelist called Lily Tuck. She was an old friend of Julie's. She shook hands with U.G. and said, "My name is Lily Tuck and I do not like my last name because it rhymes with f\_\_\_\_." U.G. found this very funny and we all laughed.

My headache returned and I could no longer concentrate on anything. The terrible headache was my sole source of discomfort. I was thinking about going home. When people heard that I was doing research in Physics, many of them ooh-ed and aah-ed and said, "How wonderful." They wanted to know more about Physics. I promised to discuss it later and turned the discussion towards U.G. Giving the excuse of having to travel very far, I took my leave. Before departing, I threw up once more. Sitting in the bus I remembered what Julie had said while bidding goodbye. "I have never seen anyone meet U.G. the way you did today. That too in the first meeting!" There was no one to applaud the inner "I" as at the time I was aware of only one thing, which was ... pain! I somehow staggered home.

My first meeting with U.G. is chiseled in my memory like words on stone.



U.G. and Julie outside her apartment in New York. This was the first picture Guha took of U.G.

## CHAPTER 15

### Leaving Palm Springs

I settled the Bermuda Lodge accounts last night, and in the morning checked all the drawers, wardrobe and bathroom cabinets. Before closing the door to leave, I looked at the bed and thought of all the events that happened in the last fourteen days; they are a mystery to me. An extraordinary life force seems to be trying to create something new from inside. I felt a tremor in my chest. Sometimes right in the middle of the chest, under the skin a tremor would create a sensation and then stop. I came back to look at myself in the mirror. The point where the ribcage comes together in the middle of the chest, turning inwards, has become red; there is a sensation there. Perhaps I had scratched that spot at night unconsciously. I decided that I am not going to think anything further about all this. I deposited the key at the counter and came out of the lodge. It was still dark outside. I had crossed this desert piece of land every day for two weeks; today I will walk the path for the last time. I turned around in circles and took a good look at the sky, hills and the lodge. Within a few minutes I reached U.G.'s unlocked door. I kept my suitcase outside, removed my shoes and entered the room silently. U.G. was sitting on the sofa, his feet propped up on a table in front of him. I sat down on the carpet facing him on the other side of the table. He said, "I am ready." I saw that his luggage was packed and as soon as we wore our shoes we could depart. We both were quiet. I looked at his face and smiled.

I started the conversation.

G: "The last two weeks passed as if they were just a few moments. I felt a deep attraction all the time, a strange liking. There is an unknown intoxication with not even a bit of worry. I cannot understand anything but still I have a desire."

U.G.: "What desire?"

G: "I feel like spending the rest of my life with you."

U.G.: "Oh, you are very sentimental. Like Telugus, even Bengalis seem to be very emotional."

I felt my emotions turning from laughter to tears. My chest seemed to be twisting with deep pain and my throat felt choked. A hot burst of fire blew across my face. For once I felt that if I could cry holding his feet, the pain in my chest would be relieved, that the heaviness in my heart would lighten a bit. My throat was constricted. I had difficulty breathing. Still I took a couple of deep breaths and trying to control myself said with great difficulty, "I want to touch your feet and offer my pranams." The minute my words reached his ears, his feet mechanically came down from the table. I got up and stood next to him. He too got up from the sofa and became busy trying to making his feet inaccessible to me. Soon we were both moving to all the four corners of the room in a most peculiar manner. This was a unique scene! While writing this, I am amused but at that time in my heightened emotional state, tears were continually flowing from my eyes.



U.G.: "What will you do staying with me? I am a nomad. I do not have a place to stay nor sufficient money. You are a householder. You have a wife, daughters and added to that a valuable profession."

G: "We will chat like this. A small piece of floor will be enough for me to sleep. And I will study during the remaining time that I get. I am sure I was a Baul\* (itinerant singing monks from Bengal) in one of my earlier lives. Right from my childhood I used to run away from home. I used to spend the nights anywhere. Besides, a lot of my life has been spent in hunger without basic necessities. I had chosen such a difficult life for the freedom of my countrymen."

U.G. took out a note from his pocket. He waved it around in the air and said, "This twenty dollar bill is the only thing standing between me and starvation. This will not fill the stomach of more than one person in America. You go back home. Your welfare lies in that."

Meanwhile, Mahesh entered the room and rescued U.G. from this uncomfortable situation. I thought to myself that maybe U.G. was feeling shy about all these matters and would not like to discuss it. I had no such problem, being totally shameless about such things. I was in such a state at that time that I could have kissed U.G.'s feet in front of a room full of people. I had core confidence in my mind that my search for spiritual fulfillment could be seen culminated in U.G. Just like a traveler gets tired running after mirages in a desert, I was in a similar state. And U.G. was an oasis suddenly found in that desert. I could shout and tell the whole world that anyone who is interested in spirituality should at least once test this inexhaustible container of the source. But, of course, I cannot do all this because it would make U.G. uncomfortable. However, surprising me, U.G. told Mahesh, "This Bengali gentleman, though a scientist by profession, is very sentimental. He says he will stay with me from now on." Mahesh gazed into U.G.'s eyes for a few moments and then said seriously, "I am well aware who is responsible for this." Thus ended the episode of our departure from Ocotillo Lodge.

Today all are leaving Palm Springs, and have gathered in the lounge of the Ocotillo Lodge with their luggage. Julie will proceed to San Francisco to visit her mother, Ruth Hubley Thayer who is living in an old folks' home. She is nearly 91 years old and is free from the burdens of the past. Even news of recent events raises no reaction in her. If you do not call this a disease, then she is free from disease. On her glowing round face can be found a sweet smile. No worries, no fears of the world touch her. Since Julie is her only daughter, apprehensions about her mother's security sometimes trouble her even amidst her constant preoccupation with U.G. She had discussed with me her ideas about how her mother should spend the rest of her life. Julie wanted to take care of her mom, but that would mean she would lose the companionship of U.G. These dilemmas cause her worry. I understood this only too well. On one hand was her mother losing her memory with Julie her only support (her father was gone from the world long ago) and on the other hand was Avatar U.G. Krishnamurti who had in his limitless compassion accepted her as a fellow traveler. In my mind, there was no solution to this dilemma. It was not possible for the three of them to stay together. Since U.G. did not want her to travel with him this time, Julie had decided to go to San Francisco to visit her mother.

U.G. was going to Switzerland accompanied by Mahesh. While Mahesh would return to his motherland after a few days, U.G. would spend the entire summer in Switzerland. Before getting into the car, U.G.

suddenly looked at Julie and said, "If you stay with me, everything will be destroyed. There is no good or bad about this. Before you play with fire, you should consider the possibility of getting completely burnt." U.G.'s words could not be comprehended; I felt they were not new to Julie. Probably the same thought kept on expressing itself in different examples. However, the more U.G. tried to scare her, the more determined and aggressive Julie became, meaning she was getting ready to jump into the fire. Of course, the words that U.G. directed towards Julie may not always have been meant only for her. Much needed for many, but disliked truths could not to be told to new friends; U.G. would select Julie as the medium to convey them.

The responsibility of driving the car early in the morning was given to me. This was because U.G. said he had objection to sitting next to Julie and it was a tradition for U.G. to sit next to the driver in the front seat. The rear seat today was occupied by Julie and Mahesh. The car was now travelling along the highway, passing rows of windmills. In an answer to Mahesh's question, my history of spiritual practices came up. I said, "At present the President of Shri Ramchandra Mission is our guru and he is addressed as Master. His name is Parthasarthy Rajagopalachari. After my initiation in the Mission, I began to have different kinds of spiritual experiences and became very enthusiastic about my meditation practice. The amusing thing was the person often associated with my spiritual experiences was the late Shri Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur, Shri Parthasarthy's guru. This gentleman passed away quite some time ago." U.G. said, "I know of him. I have a French friend who was a disciple of this gentleman, Ram Chandra."

I replied, "I have read the literature of the Mission and Parthasarthyji's diary so thoroughly that I am acquainted with the names of most national and international prominent preceptors." I eagerly asked U.G. the name of his friend but he could not recollect it. I asked, "Was it Andre Porey?" U.G. was astounded, "How did you know?" I replied, "After the death of Shri Ramchandra, Andre Porey broke off all ties to the Mission." U.G. was even more surprised and said, "I was just about to tell you that. In fact, Andre Porey introduced me to many people, and among them a German artist called Gottfried Meyer, who later became a close friend of mine." U.G. went on to talk about other friends in Bangalore who were associated with the Mission. A friend who regularly came to meet U.G. was G.S. Mani, famous musician from the Karnataka *gharana* (place where the musical ideology originated). He and some of his friends had developed an aversion for this guru and all of them had cut off ties with the Mission. I said, "I have read about G.S. Mani in Parthasarthy Rajagopalachari's diary. The truth is now there is no amity between the two, they are like daggers drawn. The funny thing is G.S. Mani's nephew is a very close friend of mine in New Jersey." Again U.G. was really surprised. "G.S. Mani, his son and daughter-in-law just do not want to leave me. If I go to Madras or Bangalore, they are always around me." I laughingly told U.G., "Sir, the world is very small now." U.G. smiled in a peculiar manner and said, "Yes, yes."

The car was somewhere midway between Palm Springs and Los Angeles. In these few days we have travelled on this road many times. Sitting in the back seat, Mahesh told Julie, "This gentleman learned driving quite late after coming to America but he has such steady hands." U.G. said, "Do you think it was for nothing that I said that Guha will drive me from now on?" I think whenever U.G. finds an opportunity, he likes to torment Julie. U.G. again started discussing my future. I said, "My social interaction outside my work is limited with the people belonging to my spiritual organization and to people who are eager to discuss such issues. Even my ticket to come here has been booked through a

travel agent known to a member of the Mission.” Suddenly I remembered an interesting incident which took place on the eve of my departure to Palm Springs. There was a young member of the Mission who had just been accepted in college. He was an enthusiastic worker, very close to the Master. Whenever he had some time he would go to Madras to stay with him. He had arrived in our house in the evening. He used to address me as “Sabya Uncle.” He said he wanted to speak to me privately. I said, “Let us stroll outside. It’s so beautiful, we can talk while walking.” He was utterly respectful of my opinions. First, we had a light discussion. Then he straightaway asked me why I had become so neglectful of the Mission’s practices and satsangs recently. If I had a difference of opinion about the practices or the way the Mission functioned, why was I not contacting the president? He was agreeable to arrange for me to speak with the Master. He also said, “I have heard you are going out of town for two weeks to spend some time alone. There is still time. If you wish, your ticket can be changed and you can stay with the Master. You can have a detailed and open discussion with him regarding the reasons for your sudden disinterest. This may benefit not only you but us also. There are differences of opinions among our preceptors here. Some of them may have criticized the workings of others to you. Maybe your speaking out could solve these problems. The Master has always been in search of people like you who have deep enthusiasm for spiritual matters and an independent point of view.”

I was surprised to hear what he said, all in one breath. I asked U.G., “Do you know the answer that I gave him? I told him that the working of the Mission was not my headache presently. My matter was related to my thinking at the root level. I was not ready to express an opinion right now. The truth is that I have found a new subject on which I am conducting research personally. This is so important to me that I am not able to create space in my head for anything else.” U.G. interrupted me and asked, “What is the subject of your latest research?” I looked into U.G.’s eyes and said politely, “Sir, the matter is very personal. However, the results of the research will be published in due course of time.”

We all fell quiet. Although the speed limit was 65 miles an hour, the speedometer showed that the car was running at 90 miles an hour, and I could get a speeding ticket. But I am desperate, uncaring. Curiosity seems to be whirling in my head: Where will life take me now? A tremendous excitement at the possibility of finding some invaluable gems in the depth of my consciousness would swamp me and bring me to a peak of emotional joy. I felt like hugging and caressing the person next to me, or anyone who would come near me. Whenever the tremendous experiences of Palm Springs appeared in my memory, a strange sensation, which I never experienced before caused my body to tremble from within. This episode of my search for spirituality was completely unknown to me. I wondered why these sudden waves of acausal happiness were flowing through my body and making me crazy. Suddenly U.G. disrupted the silence, and the pace of my thinking changed. He looked at me and said, “The actual thing is you have to decide on reaching home how you would like to spend your life.” U.G.’s statement diverted my attention to another path. On the screen of my mind a strange life story appeared.

A gentleman under the pressure of creating prosperity for the family and creating his own future did not get the time to think of marriage. At last, due to pressure from family members and relatives he agreed to get married. The bride was chosen, everybody in the family liked her, the date was fixed and shopping was being done. Everybody was happy, everything was proceeding smoothly, though there was an apprehension in his mind that he was not too attracted towards the lady with whom he was to spend

the rest of his life. In the midst of all this he met another lady. Unknown to him, as per pre-determined destiny, the intoxication of love entered his blood. The gentleman just could not help himself. Now what will he do? On one hand was social obligation and on the other hand was love. I was laughing so hard that I nearly had to stop driving. The others were staring at me as if they had forgotten to close their jaws. I am sure they thought that Guha had gone crazy. I told them laughingly, "I know what will happen now when I return home. All my friends from the Mission will start pleading with me to meet the President. I will try to explain to them through arguments and logic that I no longer believe in meditation and prayer or even spirituality. They will not accept my contention. Whether they agree or not, all of them will want me to go and meet the Master to have a discussion with him." I was thinking that I knew what the Master would tell me. He would explain that to walk on this path of spirituality properly one must become a model devotee and should maintain good habits and faith in oneself. To tell you the truth, I am fed up of listening and reading to all these clichés. Not only that, all the roads have now been shown to me to be dead ends. I know clearly that it is no use meeting the Master. If the goal is indescribable, unknown, and beyond thought, is it possible to have a way to reach it? There is no way. If I take a certain road, there has to be hope of something happening. That's why these kinds of thoughts are not entering into my head any longer. I can clearly envisage the effects of listening to the guru's advice and doing work according to it. Therefore, I am not in the least interested in doing those works.

U.G. asked, "What are you thinking of doing now? I said, "What I should do out of politeness is write a detailed letter to Parthsarthy Rajagopalachari to thank him. I would like to thank him for making me acquainted with one element of spirituality and then I would like to end the letter by respectfully taking leave of him. He will surely understand that the need of the Mission in my life is over." In reply, U.G. of course suggested the opposite. "If I were you, which I'm not, I would choose to remain quiet. The reason is this. Suppose you decide to write a letter and send it off to your guru. If you think the matter ends there, you are sorely mistaken. In the next breath you will find a reply from him. Either you will be asked to explain the reason for your sudden current state of mind or you will be requested to meet him as soon as possible, or a subtle threat will be made of something unpleasant happening and you will be gently ordered to meet him. You will become anxious and will be in the same state as you were in before you wrote the letter. You will have to start thinking about what you will do. Either you will write another letter and try to convince him through logic or keep quiet and try to forget everything. In this context let me tell you an amusing story, the story of Mahesh and his former guru, Rajneesh.

"Rajneesh and his closest disciples observed that many of the disciples had been disappearing. Rajneesh was worried; he had noticed an uncaring attitude among some of his disciples. At this time came the news that Mahesh had thrown the mala (necklace) given to him by Rajneesh himself into the toilet. The mala disappeared forever. Rajneesh was livid with anger. He knew that famous film star, Vinod Khanna, was a close friend of Mahesh. He called Vinod Khanna and told him, "If what I have heard is true, then Mahesh has acted as a coward and he will regret it deeply one day. If he did not like all this any longer he should have met me and returned the necklace. You go and tell him I will destroy his life. In the meanwhile, Mumbai's famous film director, Vijay Anand, Dev Anand's brother, who was also Rajneesh's devotee and disciple, began to visit me. Within a few days he decided that his days of conducting

spiritual practices under the shelter of Rajneesh were over, that his days of meditation were finished. He wanted to end all relations with Rajneesh. He decided mentally not to behave like Mahesh and to return the necklace personally after explaining everything to Rajneesh. Just like I am telling you today, I had explained to Vijay Anand also that all this had no meaning. This was the result of social pride. It was childish behavior in the context of what you were deeply committed to. Better to keep quiet and not do any of these things. Vijay Anand did not take my advice and decided to return the necklace himself.

“The news had reached Rajneeshpuram that now Vijay Anand wanted to sever all connections with the ashram, but he would return the necklace himself and explain his reasons. Vijay Anand went to the ashram and sent word that he wanted to meet Rajneesh. No one in the ashram paid the slightest attention to him, including Rajneesh. In fact, he was not even given the opportunity to meet Rajneesh. Vijay Anand came back feeling insulted. Later he told me, ‘If I had listened to your words I would not have been insulted in this manner.’ I said, ‘Actually even though gurus may speak of unconditional love, if anybody leaves the ashram or rejects the guru’s call, then just like any ordinary lover they burn inside. They get angry and can curse the person. If I were in the place of Rajneesh, I would have said, ‘Good, one more trouble gone. One less burden.’”

After listening to this event I decided to stay quiet and not take any steps. It seems it is written in the *Bhagvad Gita*, “Inaction is sometimes the greatest action.”

## CHAPTER 16

### Homeward Bound

We have almost reached Los Angeles. There is a sea of cars both in front and behind us. Five cars can move abreast in the same direction and there are no traffic lights but still there is a traffic jam. I am wondering how many cars are moving on the highway. In this country people use petrol like water. One gallon of milk is more expensive than one gallon of petrol. People working in the same profession in our country earn at least 25 times less than those in this country, but the cost of petrol is four times more in India. Behind the fulfillment of the vast demand for petrol in this country and keeping its prices low are the various relations the US has with the Arab countries for mutual benefit. America's vast progress in arms and ammunition and its extraordinary prowess is made known to them. Mutual enmity and infighting among the Arab states also helps in this regard. Money power and the power of the gun control everything. We are not ready to admit that India has no role to play in the modern advancements that are taking place in the developed countries; our self-pride does not allow us to think this way. But yes, the middle class population of India is vast, and it is a big market for the businesses. If they can cater to their needs, big companies can make extraordinary profits; this all the countries do keep in mind.

Various thoughts were floating in my mind. I suddenly remembered that the figure seven had an unimaginable influence in U.G.'s life. It would be wrong to say influence, rather significance. Immediately I asked U.G., "Mahesh has written in one place that the number seven has a mysterious association with the events of your life? Not only that, it is when you were exactly 49 years old you gained self-realization." U.G. said, "In the world, in all cultures there is a mysterious significance to the number seven." I said, "In Hindu spirituality there are seven chakras, namely Muladhara, Swadhisthan, Manipur, Anahat, Vishuddhi, Ajna and Sahasrara." U.G. said, "Actually, there are references to imaginary chakras in the *shastras* (scriptures) along with lotuses and their multi-colored petals; they are all fictional stories. But there are glands in different places in our body where some significant changes can occur. What kind of changes or transformation is possible is not known clearly to human beings." U.G. is trying to give all these explanations while I am pondering on the number seven.

Human beings know themselves and always remember the events of their own lives foremost. I began to think if the number seven had any significance in my own life. I thought the matter was a mere coincidence. Suddenly I found so many connections that all the cells of my body woke up shivering; this brought my sense of touch to an unimagined level of sensitivity. Not only that, my year of birth is divisible by seven and when I was sent to my mother's guru's ashram to stay there, I was 14 years old. At the age of 21, I left my studies and home to work for my countrymen. Lastly, I came to Varanasi and lived there in disguise and it was there that my struggle to learn the significance and meaning of life started. At the age of 28, Jiddu Krishnamurti's writings attracted me to spirituality. I came to America at the age of 35 and at the age of 42 I met U.G. Krishnamurti. I told U.G., "I had not thought all this before. Before these discussions with you, I was not aware of the significance of the number seven." U.G. smiled gently and said, "In your life too there is the influence of number seven, surprising!" I replied, "Not only

that, there is the role of seven in my association with you. When I was born you were 35 years old. When you had self-realization, I was 14 years old. When I got acquainted with you, your age was 77." I laughingly told him, "I know you will say that the human mind very cunningly tries to find such things so that a coincidence can be established." U.G. began to laugh soundlessly. I could not judge whether there was any reaction in Mahesh and Julie. Maybe they were immersed in the thought of finding the importance of number seven in their own lives.

I was feeling an uncomfortable pressure in my chest and finding it difficult to swallow. I began to think of how all this began. That one morning while analyzing U.G.'s palms I felt heat from his hands flowing to my heart. The sharpness of this was so inexplicable that I felt as if somebody had mixed opium juice into my system. Then, in Las Vegas, there was that terrifying cry of pain with the twisting sensation in my chest in the wee hours of morning. Who knows when and why all this started? But now I was again feeling something in my chest, elliptical shaped, the progress of which was uncertain. Sometimes it was fast, sometimes slow and deep and sometimes totally still. Whenever this feeling increases in intensity, it creates difficulty in breathing due to the pressure in my chest. Suddenly I looked back and told Mahesh and Julie, "I feel something is twisting inside in my chest." Mahesh gazed at me for a few minutes and then said, "Brother, this twisting will never stop." I was even more surprised. Although U.G. and Julie did not comment, it meant these people knew something about all this, but what is it that they knew?

We arrived back at the same Hotel Cal Mar on the shores of the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica from where we had started our journey. We booked a room for a couple of hours. Everybody wanted to relax for some time. Ahead of us were long hours of air travel. My eyes seemed to be closing of their own volition. Something was forcing me from inside to get lost in myself. I said I was very sleepy, that I needed to sleep for some time. There was a bed in the living room. I lay down on it and lost all sense of time. When I woke up, I couldn't remember where I was and what I was doing there.

Hearing Mahesh's voice, I slowly began to recollect all. I heard him say, "You were sleeping like the dead for an hour, are you aware of that?" I had really thought I was doing *Shavasana* (the corpse pose in hatha yoga) for five minutes. I washed my hands and face and told Mahesh I was feeling strange. "Something is happening inside. I am thirsty all the time. It's as if some process has evaporated all the water in my body and turned me into a dry tree. I am unable to make out anything clearly about what is happening. Anyway, I want your advice on something. You have known U.G. for such a long time and you have knowledge about him from actual experience, so tell me, what kind of work should I concentrate on doing after going back?" Mahesh looked at me for some time, then at U.G. and at last said, "You should continue to do what you were doing before, but with deeper concentration." I did not like this advice. This is because I was just looking for ways to increase the time spent in companionship with U.G. The matter of work did not figure in my head. Weird contrary argumentative thoughts began to overcome me.

I asked everyone when and where I could meet U.G. again. U.G. said, "I will be in Switzerland till the end of August. After that I may proceed to India, I don't know." Mahesh said, "Come to Switzerland in the summer holidays. Many people will be there for U.G.'s birthday. We will have fun, lots of chat sessions."

U.G.'s birthday is on July 9. U.G. knows about my immigration problem, but Mahesh does not. I said, "My Green Card process is in the works. So, it would not be advisable to go out of US for two, three months. I will not be able to travel to Switzerland during the summer holidays. I know I will be upset. If U.G. travels to India in September and the process of getting my Green Card is over, then maybe I could go to India and spend time with him there." Thinking of all this, a certain feeling of sadness began gathering in my inner recesses. The seeds of pain of separation were planted in my heart. Why this attachment to the old man I cannot understand. Mahesh asked, "You are in this country for eight years, why don't you have a Green Card yet?" I said that was a long story. U.G. said, "This gentleman has a strange mentality. He loves his country and is obsessed with the idea of going back to India. He is earning money, name and fame in this country but has only one thought - how to go back to his country. Tell Mahesh your story."

While doing research in America, I always used to feel I did not belong here. I felt I would never be able to have deep relations, spiritual or otherwise, with people here. What I am most interested in now, I have no one to discuss with. What I was interested in formerly, I no longer have interest in. I now work only to earn a livelihood. I have given up all hope that science will one day reveal the secret of our existence. It is really unthinkable that science has given us the proof of the validity of the theory of evolution. But is it possible to know the reason for man's suffering, pain and conflict? Would knowing the reason even solve the problem? I used to secretly harbor the hope that spirituality could perhaps save me from the onslaught of such questions and resolve these issues in me. I had decided that after making arrangements for the basic necessities of life, I would immerse myself in spiritual sadhana. I have been associated with a spiritual organization for many years; I have done many practices. Presently, I desire to immerse myself totally in it. India is the sacred land of spirituality. I had decided to go back to my motherland and concentrate on my spiritual practices.

In the meantime, there was a problem facing me, relating to the tenure of my stay in US. The head of my research team had asked me to stay back with them for some more time, and also informed me that I would require a Green Card to stay longer. Obtaining a Green Card would allow me to stay as long as I wished in America. However, I was so eager to return to India that I was not ready to apply for a Green Card, knowing that if I had it, I would have to stay in America due to family pressure. I decided not to listen to the professor. My tenure in America was about to end when suddenly in the sky of my life appeared the bright star called U.G. Krishnamurti. U.G. did not comment on my plans but he expressed his disgust and disappointment with India's political leaders and the general condition of the country. I, of course, agreed with him. Lastly he said, "India's situation is so pathetic that it cannot make use of people like you." I never felt that way. I came here at my own wish. In fact, I am very selfish. My country spent a lot of money educating me. I ought to be giving it back in some way. In America one has to spend lots of money to pursue a doctorate. In comparison to that, in India a college or university education is nearly free. Anyway, U.G.'s contention was that if one could get good facilities comparable to other countries, very few highly qualified people would go elsewhere. If other countries offer more opportunities and facilities, then it is natural that people will go away to study. I thought maybe the pressure of migration is like this, millions of living organisms for millions of years have been moving from one corner of the earth to another in search of a better environment to flourish.



It has been just a few months since my introduction to U.G. Within this time he has changed his tune. He has asked me to come out of my needless disappointment. His tenacity for persuasion is so extraordinary that within one month he had completely negated my determination to go back to India. Whenever he got the opportunity, he attacked me gradually, and he had also managed to rope in my wife and daughters that I should not return to India. My daughters were born here and as such they have no attachment to India. I, of course, think of my childhood and try to understand their state of mind. My father would always speak of East Bengal (then Pakistan, now Bangladesh), of Borishal. But no feelings would arise in us, his children. My local friends were my entire attraction. My daughters started loving U.G. like their own grandfather, happy that he was promoting staying put in America. Buckling under pressure, I was forced to go and tell my professor that I was now ready to apply for a Green Card. He was very happy and affectionate towards me and immediately jumped into action to do the needful; there was less time at hand and the process of getting a Green Card is very time consuming. Let's see what happens.

After listening to everything, Mahesh said, "Now I understand why you will not go out of America." He looked at U.G. and asked in a strange manner, "Sir, I have noticed always that symptoms of madness can be noticed in all the people around you. What is there in you that mad people are attracted towards you?" I stopped Mahesh and asked him, "Why this question now? Have you noticed any mental abnormality in me?" He replied, "I have seen so many people who are crazy about coming to America and those who come here immediately start working towards the ways and means of staying here permanently. And yet you have remained indifferent, what else can I term this if not mental abnormality? Divine knowledge?"

We had about an hour or two in hand. U.G. told Mahesh and Julie, "If you have any last-minute shopping to do then please leave now. Guha and I will take a walk on the beach." Both of us left the hotel and reached the warm shores of the Pacific Ocean. There was hardly any breeze. The waves were small, the sun was shining in the clear sky and there was a moist smell in the air. I remembered the sea shore of Digha in West Bengal, but here everything is so neat and clean that it hardly felt like we were strolling near the seashore. After the water there was sand, and after sand, a road. After the road was an empty piece of land. On this land situated at equal distances were rows of benches. I noticed that some homeless people were lying on these benches with a bundle of all their belongings next to their heads. U.G. pointed to these homeless people and made some comments. After the benches there was a small railing, then a walkway and then a huge road. On the other side of the road were skyscrapers, many five-star hotels and enormous shops selling expensive goods. In these shops clothes are available at a cost exceeding the annual income of a middle class family in our country. I thought, what is progress? On one side of the road is such excess of wealth and on the other are these benches on which are sleeping homeless, helpless people with no support. Till such time as even a single man spends nights here in this manner, till that time how will the value of the progress be gauged by the thinking human?

The leaders of the most developed countries of the world give lip service to humanitarianism. It is amusing to think how they stay in five star hotels and talk about humanitarianism even after seeing all this. Not just that, if there is any possibility of an obstruction to their way of living, then their real selves

stand revealed. I doubt whether we have the right to use the term humanity. We have handed over our future, the future of the human race into the hands of such leaders so we know what it will be like. The leaders here, of course, criticize the structure of the third world countries. They express deep sympathies for the people of those countries, about their sad living conditions and give long speeches but cannot see the garbage right under their own nose, or maybe the word shame is not in their dictionary. Of course, some people here say, that such people serve as an example for society. If you do not try hard and work hard, then your future will be like the homeless people on the Santa Monica seashore. I feel if this is the way we have to inspire people then why are we so proud of our progress? Man has such power, such ability, and so much abundance and upon that we have kindness, religion, and humanitarianism. We loudly proclaim and talk about feelings of the heart, about love, the extraordinary value of life, yet we are unable to make arrangements to provide food, clothing, and shelter for all mankind. If in the depths of our being, no change occurs in our lifestyle then it will have to be admitted very soon that mankind's social rules and regulations are a complete failure. The twentieth century has come, and the computer will control everything. All these things seem like empty words to me.

What percentage of people has progress really been able to touch? How many sections of society has it succeeded in bringing freedom to, how many real men has it succeeded in creating? Nature, however, had been making arrangements for all living beings. Man could not trust the give and take of Nature. He began to judge with his new weapon, the power of thinking, and started to calculate how much right each one of us should have on this planet. Do we have true courage to see the ugly side of this selfish thinking? It is strange to reflect how the same thinking has convinced man of the need for nuclear weapons, which have the capacity to kill millions of its own kind at a time.

Strolling around, we entered a store selling clothes. Normally, U.G. likes to feel the texture of clothes as if he is trying to experience and feel them. If he liked any of the shirts or pants, he requested me to read the fabric details on the labels to him. First, he wants to know the fabric out of which the shirt or pant is made, whether it is cotton, silk, rayon, polyester, spandex or something else. Sometimes they are made of a mixture of materials, so he would want to know the proportion of each. For example, 80 parts of cashmere and 20 parts of silk is excellent material. Lastly, the cost. U.G. always said that unless he had money in his pocket, the desire to buy something never arose in him. I thought this kind of thinking and lifestyle was very practical and appropriate. If there is plenty of money in the pocket what kind of desires will arise? U.G. always said that if you have two or three of one thing and you buy something more, give away one of the old to somebody else. U.G. spent a lot of time in the shop but did not buy anything. I had thought of offering him whatever he liked. Anyway, I never got the opportunity, as he did not like anything. We decided to go back to the hotel. The sun rays seemed hotter after we came out of the shop.

We had to walk in the strong sunlight and I put a black plastic attachment on my glasses as per my habit. Then out of politeness I asked U.G. if he would like to wear dark glasses to ward off the glare. Earlier, in Las Vegas I had asked him once before, but I could not remember his reply exactly, although I knew he did not believe in such things. He immediately replied, "The fashion designers are hand in glove with the manufacturers of dark glasses so that they can con you into emptying your pockets and in this they

are assisted by the doctors so that dark glasses are considered scientifically essential for us. The truth is you cannot imagine how intelligent our body is. Our body and senses have been brought to such a state by evolution itself that our eyes can automatically do all the work. The eyes know how much they have to keep open in what kind of light so that they are not harmed. On the contrary, wearing such unnecessary colored glasses can gradually reduce the natural ability of the eyes to function optimally. Do you know the reality? Nobody thinks of what is actually good for your eyes. Those who recommend you to wear such things have only business and profit in mind.” I thought that this 78 year old man is so tough, yet my love for him is only increasing. In every matter, his harsh comments are as if they are creating an extremely effective power in my entire nervous system; that unique feeling of heat in conjunction with the neurons in my brain is continuously creating a novel, wonderful experience that words fail to describe. Truly, in U.G.’s company I am realizing life and energy-giving effect in every pore of my system, heretofore unknown to me. My knowledge is not able to comprehend this; time passes in complete surprise and wonder. Maybe I will not be able to discover the source of this testing experience, but the truth of this reality will never disappear from my life. I removed the dark brown attachment from my glasses and promised myself never ever to wear them again.

When we returned to the hotel Julie and Mahesh were waiting for us anxiously, especially Julie for whom every moment with U.G. is priceless as the time was nearing for us to leave. I remembered a famous Bengali poem I had read in my childhood: “O Night please do not go away today taking away the stars; if you go my compassionate one, this life will also go.” Julie asked U.G. eagerly where he had been. U.G. answered in a serious tone, “I showed Guha how in this proud, famous, wealthy and modern city whose tiara is Hollywood, filled to the brim with wealthy people, some residents are without any support and means of livelihood, with not even a roof over their heads at night. So long as even one man in any country sleeps on the road in the night, I do not value that country’s progress.” U.G. seemed unwilling to discuss this further so he changed the subject and said, “I went to a shop. I did not like anything. Maybe Guha had thought of buying something for me.” I was very surprised! U.G.’s mood turned lighthearted and he asked Julie to tell us about the strange experience she had in Marin County, north of San Francisco a few years ago:

Julie had given a check to U.G., which he had deposited in his bank account in due course of time. After some days, U.G. was informed that the check had bounced, and he would have to pay a fine. That he would incur a loss by paying the fine did not bother U.G., but that his good reputation at the bank had been affected definitely irked him. That was the source of the trouble. He was very angry. He did not like casual attitudes of people regarding these matters. Julie gathered her courage and tried to give him another check, but U.G. had decided not to accept any more checks from her, only cash. She had no choice but to agree. U.G. and Julie went together to the bank to deposit the cash in U.G.’s account. When Julie gave the money to the teller, one of the notes turned out to be counterfeit. The teller immediately summoned the manager. Julie tried to explain that she had withdrawn these bills from their very own ATM. Normally, the bank is supposed to accept the fake bills and ship them out to Secret Service. But the manager did nothing of the sort. On the contrary, he advised her to try to pass on the note in a grocery store! U.G. and Julie were floored.

Then U.G. asked her to tell another money story: She and U.G. were alone in Santa Monica during Christmas in 1992. On Christmas Eve, Julie drove to the pharmacy which was nearly empty. As she came out and was walking towards her car, she saw a bag lady with a shopping cart full of possessions. She wanted to give her a \$20 bill. The bag lady said, "I don't need the money, but if you go to the next square you will see a young girl who could be your daughter. She needs the money more than I do." Julie followed her instructions and found the girl. But she did not look poverty stricken. In a very gentle manner so as to not insult or humiliate her, Julie expressed her wish to give her the money. The girl accepted it without any hesitation. The incident seemed very significant to Julie. Maybe it was to fulfill the genuine needs of good people that a man like U.G. strode on this earth. Julie literally ran to the Cal Mar Hotel to tell this story to U.G., to which he listened attentively; but as soon as it was over he went back to the task he was doing and behaved as if nothing had happened. That was U.G.'s personality.

U.G., Mahesh, Julie and I left the room with our luggage. Usually the hotel has staff to load it into cars but all of us have so little that their help was not needed. Julie went to pay the hotel bill while I proceeded to the garage to bring the car. Again, on U.G.'s orders I was to drive to the airport although I am not familiar with roads and streets of Los Angeles. Julie knows these roads like the back of her hand. She sat in the back seat and began to give directions.

Mahesh is a thoughtful kind of person. Whenever a topic of discussion with U.G. would strike my head, by that time he would insert his head between the two front seats and scream out U.G.'s name. Then would start their argumentative conversations which seemed as if they were fighting. Of course, he asked me if I was disturbed by such behavior. I was used to it driving with my family. My two daughters would sing loudly, put on the radio, get scolded by their mother and fight with each other so driving while co-passengers were creating a ruckus was no problem for me. In fact, it was not even uncomfortable.

Mahesh's topic of discussion was the summer holidays in Switzerland, when would he arrive, how many days would he stay and what kind of work would he do while there. Mahesh was a busy man. He would become disturbed if there was less work even for one day. The person he would live with, in this case U.G., was not to be hurried though he was not totally laid back. Mahesh would compare U.G. to sunlight. If somebody could harness the sunlight and make it work the credit was his. And if he could not make it work the sun did not care, the light was indifferent. Mahesh always displayed an eagerness to hear U.G.'s comments on all matters, even his opinion about India's political future. If U.G.'s comments were surprisingly different from the norm or if Mahesh liked them, he would make a note in his diary. From their conversation I understood that U.G.'s friend Chandrasekhar from Bangalore had written a book on him in Telugu. It was Chandrasekhar's wish that Prof Narayan Moorthy whose mother tongue was Telugu would translate the book into English with his, Chandrasekhar's, help. Prof Moorthy was suffering from cancer in the leg. He had been operated upon. If he recovered by the summer holidays it would be a good thing. He and Chandrasekhar could translate the book together. Larry Morris and Narayan Moorthy could help Mahesh in writing an essay for his newspaper. Mahesh sighed in relief on hearing that the pills of intoxicating work would be available in summer and the dose could also be increased. We reached Los Angeles Airport.

## CHAPTER 17

### A Powerful Attraction

I gave the car keys to Julie. She had rented the car from the airport for two weeks. I whispered in her ear, "I am sorry for the episode of 'deep sleep' that you had as a result of which I had to fulfill an extraordinary responsibility. Maybe this good fortune of mine was predestined, please do not misunderstand me." Julie gave me an affectionate tap on my head and said, "I am very happy for you. There is something in you that brings out a certain gentleness in U.G.'s tough mindset. In these few days a relationship I could have never imagined has developed between you and U.G., he who is such an extraordinary, rare personality. U.G. always says it is impossible for anybody to have a relationship with him. Seeing this do you know what I think? It is possible that the Hindu theory of reincarnation is true! It is possible to have lasting relationships through different lifetimes!"

This is the unique warmth of Julie's affection. An intense goodwill flows from her heart for the well-being of all those who come close to U.G. In my case, this has achieved the distinction of reaching new heights. I listen to her views utterly surprised, and the environment around me forces me to think why and how did such a relationship spring up between me and this American lady? My first meeting with U.G. was in Julie's house in New York just a few months ago. The three of us spent the whole day together. In between then and now, Julie has visited my house many times. She has the impression that there is a spiritual connection between us.

After many days Julie sat again in the driver's seat and drove the car towards Hertz Rental Company shed. I, along with U.G. and Mahesh proceeded towards the international counter. U.G.'s luggage consisted of just a small suitcase. I tried to ease his burden by taking it from his hand; after all he is an elderly gentleman of 78 years. But Mahesh forcibly took the suitcase away from me. U.G. looked at me with a broad smile and said, "If Mahesh is with me, he does not allow anyone to touch my luggage. When I return to my country, usually I go to Bombay. At the airport Mahesh informs the Immigration officer of my arrival so that I do not have to stand in queue. Willingly, I stand in the queue to watch how efficient our officials are at the counter compared to officials in the same profession in other countries. I know you are an emotional patriot so you will not like my opinions and views. Anyway, as soon as I clear the Customs, Immigration and come out, Mahesh puts my luggage on his head and starts dancing. He has absolutely no shame, a truly courageous person, but I feel very uncomfortable."

Julie joined us after returning the car. Her eyes had a reddish hue. It was evident that she had been crying for some time. As soon as U.G.'s gaze fell on Julie, his attitude and persona changed. In a firm voice he said, "Human emotions, sentimental twaddle, cannot touch me. I have no value for tears. I have no worries about whether I will meet all of you or not in the future." I thought if Julie's tears could not change U.G.'s opinion then there was nothing for anyone to say, but U.G. was adamant and continued in the same firm voice. "Those who stay around me, if they cannot understand what I want, then they have no place here." I thought if one sees the history of evolution of the living beings then one could come to an understanding, which was something like this. Every living being has to adjust to a

specific sequence of the life flow, where there is no forgiveness for an error. If you conduct yourself properly there is life, if you make a mistake there is failure and death. I felt as if I had heard a terrible divine pronouncement. I felt the cold touch of the warning of the God of Death in my bones and muscles. An unusual stillness stopped the bombarding of neurons in my head. The deep peace, which beckons in the absence of fear ran through my awareness like a streak of lightning.

A specific kind of neuron has been discovered in the frontal lobe of the Neo-cortex. These are extraordinary evolved clusters of neurons, which bypass self-consciousness and connect with the senses and function in the brain on their own. Maybe U.G.'s extraordinary and powerful field creates a response in those areas and we feel the after-effects, a kind of unusual excitement and irresistible attraction. His fearless disposition and carefree expression create in us, according to the dictates of Nature, an inexplicable resonance in the deepest part of our existence, just as the image of the glowing personality of Swami Vivekananda used to evoke an eternal flame of inspiration in us when we were young. Maybe in the core of every human lies the desire for salvation and a free man's living truth creates a resonance with the hidden powerful need for freedom. It brings a ray of hope and we find in our body a new flow of life's energy. The trouble lies in the arrangements made by our culture, the surroundings in which we grow up. Opposing viewpoints influence us, and the conditions for harmful wastage of energy are created right from the beginning of life. What kind of person do we want to be, what should the ideal form of our living be, and if there is any individual role one has to play, what would its ideal character be? All these opposing viewpoints have created so much confusion that all possibility of flowering into a natural personality gets destroyed in the budding stage itself.

In our foundation there is an extraordinary organic innate demand to live in harmony with Nature. This demand is primal and real, although social evolution seems to have added many shallow desires. In the deep, peaceful fundamental flow we all want that equilibrium. In that there is no pleasure, no knowledge and no honor of achievement. Our internal desire for total wellbeing is not able to withstand the tremendous momentum of socially created desires, and the terrible effect on our personal life is reflected in the form of severe internal conflict and acute depression. The social demands are not limited to the basic essentials of living and the need to generate livelihood. Even people who already have what most others work for throughout their lives - that is wealth, respect and/or fame - are not saved from conflict and deep disappointment. Maybe in the absence of a peaceful and symbiotic relationship with Nature our body rebels, which we are not able to comprehend and as a result, what we experience is a deep and unknown sorrow and disappointment.

Why do these thoughts arise in me and from where? Actually, our brain is not a factory for producing thoughts. Our senses gradually capture them from the outside world and process them in our brain, then after churning them in the brain innumerable times, bring them out as ideas. This can be seen clearly from our conversations and our writings. However, the thought that the rich and famous are not exempt from the grip of extreme sorrow and terrible disappointment is evident when we study their lives. Most extraordinary literature and ageless art has been created out of intolerable frustration and sorrow.

The demand to maintain balance in life is a powerful force. Is the human civilization and the subtle desire of man to dominate all living beings caused by an imbalance in the human system? Has there been some kind of shortfall in the deep, symbiotic connection that all living beings are supposed to have with each other? Thought, though such a basic mental process, due to its constant use without any control, prevents a proper balance from being achieved. Not only that, when an increase in chaos turns into unbearable torture for Nature, then we see extraordinary explosions. Man creates nuclear weapons. He is an exceptional species that is capable of destroying millions and millions of its own kind. Maybe we could discover many principles by studying the past history of living beings, but how much can we know about the future? It's impossible to tell whether we will succeed in applying these principles in our dream of knowing the future at this stage of evolution. Our knowledge about life is so limited, that using it to know the future is impossible. Man's fears are related to this. We want to know the future, because we have the ability to create an imaginary future. Our unknown future creates fear in us. To escape from that fear, an extraordinary demand is born. This demand has created religious figures, political leaders, astrologers, psychiatrists and God. Man's knowledge will never be able to reach the root of this problem. These thoughts of mine were interrupted when my gaze fell on Julie whose eyes were full of tears. Do thoughts ever stop? My flow of thoughts was diverted onto another path.

Maybe in my life, this half-moon cycle will never return. I know that the flow of events is like a swift-moving river; once it passes, it is gone. Still, some events are so momentous that their qualitative value deeply affects the rest of one's life. Somehow, I feel that in Palm Springs such a seed of change was sown, and the effects will surely be seen in the next chapter of my life. I do not know what the result will be, but what has occurred in these few days I can never forget. The mindset that I had before coming here has drastically changed. I know the environment of Palm Springs is extraordinary. Firstly, I am alone here; there are no tensions of work and family life. I did not know anybody except U.G. and Julie, and as a result I was free of all the mental struggles that are often prevalent in a group. I had experienced the novelty of U.G.'s company before this and Julie was always very affectionate towards me. After coming here I realized within a day or two that an opportunity like this to exchange views with eminent personalities without any inhibitions is extremely rare. And, of course, above all was the company of U.G. and his powerful point of view, born out of his own experience. Although his merciless assault on my dearly held thoughts and beliefs was creating a strange effect on my self-consciousness, it is, however, my firm belief that his presence and its living quality as well as our deepening personal relationship was creating an even greater influence on my subconscious existence.

The thing about influence is this: Superficial influences, however long lasting, cannot bring about any qualitative transformation. But powerful influences can bring about a radical change in a short time. I am of course not talking about any spiritual levels. At present, I am thinking of those bodily functions which consciousness cannot touch, which knowledge or the mind cannot influence and whose changes cannot be seen in the world of knowledge or feelings directly, meaning the effect of this whole physical change does not take any specific shape in the world of our self-consciousness. In plain words, there is no direct translation of those transformations. This kind of change of course indirectly creates an influence on the mental state and its expression is reflected in various ways in people's lives. My

personal experience constantly indicates to me that an environment created by the proximity of U.G. can be successful in bringing about extraordinary internal changes; perhaps these changes can help human beings to peacefully co-exist with Nature.

In different locations in our body there are ductless glands, which constantly keep in touch with each other; according to the need, the correct amount of neurotransmitter is secreted and delivered to the appropriate neuron clusters. Our relations with the external world depend upon these secretions and this chemical balance directly influences our state of mind and mental balance. If for some reason the supply of certain neurotransmitters is more or less than what is required, then our mental disposition and temperament is inappropriately affected. It is my firm belief that we can have an environment that helps to restore the very basis of our biological harmony and that can help us to create a balance with Nature. The environment is an intense field determined by Nature whose powerful internal movements could create a beneficial influence on its surrounding systems. This is possible primarily by helping the ductless glands in our body to work properly. The source of the driving force that helps us to stay in tune with Nature is the various hormones in the body and the presence of the neurotransmitters and their appropriate secretions; this is peaceful co-existence.

Science may or may not find the quantitative distribution of chemicals responsible for this symbiotic coexistence but inside the body this knowledge mysteriously exists. This means the body is always trying to achieve this co-existence. Maybe our drive towards ultimate peace is a reflection of this innate tendency of the body. The mind's constant movement, however, forces us away from this state; the desire for wish fulfillment is an example. Even our desire for happiness and peace is keeping us far away from equilibrium, though the body is unconsciously eager to go towards this state with the help of the senses.

Fortunately, if the innate equilibrium according to the dictates of Nature is established in the human body, in other words, somehow, if the glands begin to function to restore the natural equilibrium in a person's body, or if the various ductless glands begin to function appropriately at the age they are designed to function, then in that body a radical or fundamental transformation can be observed. Immediate observation of the external activity would make it obvious as if a surprising new reality had descended into that person's life, and as a result it would also appear as if an extraordinarily powerful field had begun to operate.

My personal experiences after I came in touch with U.G. and my efforts to understand them have created this new point of view. The more time I spend with him, the firmer it becomes. Again and again I feel that U.G. is that fortunate and rare-born person in whose life this extraordinary reality has manifested and as a result, he is the source of a brilliant and powerful field. I have firmly established this viewpoint after taking into account the meaning of the movements that arise in my own body in the presence of U.G. Such a process has been created in U.G., a little like radioactivity, and its direct result is his fearlessness about the nature of its self-evidence. The reality of such a physical existence is expressing itself spontaneously; his confidence about this truth is limitless. Indirect evidence of this strong force and intense invisible radiation emanating from him is its powerful resonance with every nerve bundle of my entire nervous system, and the heat that is resulting in me. Like solar flares this



eruption is sometimes intense, severe and sometimes mild. This powerful field and intense energy creates an unknown attraction. *The existence of this powerful attraction embodies an inherent truth: Every human body is eager for the harmony envisaged by Nature but there is no direct translation of this desire for the natural state in the human mind.*

Like us, when an ordinary man's perceptive instruments sense the existence of such equanimity, and see the expression of its harmony with Nature, it inevitably creates a core resonance. The trouble is, we are ignorant of the kind of resonance that these sensations will create in our conscious mind. Our self-consciousness emerges by an extremely limited process in our system, so it is possible for many things to take place in us that the conscious mind is not aware of. Of course, the after-effects and counter effects of these sensations can come up to the level of self-consciousness. If we can compare the state inside us to a magnetic field, then we can create a beautiful example. When a powerful magnetic force is created inside an object then we know that internally the state of that object is orderly. The magnetic force reduces if internally there is disorder. If somehow order is restored, the force increases. When this magnetic field is strong there is induction of the magnetic field in the surrounding objects as well, and it means the order has been created in them. The proximity of this power creates order in the object. I am of the opinion that U.G.'s presence tries to create a harmonious order in us and we feel a strange excitement in our core. Our body craves this mysterious order that maintains harmony with Nature; that is why this personality called U.G. creates such an unknown attraction in us, a love bordering on madness. Even if such an attraction does not come to the level of self-consciousness, it does not mean that our system did not respond to that stimulus that could awaken the primal order in us. We know that similar workings in various parts of the body result in very dissimilar feelings in different people. When these feelings are translated with the help of past knowledge and projected on to the world of self-consciousness, the Nature of the interpretation would depend on the process by which individual memory was created during the entire lifetime, along with the external struggles responsible for the collection of such memories. These memory structures decide what ultimate shape the translation will take. Since every life's collection of memories and the path of external struggle are absolutely different, it is natural that the same kind of sensations can have different external manifestations. Still I sincerely feel that no matter what the external manifestation is, the influence of the power and intense energy of a highly evolved individual, the result of Nature's pre-programmed order, creates a powerful and benevolent effect. In other words, the manifestation of this evolved power and intense energy takes place for the benefit and well-being of the entire living world.

It is difficult for me to prove this point of view through cause and effect, but the spiritual (there is no other word for this) experiences in my life and the influence they have had on my body and mind, is the evidence I have been assiduously examining, which has contributed to the creation of my point of view.

There is only one absolute demand dominating my thoughts every second, and the power of this living force in me is suppressing all other movements in every direction in my consciousness. This all-pervading demand is to immerse myself in the close proximity of U.G. Krishnamurti. For me, this is an extraordinary opportunity and I am completely crazy/mad and intoxicated. I don't believe this kind of situation can occur twice in one's life. I passionately want to immerse myself completely in this environment and keenly observe everything about myself, without being influenced by past

conditioning. In other words, we have this powerful cultural tendency born out of our *samaskaras* to observe incidents of life in order to establish a very specific point of view; to ignore this tendency with great courage I want to light the lamp of deeply perceptive consciousness and see clearly what kind of revolutionary movement can arise in the very core of my being in the close proximity of this powerful personality. I'm wondering where and how the influence of this movement will blossom in my life.

The primary examination of philosophical theory is now finished. I have extensive proof of this. This power has touched me many times. Its existence is like the light of the sun, self-illuminating. Now my utmost desire is to extend my stay in this environment. The background and the necessary momentum are favorable, meaning that my attraction towards U.G. is increasing. It is my firm belief that my deepening love for him will clear the road towards the next level of this experiment. All that is needed is the compassion of the God of destiny and complete acceptance.

Now the time has come to actually take leave. The twisting in my chest brings tears to my eyes. I caught U.G.'s right hand with both of mine. He shook hands with me and said, "Hope we will meet soon somewhere or the other." I asked him eagerly, "But what if I cannot wait? What should I do?" U.G. replied, "Make do with the telephone!" Then gesturing at Julie he said, "If I give this lady permission to call me, she will be on the phone with me the whole day; if I am not agreeable to speak to her then she will phone me twenty times a day in whichever corner of the world I am." I do not know if he was hinting at something to me, maybe my enthusiasm should be much more. Anyway, we all began to laugh. U.G. has this unique ability. When emotions are heightened he can very cleverly bring everyone down to ground level. U.G. and Mahesh passed to the other side of the security gate. Julie and I stood still like stone statues watching as long as we could see them. Mahesh looked back at us a couple of times but not U.G. As soon as they disappeared, Julie burst into tears. She said, "I do not know what I will do now, where I shall go? Every time before he goes U.G. leaves me in a state from which it is difficult to come back."

It is not possible to understand the relationship between U.G. and another person. He says in his environment there is neither a door nor a guard. Then what is the problem? U.G.'s contention is if he particularly liked someone and desired the presence of that specific person and if that person also liked U.G. and needed him, then a give and take relationship would develop between them, be it physical, mental or economic, whatever. A kind of illusory play would then begin on who needs who, a mutual multilevel give and take relationship would be created. But ... in U.G.'s life all this is all utterly *impossible*.

The difficulty is U.G.'s easy, casual logic. There is no need for any special person in his life and nobody can have a give and take relationship with him. Julie understands this very well. So I asked her, "What is *your* need?" Tearfully, Julie said, "If you had ever loved anybody truly in your life, you would not be asking this question." To bring some kind of power to her sorrowful self I told her, "U.G. says love is just a four-letter word. There is nothing else to it. It's just an unfortunate notion that creates confusion. Not only that, but if you take a quick look at your own life you will be able to see how love changes rapidly. If love were something extraordinary then why after a major disagreement would your love for a person change to hate? How is this possible?" Julie stared at me for some time as if I was an innocent baby. "If ever I come to 'hate' U.G., only then would I accept this. Until that happens, which it won't, even if the

whole world agrees with him, I will not believe any of it.” Without hesitation Julie let me know her opinion.

U.G. often does not give a straightforward answer to a question, and he says things that could mean either yes or no. Julie’s problem is not love or anything like that. In her love there is no place for hesitation, conflict or tussle. Her question is only one: “U.G., wherever you are going, can I go with you?” Julie never gets an answer to this ordinary question; if she does not hear what she wants to hear, then chaos is created in her neurons! Ordinary people could never understand if the reasons for the effects on Julie were dictated by cause and effect limitations or not. To her friends and relatives such behavior is staggering and incomprehensible. I remember writing in the beginning that the next level of love is madness.

Everyone feels they have to help Julie, looking at her state. I also constantly ask myself how I can help her. Before speaking to her personally, I have of course observed what advice others offer and this is also strange to me. They offer advice as per their own notions and even here there are varied opinions. Some tell her there is no need for her to ask U.G. so many things. Wherever U.G. goes she should also just present herself there. It is not as if this solution had not occurred to Julie. However, there were several limitations in implementing this. Julie’s aim is to please U.G., not to impose herself on him. She prays in her mind only for one thing, that is U.G. would tell her that it would make him very happy if she accompanied him, that’s all! There is nothing in the world that she wants except this. But never has she heard this invitation from U.G. in quite these words! Then Julie thought she would go even if U.G. did not invite her. But she noticed in a very short while that he was certainly not happy if she appeared without consulting him. Julie thinks it is better if she suffers the pain of separation pangs rather than make him unhappy.

There is a feeling of discomfort among some of the people surrounding U.G. on seeing Julie’s predicament. Their opinion is if U.G. does not issue a clear invitation to Julie then she ought to go back home and stay there quietly. If she stayed in this manner then U.G. himself would inquire about her and give advice about what was to be done. Julie’s contention is that she tried out all these various options in the first two years. If you wait for U.G. to phone and not take the initiative to call him you may be depriving yourself of the most important thing in your life. By chance, even if an opportunity for a great union arose, it might never translate into reality due to a wrong step taken. Not only that, it may so happen that Julie does not phone for a few days. When she is no longer able to bear the solitude, she phones and she may find that he has gathered his belongings and gone to some unknown destination. With this begins Julie’s indescribable mental anguish. When after great trouble of contacting U.G.’s friends all over the world, she finds his new address, she discovers he is not picking up the phone despite many calls. So there is no solution to this problem. Death was dearer to Julie than the prospect of forgetting U.G. and staying busy with something else. In her own words, “Science has not advanced so far as to find an alternative to the sun. So I have left the solution of the whole problem in U.G.’s hands. Everything depends on him.”

I proceeded to catch my flight to New Jersey. After seeing me off Julie will go to San Francisco. She had bought my flight ticket with her credit card. I wanted to know the exact sum in order to write her a

check. Julie immediately said it was a gift from her to a dear brother. I did not agree to this. In the pain of separation the heart is now free and generous. If it were five or ten dollars I would not think twice. But it was impossible for me to accept such a large amount. I practically had to force the check in her bag. I told her if I found the check had not been cashed in a day or two, I would never speak to her again! Julie agreed. I asked her what were her next one month's plans? She would visit her mother for some time in San Francisco then return to her home in New York. Better to stay on the shores of the Atlantic as it is closer to Europe. Before leaving I told Julie, "The doors of my house are forever open for you. Come anytime. There is no need to phone."



## CHAPTER 18

### The Proximity Effect

The plane is cruising at a high altitude. I close my eyes, lost in thought; thoughts always about the past. If I ever think about the future, those thoughts tend to transform the known past and present themselves in a new form. This was the first time I was with U.G. away from my home. Now I am trying to remember what happened to me after first meeting him.

I was in a distressed physical state after meeting U.G. that first time at Julie's apartment, but there was no sign of discomfort the next morning. I woke up at dawn in a state of deep peace. I had not told Lakshmi about my discomfort. Instead, I told her in passing that U.G. was a Telugu Brahmin and his favorite food was idli (steamed rice cake). Lakshmi was very happy, and immediately asked me, "Have you invited him to our house?" Of course, I had not thought about it at that time. During my discussion with U.G., I was so engrossed trying to find out the spiritual significance of his conversation that all social etiquette and manners never came to my mind.

I phoned Julie. I conveyed my heartfelt thanks and asked her how I could invite U.G. to our house. U.G. was with Julie at that time and she asked him, "Guha is inviting you, what shall I say?" U.G. replied, "On this trip I have no time at hand. On my next visit to New York I will try to come." U.G. went to California and Julie with him. She regularly kept in touch with me through email. I began to get updates on U.G.'s whereabouts and what he was doing.

After three weeks I received an unexpected call from Julie. U.G. was coming back to New York in the coming week. She remarked in a surprised tone that to her knowledge U.G. had never before come back to New York so soon. She was even more surprised to think that he would not be staying in her apartment this time; instead he would be staying at the South Gate Tower hotel situated opposite Madison Square Garden at the junction of Seventh Avenue and 31st Street. Julie was coming back two days early to make the arrangements. The hotel had been booked. The rent was \$225 dollars per day. I kept wondering why he would not stay in Julie's house when nobody lived there other than her?

Within a month's time U.G. Krishnamurti again arrived in New York. I phoned him in the evening. U.G.'s first remark was, "Why am I here? I don't know why I suddenly came back to New York! I have been coming to this South Gate Tower for many years. Valentine and Parveen Babi and I have spent a lot of time here." I asked him straightaway, "When can I come to meet you?" He replied, "I will be in the hotel after four p.m. My room is on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor and the room number is G." I told him that I would be there the very next day. When I arrived, I knocked on the door of 21 G at around 4 p.m. Julie opened the door and informed U.G. that Guha from New Jersey had arrived. I came in and stood in front of his sofa. He looked very happy. He smiled mischievously and said, "If you leave your lab and come here, what will happen to your research?" I burst out laughing.

U.G.'s grandson, Kittu, had brought idlis for him. U.G. said, "There was a time when I ate two idlis three times a day." I stayed for about three hours and after returning home told Lakshmi that if she wished

she could make idlis for U.G. The next day I presented myself along with the idlis. U.G. was surprised, but immediately instructed Julie, "Give me what Guha has for me. I am very hungry." He ate them with relish and praised the cooking. He told Julie to have some as well and she also praised them. Lakshmi had made loads of idlis and seeing the quantity, U.G. remarked, "We can feed an army easily till they are full. Anyway, if you come tomorrow there is no need to bring more. These will last for many days."

Next evening I arrived there as usual. I had noticed while working in the laboratory that I was becoming absent minded. I thought of phoning Julie to ask where U.G. was and what he was doing, but controlled myself. When U.G. saw me he asked Julie, "What is the matter? Is Guha becoming addicted? Every evening I see him coming here." Julie said with a smile, "Who knows? Maybe you have come back unexpectedly to New York to meet Guha." U.G. pretended to scold Julie and said, "If you kindly shut your big mouth it would be a relief to everyone." After chatting for an hour, U.G. suddenly said, "Let's have dinner quickly and then we can go out." Julie warmed the idlis made by Lakshmi and gave them to U.G. Afterwards we left the hotel.

Kamal Grover, the Air India pilot, was with us. In Julie's car, U.G. sat in the front while U.G.'s grandson, Kittu, Kamal and I sat in the back seat. The rest who were visiting U.G. that day were asked to go back to their residences. We sat in the car and moved forward watching the dazzling neon lights of New York City. The lights in Times Square are the most glamorous. We crossed the square and were proceeding towards Lincoln Tunnel when U.G. asked, "Guha, how far is your house?" I replied, "If there is no traffic jam, it should take about 45 minutes." I was really surprised at U.G.'s query. Lakshmi knew nothing. Suddenly if I knocked on the door with this gang of people, there could be trouble. I was staring at his face open-mouthed. After a few seconds, U.G. said, "We are ready to drop you home on one condition." I asked what that was. He replied, "The condition is that you will not invite us to your house nor inform your wife that we are outside in the car. We will leave you at your door and immediately turn back." I was helpless. My wife Lakshmi had repeatedly told me to invite U.G. home, but he would go back without stepping in and I was also forbidden to call her outside to the car. I soundlessly agreed. I thought he might change his mind once we reached the house. But U.G. stuck to his condition. He left immediately after dropping me outside the house. Lakshmi becomes worried trying to find the significance of such events.

Before I went to bed I suddenly felt very cold. My body began to shiver; I had fever. The shivering and fever increased rapidly. I thought maybe I was suffering from malaria. The place where I stay has no mosquitos or flies. I didn't know what happened. The shivering and fever intensified. I felt that the jolts from the shivering would separate my muscles from the bones and covering myself with layers of blankets and quilts did not remedy the situation. Lakshmi became very anxious. I told her there was no need to call anyone. If the fever did not go down by morning we would consult a doctor but as of now I would try to sleep. Lakshmi began to apply a cloth soaked in cold water on my forehead. I soon sank into the lap of deep sleep.

In the morning I could not find any sign or remnant of the night's torture on my body and mind. I felt I must have had fever in my dream. The whole day I was light and peaceful. I thought I would get fever again in the night. But nothing happened. I phoned U.G. in the morning and mentioned the strange high

fever, the bone rattling cold and shivering. U.G. said something surprising, "It is better to stay away from me. You saw in what kind of trouble it lands you." It was as if U.G. was giving me a hint to think of these events in a specific way. I had not considered his presence having any connection with my fever. If I had asked I knew he would have just denied it and blown it off. My eagerness began to increase. I will have to conduct all the examinations myself. Thus, started a new chapter in my life, the study of the human body. One man's disease can cause sickness in another person but what else can there be in a human body that could affect the body of another.

We know that our knowledge and mental state together cause reactions in our bodies. For example, longstanding worries cause increased secretions of acid causing harm to our equilibrium. As a result, there may be many harmful effects. The ability to digest food properly may decrease, scarring may take place in the internal walls, etc. Worries can cause blood pressure to rise and even affect the regular heart rhythms; this can throw a person into the jaws of death. People with heart problems are often advised by their doctors to relax and to try not to worry. They feel that peaceful thoughts help in maintaining the body's equilibrium. It is my firm belief that the reason people sometimes feel they are getting beneficial results from visiting temples, mosques and churches is due to favorable conditions created in the body due to their faith. The body, therefore, fights against the cause of the disease and sometimes is victorious even without medicine. It can also happen that a person who gave his blood to be tested due to a lab mistake may receive the result of a person who may not live long. Hearing the news, from one moment to the next, the healthy man's life will suddenly come close to borderline of life and death. I began to think and wonder. My question was, "Just like disease-causing germs that work outside the boundaries of thought, is there any unknown element in a human being whose presence arouses a reaction in another?" I don't know what there is in U.G., but it causes a strange reaction in me. Will all this be answered by science one day? Who knows? U.G. will never allow any scientist or doctor to touch his body, let alone examine it. So it will be unknown to us if there is anything extraordinary there. With his death nothing will be found, just as living qualities like talent or fearlessness can never be discovered in a dead body.

I folded the wings of my thoughts as the airhostess inquired about food. "Did you place an order for vegetarian food?" In a daze, I replied in the affirmative. The lady placed a packet in my hand and went away. I was then wondering how the journey of my life would continue, what I should do, what kind of activity I should engage myself in? Research work requires so much prolonged mental work and concentration that there is no scope to do anything else. This kind of work causes harm to the equilibrium of the body. As a result, new rules and regulations are always being discovered to keep the mind and body refreshed. It is even advised that we do yoga exercises. Nowadays corporate employees are being given time off for yoga, meditation and deep sleep. Experts are called in to advise how to maintain physical and mental health of employees so as to maximize their productivity. But my basic flow of life is trying to take a new direction.

Research work is the only way for me to earn a livelihood to take care of my family. I feel I am useless for any other work. Moreover, there is no place in my head for plans to save money for the future. At the university we sometimes have meetings to discuss where to invest parts of our salary in order to improve our future economic conditions beyond our expectations. Not a word of those discussions

enters my head. What an extraordinary limitation! I can see as clear as daylight that I am working in order to *just earn money*, there seems to be no need in the mind for anything else as far as I can imagine. The quest to know the Truth has stopped at a peculiar place. If it was possible to know the Truth by reading books or gaining knowledge then the number of people to have gained Truth would have increased so much that the earth would have been transformed into heaven. I am talking presently of the society made by man. The earth is really heaven. Man's greed and his thirst for fulfilling the desires of the mind have created hell here. Why do we want to know so much? From where does this motive to know arise? The thought lurks, "Am I going crazy?"

What is the significance of those extraordinary experiences in Palm Springs? How would I know which ones could bring about a radical transformation in one's life and which ones are the illusion of the "I"? Is there any experience that is free from *samskara*? What exactly *is* experience? Our medium of communication with the surrounding world is through the senses. The knowledge gained through the senses is a small part of the brain's internal response. Until that response finds its way to consciousness as a translation, it has no significance to the sense of "I". When part of the response is separated from the stimulus and begins to work in a parallel fashion, it gives birth to thinking, reflection, and decision-making and through these processes the "I" gets strengthened. We try to understand and depending on our background, whatever gets translated from the response we identify as good, bad or meaningless. If the translation is favorable to the deep desire of the sense of I, we get a taste of extreme happiness. This is what happened in Palm Springs. When I thought I had found what I was searching for and had arrived close to it, the excitement created in me was absolutely incomparable; there was no limit to my joy. When a huge high tide flows through a river, the river is in spate, overflows the banks and creates fertility in the surrounding lands. I felt something like this was happening in my mind, whereas the source of this joy was actually the unison of my lofty idea and the translation of the experience. Other than joy is there any other direct effect? This conjecture keeps my curiosity alive.

I had assimilated many things through knowledge; many of them created aspirations and desires in me. Then I began to search for their fulfillment; when I felt I was "getting it" there was deep excitement. Then again when I discovered it was illusory and erroneous, there was deep disappointment. At present, my primary concern is to know whether it is possible to have any direct proof of whatever I am searching for beyond this apparent knowing and relative understanding that is born out of my expectations. How does one get to know this? If one tries to see the philosophical implication and fundamental truth, tries to present it in front of others, tries to find the expression of such truth in the world of functional existence, then all joy ends - the value of experience is very strange. It can never have the last word. Even though in my mind's eye I have had visions of God and have heard his voice, it is impossible to prove the validity of such experiences; human experience itself is such a strange phenomenon. It is difficult to know what the use is of one's experience in one's own life, let alone to understand its effect on others. Since it is impossible to know one's future with certainty the thought of trying to know which experience can change one's life is absolutely meaningless.

Every experience is like a short-lived, passing mist. Like reading a book and becoming illuminated, our internal mindset is a rainbow, glorious for a short while. After some time everything is as it was before. I had so many experiences during meditation, so many spiritually significant dreams, actual visions while



fully awake, experiences of revelation in my awakened state, which is called *Shruti*. Although I had no words for these, even then due to lack of basic fundamental changes in my nature and mindset, they were disregarded as illusion. But something happened in Palm Springs, something causing ceaseless stirrings in my body. The trouble is how can I deny all this? Our deep desire for experience sometimes creates an illusory experience. But these acausal physical movements taking place in my body are so much outside my habitual thinking that I cannot accept that it is happening due to the strength of my suggestive power. It is my firm belief that one cannot initiate these bodily changes by the strength of the mind or with its help. A woman cannot become pregnant by mere thinking and strength of mind. It is a bit like that.



U.G. at Guha's home in New Jersey

## CHAPTER 19

### A Spiritual Flowering

Back home after 14 days. Seeing me in the evening Lakshmi and my two daughters heaved a sigh of relief. I told Lakshmi that U.G. is an extremely mysterious man, even more than I had previously imagined. Whether anyone will be able to unravel this mystery or not, and how much of it, is not only difficult but nearly impossible to tell, the main reason being no help comes forth from him. I then asked if anybody from Shri Ram Chandra Mission had called and inquired about me. Lakshmi said, "Yes, yes. They have asked many times where you have been, why and when you will be back. Your disinterest in *sadhana* has reached the ears of the President Shri Parthasarthy Rajagopachary. He is coming to New York in a few days' time, and then he will surely call you. In the meantime, I heard from another friend of yours that the preceptor, Kamlesh Patel, to whose house you went every Wednesday to meditate in New York, has told the President that you are fed up with the petty politics of the preceptors and have stopped attending *satsangs*. The president told the preceptors that while he has nothing to say about their internal squabbles he has only one request - I should be brought back to the mission." It was curious that a man's viewpoint and path of his thoughts can be so divergent. The cause of my headache was the internal conflict and disagreement between the preceptors, yet it was beyond their thinking that my lack of eagerness to do spiritual practice could possibly be a disagreement at the root level. This kind of thinking was threatening and could bring about a crack in the faith of the dedicated workers of the Mission; it was not possible for them to have any interest in such discussions.

I don't know who wants what in life; whatever my friends in the mission were pursuing, what they would have had to do to reach their goal is unknown. Perhaps they are thinking that they have made that arrangement already and are pursuing their goals. Until one or the other of them asks me directly for my opinion or advice, I have no interest or responsibility. I know now with certainty that I personally will never get what I am looking for in that mission. I have also told Lakshmi that I am not ready to discuss this matter over the telephone. But yes, if anybody wants to come home and discuss this face to face with me I have no objection. When the president of the mission comes to New York, I will see what is to be done but at present I am not thinking about this. There is a strange weakness in me. Normally, if someone is uncomfortable with my expression, I don't find it necessary to say anything to that person. But the present situation is a little different. When my friends try to impose their thinking on me I have to destabilize their dearly held beliefs. And when one side wants to present their views in a forceful manner and engage in what is known in plain Bengali as a quarrel, then I am terribly reluctant to enter into it. And yet, now I have an unusual excitement in myself. Right now, I feel like getting together with those who are really interested in spirituality and giving them some really good news; is this what they call "missionary zeal"? I don't know why I feel this way. At present, my only audience is Lakshmi. I try to make her understand many things at night.

It was nearly two a.m. The twisting sensation in my chest increased to such an uncomfortable level that I woke up. I was thinking, what's going on in me, what are all these things that are happening? Did I develop heart trouble? How can I understand this? I was thinking of calling Lakshmi, but did not feel like

waking her up. I realized the pain was focused around the middle of my chest, and at a very specific place the intensity was increasing. I thought maybe I had unknowingly pulled some muscle, and hence the pain I was feeling now in the solitude of the night when the body is totally at rest. In this manner a few moments passed. In the meantime, I cannot list how many thoughts cropped up, all of which I denied. Slowly, I understood that the intensity of the pain was forcing me into unconsciousness. I felt as if a very sharp object had pierced me through the back and entered my heart, and the very next moment that unbearable pain radiated from my heart in waves throughout my whole body. I lay there inert and my hands and legs went limp; my whole body was bathed in sweat. My hands and legs had no strength left in them, nor had I the strength to call out. I do not know how long I was lying like that, but when I regained a bit of strength I found the bed sheet soaked in sweat. I was afraid to move. I worried that some part of my rib cage near the back might be broken! Slowly I tried to turn on my side. I had no trouble. There was no sign of the pain in the heart and the churning sensation had ended. I checked my back, no pain there; now I sat up. Was I dreaming? No. I remember seeing the time clearly; it was 2 a.m. I was so surprised! Let alone explaining all this to someone else, I doubt if I could understand it myself. I could not sleep due to excitement. The sweat was yet to dry off. I thought probably I would not get a clue to all this by thinking. So I left it all to the goddess of destiny and went to sleep.

I remembered the torture I went through at night as soon as I woke up in the morning, but the body was in a state in which there was no place for disquiet. No question of fear or anxiety; instead internally a novel, unknown vitality was being generated. The depth of my inhalation and exhalation was also transformed. In my mouth there was a flow of warm saliva and along with that, subtle shivers bestowing a strange, unknown strength. What had happened, I couldn't understand! My head felt light. The daze did not clear, but there was no sign of discomfort anywhere in the body. Yet my thoughts flowed in various directions remembering the sharp pain in my chest. They turned to one question, "What happened last night?" The matter was not one of philosophy or experiences based on listening. It was not an experience of hearing or seeing something, either in the dream state or a vision. This was a physical incident, something had happened in my body. Exactly and with certainty it is very difficult to know what happens inside the body; in reality our consciousness is not aware of it. By using knowledge we can speculate, and based on that we can conjecture that perhaps some knot around the heart was untied -- if the muscle or bone were hurt it would still be painful -- or some fundamental change had taken place in some gland. Near the heart is the Thymus gland. In childhood its size is relatively big, and when we reach puberty, it atrophies and shrinks to a smaller size. Maybe some new movement has been generated in this gland. Who knows? This is all speculation. How to know what happened? Whatever it may be, the whole day I felt extraordinarily free and unburdened.

Though my mind was free of angst, one intriguing question kept popping up -- what are the organs near the chest according to medical science and what are the means to know and understand their workings? Though I am enjoying this present feeling, which is free of burden, there is no eagerness or hurry to augment my knowledge, yet at the same time I *am* curious to know and understand what is happening in my body. It is a feeling of surprise and childlike curiosity. The main reason for this curiosity is wondering if there is any extraordinary possibility of spiritual transformation having a direct influence on the physical system. (I know here also there is the play of "I".) Even then I feel this curiosity is

innocent. After much consideration, reflection and research I have come to the conclusion that no such ray of hope was to be seen. Perhaps the bodily changes could be expressed in the language of human physiology and I could also describe my feelings, but the problem is how to establish a corresponding connection between my descriptions and the changes taking place in my body.

Feelings are always personal and subjective, and therefore the description of feelings is like a literary creation. For example, deep and powerful feelings expressed by talented individuals can become epic poetry like Kalidas' *Meghdoot* and Tagore's *Geetanjali*. Ninety-nine percent of the population, on the other hand, can barely express one word about their feelings coherently. So it is impossible to evaluate the quantitative essence of the transformation through the expression of feelings. The body/mind relationship is mysterious. Even the thought of establishing a connection between experience and spirituality is uncomfortable to me. It appears to me that spiritual concepts are like fictional stories. As far as I know, according to the language of science, there is no proof of the location of soul in our system. So to think of these matters now seems meaningless to me. A description of spirituality based on the body is futile, like the effort to know from a feverish, ranting patient the expression of a universal truth. I felt my body did not want to supply energy to the "thinker". I decided that there was nothing to think about regarding all this in the present. If the pleasant breeze of spring is blowing in my head let me enjoy its sensation in every pore of my body. Let me eat the mango with deep enjoyment, later I will judge what is called taste and in that light understand where the connection lies between what we understand by deliciousness and the juice of the mango.

Towards evening I felt the tremors in my chest again. But this time it was less uncomfortable. The pressure seemed less than earlier and along with the flow of saliva it felt pleasant to have warm tea or coffee. I have reduced my food intake due to the pressure in my chest. During my stay in Palm Springs I realized that I could not maintain my normal quantity of food. Lakshmi became anxious watching the quantity of my food rapidly decrease. She began to tell me that my health would be permanently damaged if I continued to eat this way. I defended myself by lecturing her, "Have you seen the quantity of food U.G. eats? He keeps practically nothing in his stomach. And whatever bird-like quantities he does eat, seventy percent of it he throws out immediately. Still his seventy-eight-year-old body has such extraordinary radiance and vitality; his ability to function surprises all of us." Lakshmi was, of course, not the sort to accept all of this easily. She answered forthrightly, "Nobody can be compared to U.G. If someone sees U.G. and then tries to imitate his behavior and adopt his way of life, then only trouble awaits that person at every step... Not only that, he may find himself in the jaws of death." Although I remained quiet, the truth was that the internal pressure was not allowing me to eat; my stomach felt full.

I could feel the creation of a novel kind of energy in the body along with a curious excitement. How to channel this enthusiasm in the appropriate direction? I thought, maybe if I meditate I will come to know about it. Yet if I close my eyes and sit, a potential power increases as if a clock has been wound up too tightly and any more may destroy everything. Inside me it feels as if a young lion is shaking his body and getting ready to explode. I feel the desire to embrace my wife and consume her. So many other things come to my head.

I don't know if there is anything called "progress" in spirituality. Whatever we experience in the world of feelings is it possible to know which have spiritual significance and which have no connection to spirituality at all? One of my predominant thoughts is trying to establish spirituality as a mythical story, yet I am unable to remove from myself thoughts and ideas about spirituality. I always feel that the sensation that arises in me in the presence of U.G. is spiritually significant. Besides this thought, I am unable to hold any others in my head.

From the very first day that I came in touch with U.G., many physical and mental changes have been taking place; consequently the body mind influence has been creating many novel, strange experiences. My mind keeps examining all this as if it were an internal self-witness. Whenever this sequence of events is entirely revealed to my consciousness, then everything else pales into insignificance. A deep curiosity creates extraordinary excitement. It excites me to think that it is possible to have a simple straight cause for our spiritual evolution, which is physical transformation. This matter has such extraordinary significance that to even think of it gives me goose bumps.

The internal changes in the body cause a change in the mental state, and the only way to change the mind permanently would be to bring about a radical transformation in the body. This change could then awaken spiritual state in human beings. The awakening of the spiritual essence in man would create a movement in the mind to be one with Nature. When the body is radically changed, the feeling that arises in the mind would continuously take the body/mind cycle into a state where a complete spiritual expression could emerge.

Human beings were created with a specific need to maintain equilibrium with Nature. Perhaps, through the emergence of the spiritual flowering in man, human beings will be able to choicelessly follow the unseen dictates of Nature.

## CHAPTER 20

### Time And Consciousness

Remembering the pain in my chest, and the consequent near-fainting spell on that first night after returning from Palm Springs, I find myself with a deep and increasing inquisitiveness about the human body; I am not able to understand anything on the basis of my present knowledge. If there is anything to the rising of the *kundalini* energy, it must be an entirely physical matter. I don't know why I am thinking about this. Due to some deep internal changes, whatever surfaces in our consciousness produces feelings and to describe them, we create examples. The *chakras*, multi-colored lotuses, triangles, rectangles and hexagons, are all a product of our vivid imaginative faculty. In the absence of well-defined knowledge about what is happening in various parts of the body, imaginative pictures are born out of religious and spiritual thinking. Such things cannot be found in biology books; I don't think internal changes in the body can produce a clear answer. The change that is taking place in me and as a result whatever the feeling that's generated in my mind is not informative enough at this stage, but I can clearly understand that the energy being generated is forcing me to be absorbed constantly in such thoughts. However, I also know whatever thought finds, it must be from the information that is available in our culture.

One morning in Palm Springs, a day or two before leaving, while U.G. was cooking oatmeal, I told him of my various experiences during meditation. He totally surprised me by asking how I used to meditate, what my practice was in that organization.

"Getting up at dawn, after washing hands and face or if possible taking a bath, we sit in a specific place and begin meditating in such a way that there is no discomfort in the body. Keeping our eyes closed, we have to imagine a divine light in the heart. Since we have no idea what the divine light looks like, we have to keep our mental focus on the heart. During meditation, if we realize that we are not able to hold that thought, and are thinking about something else, instead of criticizing and condemning ourselves, we have to simply bring our attention back to the heart. We have to meditate for a minimum of half an hour and no more than an hour. After meditating we take a few moments to remember if any experiences have taken place. If we have seen or heard anything, we write it in a diary. This is the method for regular morning practice. Three days after starting meditation, suddenly it felt as if I saw a light slowly appearing whose glow seemed to be like a candlelight coming from behind an oiled paper in darkness, but it disappeared as soon as I became conscious of it. Within a few days seeing a flame and hearing the sound of resonance during meditation became very common."

U.G. did not permit any further discussion on these matters and asked me if there were any directions given to do anything at night.

"At the end of the day after finishing work, we sit in the same spot for meditation and try to wash away layers of impressions from the inner recesses of the mind. Regarding this, one should do as much as possible and for the rest, leave it to the guru's grace, praying for his help. There were clear instructions about how to seek help from the guru."

U.G. asked me, "What kind of instructions?"

"Before going to sleep we were told to invoke deep feelings for the guru and pray thus, 'Oh Master! Thou art the real goal of human life. We are yet but slaves of our wishes putting bar to our advancement. Thou art the only God and power to bring us up to that stage.'"

U.G. listened with great attention to what I was saying. Then surprising me completely again, he remarked that this was not the kind of prayer to be addressed to the president of the Mission!

Lying in my bed, I am thinking of Palm Springs and time and again U.G.'s face floats in front of my eyes. Though I went to the lab this morning, I only feel like thinking of where the similarity lies between my spiritual practice and my experiences in Palm Springs. The basic premise behind the spiritual organization I was associated with was to practice all techniques in order to develop love for the Master. There were different rules and regulations for how to bring this about, but the one that was most operative was "constant remembrance". If you remember him constantly, carry his photograph with you, then love and trust would develop. My state of mind at present, however, is such that I feel this is only possible if it develops from within. A nomadic and unique individual called U.G. Krishnamurti has created such a space for himself in my conscious mind that it will not be possible to forget him for a moment, even if I try. Such events happen by themselves, it is not possible to make them happen by practice. As I think of Julie and her deep connection to U.G., this point of view becomes stronger.

A sharp pain in my chest interrupted my sleep. I glanced at the clock. It was the same time as the night before - two o'clock in the morning. An unknown apprehension brought my sense of hearing to a heightened level. I could hear my own heartbeat threatening to burst the eardrums. The memory of last night's torture flashed like lightning on the screen of my mind and then disappeared into darkness. The pain became sharper; it felt as if a sharp pointed object was making contact with my heart. Immediately there was pressure in the heart and an even more intense pain followed. After a few intolerable moments, the waves of pain flowed from the heart to the whole body. Then, slowly, the body began to lose all feeling of identity. Standing at the limit of consciousness and at the doorstep of unconsciousness all I could feel was pain in the interior of my chest; I had no identity other than pain. This was an extraordinary state. I had no awareness of my body. The influence of gravity brings awareness of the bed. I had no body, no bed and no pull of the earth. What was there was a gentle touch, a touch of pain; this pain in the center of my chest kept me connected, everything else disappeared.

I was just a lump of meat without any feeling or ability to move. The body just disappeared somewhere on the bed. I have no idea how long I was in this state. When physical awareness returned, there was no sign of pain. A strange apprehension took birth; although deep down there was perfect peace, a thought kept surfacing that if physical and mental calamities continue to come in this manner I will be disabled. If these episodes were to occur in the daytime my career would be over. Relatives would surely admit me to the "Emergency Ward" in the hospital. I began to contemplate what I would do if this happened again but immediately realized that if it did, I would consider what to do at that time. Right now let me rest with this touch of extreme peacefulness. I was carried off into deep sleep.

I woke up with tears in my eyes. Light was breaking outside; the busy life of the birds had already started. I could hear every separate note of their cacophony so clearly, as if Nature had removed her veil. When the mind became more focused I realized that the trace of the strange dream had given birth to teardrops and then disappeared just as night vanishes at dawn. Human consciousness is a mysterious matter; to call it a matter is also problematic. Whatever is captured in the darkness of night, what remains in the mind, sometimes as clear as what you see in broad daylight, we call that a dream.

I can remember the dream clearly: I am in the house in Hindmotor where the journey of my life began at the age of seven and to which I am still connected today. The afternoon has rolled into early evening, the house is quiet at this time of the day and my brothers, sisters and relatives are out. The cook and the helpers who are supposed to be in the house are probably asleep. I am alone in my room. Suddenly, I see my father opening the door and entering the room. He looks very tired, fatigued and lean, as if he had been searching for something for a very long time. A smile breaks out on his face as soon he sees me. He says, "I feel immense peace just seeing you. In the company of an appropriate person you have become a real man. I met so many people in my life and often thought that if I met someone like Shri Ramakrishna, I would have perhaps gotten a taste of *brahmajnana*, but I could not find such a person. Now, all my exhaustion has vanished just seeing you. You are unable to understand, this is not an easy thing, just seeing such a person a deep respect and devotion arises in the mind." I am astounded. My father never praised me to my face when he was alive. If he was ever pleased he would tell my mother, "The teachers have said that he is very clear-headed." That's all he ever said. What has happened to him today? I am so embarrassed and uncomfortable that I feel like running out of the house. Then I witnessed something that I even hesitate to express. My father bent down to touch my feet. I could not sit still any longer; I pretended not to hear what he was saying and turning my face to the other side called out "Mother, dad has come." While leaving the room, my cheeks were drenched with tears. Then I woke up.

Lying on my bed I was remembering my father and wiping tears from my eyes; thinking deeply I tried to understand the phenomenon of dreaming. How does something that never ever appeared in consciousness find its way to appear in a dream, as if it is actually happening? Perhaps we will never understand. Scientists can express the laws of the physical world in terms of cause and effect but maybe the events of the mind cannot be understood by the same logic. Even if psychiatrists, psychologists or dream analysts show off their expertise by writing theories, the truth is the balance is so heavily weighed in favor of the unknown that it can be said that personally they know next to nothing. They pretend to have a strange certainty in front of people, just like our priests who pretend to be representatives of god - all knowing. Actually, just like the qualities of the material world are reflected in our minds, if only the qualities of the mind could be similarly seen in the material world clearly, then maybe the dream world could be formulated in a cause and effect relationship; we could then understand the significance, if there is any, in our lives. Just as the stories of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the Bible seem true to people, the imaginative, lucid balderdash theories of psychiatry also seem true to many people.

My father passed away in the year 1984. Today after seeing him in a dream after so many years, there's a storm in my head; something from the depths of my memory must have been stirred up, perhaps due



to some unknown change in my brain circuitry; the dormant past has come up from the womb of time, like the churning of the ocean, with stories arising from the past. Maybe I will never know the reason but today I am remembering many disconnected incidents, some which took place at the time of my father's death, and I can now see new connections. I am really surprised when I think of this ability of the human mind to create connections and to pursue the driving force behind it. When these events took place I did not think about them but today I am feeling life is an unfathomable flow of time, a huge playground of an enormously powerful process. Unbeknownst to me there is an unlimited power working reliably in me -- not only in me, but every human life is a playground for this vast power. We are so engrossed in our day-to-day problems that we are never able to feel life's primal movements clearly. Actually, we can understand the limitless ability that a being requires to survive by looking at the eternal possibility of facing death. My body is broadcasting its victory in this battle for survival since the beginning of life on this earth and this is true for every living being.

I was then carrying out research in the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. I knew I had a bright future, but needed perseverance. All around me were encouraging stories and our research group was doing well. I had given lectures twice at major Indian science conferences, yet in the midst of such a promising atmosphere there was a rare sadness; an unusual sorrow would often cause me to bicycle out of the city to be alone. I had been avidly reading J. Krishnamurti and I wanted to practice "choiceless awareness" by myself.

I have a deep connection with Indian villages; if there is anything like a soul, I can say I find it in these villages. In my childhood, every summer holiday was spent in my paternal aunt's home amongst the grain fields and mango orchards and summer storms *Kalbaisakhi*, crickets chirping at night in pitch darkness, all of which mesmerized me. Later in life, putting my studies aside, I again went to the villages to work for the poor and the exploited and tried to make their dream of freedom come true. This was nearly ten years ago and I vividly remember those times. What was it that made me play fast and loose with my life that caused me to immerse myself in that kind of activity? No logic can answer that question. I was living a passionate and dangerous life where the threat of imprisonment and death followed me like a shadow. Some of my close friends had already been caught and jailed, and some of them while going from jail to the court of law had been illegally killed in the name of an "encounter". Others had to undergo extreme torture and coercion. It happened many times that if I had arrived somewhere five minutes earlier or later my fate would have been similar to theirs. Once I had reached a village where the previous night rifles had been stolen from the local police station. The policemen from nearby stations were hunting for the accused like a pack of hungry dogs. I belonged to the same underground party, although I knew nothing of this incident. At 10 am the town was deserted as if stricken by an epidemic. Walking down the street, I became uneasy and suddenly noticed a widow beckoning me towards her house. When I came to her door, she said without any hesitation, "Many people have been arrested and the situation is extremely dangerous for people like you; as soon as possible you must run away." She herself took me by the hand and dragged me to the bus stop by a road that was trouble free. Later, when I got news of "the action", I realized how narrowly I had escaped from the jaws of death. Today I feel surprised by the play of destiny. Nature's mercy was evident; I never received even a scratch on my body!

The year 1974 was very eventful for me. The purpose of our agitation was to wipe out the torture and exploitation of 80 per cent of India's population, which had been taking place through the ages. It was a movement to turn the seventies into a decade of freedom. Now due to the desperate attacks from the government's armed forces and reactionary coalition, our movement had been broken into smithereens. I was sick, alone and on the run. Today here, tomorrow there and where I would be the day after was not known. Finally, I turned up at my aunt's home of which I have so many fond memories from childhood. After a day or two living with them, I realized that even relatives were not comfortable sheltering me. Offering refuge to an underground rebel like me would certainly mean harassment at the hands of the police. There is a saying prevalent among the poor and middle class people of Bengal, "If a tiger attacks you there are 18 wounds and if the police do there are 36." Ordinary peace-loving citizens would prefer to stay far away from police lists or getting enmeshed in the mysterious maze of the law. I could sympathize with their situation, though it hurt me. I had been the blue-eyed boy to all my relatives and my father, being a doctor, had been very helpful and kind to all of them; they were very nice to me yet I sensed deep fear in the back of their minds. I decided to leave West Bengal.

At fourteen, a new chapter of my life had begun when I was sent to boarding school affiliated to the ashram of my mother's guru. At the school, we were compelled to memorize *slokas* (verses) from the *Bhagvad Gita*. Every day at sunrise, I had to wear a dhoti and recite prayers, *Gurudev, have pity on us poor people, Gurudev, have mercy on us ignorant people*. Then we were obliged to sit cross-legged and do meditation. Now at the age of 21, it was necessary for me to live in disguise in the same guru's ashram in the holy city of Varanasi, which is located in a different state, since I was considered an enemy of West Bengal. In religious matters, my mother was influential and impressive. There was no dearth of people she knew, and she had made all the arrangements.

At the Varanasi ashram of Paramhansa Durga Prassana Brahmachari, my stay for an unlimited time was finalized. At the time my departure was being finalized, I was living in different places daily. The news from home reached me regularly and one day word came that caused everything to come apart for me: my father was unwell. A tumor had developed in his throat and doctors had advised a biopsy as soon as possible. My mental state at that time surpassed the limits of my work capacity. I had been considering many things, science, society, religion, but had not given a thought to the future of my family. Although I was the eldest son of the house, my father's towering personality had not given me an opportunity to think about these matters. In the eyes of friends and relatives we were comfortably off. Father was a well-known doctor and a social worker in those parts. The house was always filled with people. We were a family of eight brothers and sisters plus a couple of close relatives would be staying with us for long periods. Added to that were servants, cooks and relatives coming and going throughout the year. Father's income solely supported this family, which was like a ship. Expenses were greater than income. There was no question of savings. There were three sisters, none of whom were married yet. The more I thought about these matters the more the earth under my feet was turning into quicksand. My extreme anxiousness took the form of a limitless panic: what would happen if father's tumor turned out to be cancerous? My maternal grandmother had died of throat cancer; a fearsome mental picture rendered me utterly helpless.



Guha as a teenager



Guha as a young adult

I had seen the condition in the house of my friends who were extremely poor. I knew a lot about the condition of relatives who had been ruined also. The possibility of my mother, little brothers and sisters coming to a state like that was corroding my insides. I sat holding my head - if this state really arrives then there is nothing to be done. I felt my chest would be crushed with the weight of sorrow and disappointment. And then, suddenly, I know not from where, I got a burst of limitless power. I refused to accept this mental distaste. From the core of my identity a firm resolution arose - this cannot happen now; I need at least ten more years. After a few days test results arrived: father was absolutely healthy.

It is 1984. In the midst of my thirst for knowledge about Physics and the sharp desire to be a scientist, the writings of J Krishnamurti were like gusts of cool breeze, a companion for my restless mind. Carrying a few of his books, I used to cycle away and disappear for the whole day. One fine day I bicycled to the outskirts of Bangalore and arrived at a mango orchard. I began to read my favorite book, *Commentaries on Living*. The essence of his writing appeared to me to be a method of instruction to choicelessly observe the movements of all layers of the mind as deeply as possible. This observation was just for the sake of observation. If there was any goal or desire to see anything in a particular way, then the observation would be partial and polluted, and one would not be able to recognize and know oneself. I closed the book and tried to understand why I was so sad. What do I want? In the society where I grew up people would be so happy and proud to be in my present situation. From where does my deep sorrow arise? I cannot understand. Maybe the light of my examination will never be able to reach to the root cause of this. I considered, let me think about it from another angle; what should I do to remedy this mental suffering? Keeping this thought in mind, I began to concentrate on the play of light and wind on the leaves of the trees. That world was busy with its own play; my mind has no influence there. Returning to the institute in the evening, I more or less decided that spending a few days in Kolkata with mother, father, brother, sisters, relatives and friends would rejuvenate my mind.

Our research group was quite large. About a year before I joined it, my mentor and thesis advisor was decorated as one of India's most distinguished scientists. As a result, many new researchers wanted to work under his guidance. So there was a crowd. He always emphasized our need for him and asserted his influence on us in strange ways. From the outside his behavior was gentle and humble, but behind this lay an inscrutable and competitive self-pride. I could clearly see that not only in research work, but even in personal interactions he was instrumental in causing tensions amongst my colleagues. On a personal level I had a negative mindset about him. I wanted to stay far away from all this but my roommate liked to be involved in all this petty politics in preference to studies. My situation was such that I was also a pawn in his clever moves. It was not possible to accomplish anything in a simple straightforward manner and it was not easy to take a few weeks off to go home in this situation. However, I straightaway walked into his office and asked for leave to go to Kolkata. I knew what he would say in his insinuating way – that my work was not progressing as fast as he thought it should, and that it was very important work. If others completed this work before me, it would be difficult to publish it in my thesis. I didn't want to argue, but just felt a strange compulsion to go. From my mouth, the words came tumbling out, "Father is sick, I have to go." When I left his office, I felt terrible. I asked myself if it had been really necessary to say this.

For the last seven years I had been staying out of West Bengal. In these years I had visited my home only three or four times for a few days at a time. The railway station in this area is called Hindmotor after the Birla group's Hindustan Motors Company, which manufactures the Ambassador car. A shiver passed through me when I stepped on to the station. A great many strange stories in my life are related to the Hindmotor station. There, during my childhood, while studying in the sixth standard at Kotrang Bhupendra Smriti Vidyalaya, I used to play hooky from school and travel ticketless in train to many places, sleeping in cardboard boxes at night on the platform, as well as later on when I was involved with the contemporary political struggle. This station has been a witness to it all. Getting down from the train and proceeding towards the rickshaw stand, I noticed a few familiar faces. When a 10 year old child is transformed into an eighteen year old, there is a vast change, which may not be noticeable on a daily basis, but seems astonishing when seen after a gap of seven or eight years. My father was a well-known doctor in this town. One could just give his name to any rickshaw puller and he would be taken straightaway to our home. An acquaintance hailed me at the stand and said, "So you are back after a long time, eh? Come, get in my rickshaw, I am going towards your house." I have known all of these people since my childhood. Their world is limited to a few nearby stations. Their boundaries are so small that they cannot even imagine how far away I have ventured from them. The rickshaw driver wondered how I could live in a place where I do not understand a word of the language. How do I stay there for so many days, do I earn a lot of money? I replied "No, no. I study there." That surprised him even more.

Getting down from the rickshaw, I looked at the house. There were no changes in the last three years. Originally, our house was built with just two rooms - in one room we all lived and the other was used as my father's dispensary. I was then seven years old. Then one room after another was added over the years. Now the house occupies the full plot of our land. On a portion of the house a second story was added, and then a third. Ever since I became aware, the house has been in a state of construction. There is a busy air about it. My father's name is Ajit Ranjan Guha and his nickname is Monu. My paternal aunt would always say that there was no dearth of rooms in Monu's house but there is no place to sleep also. But today the house looks like a ruin - desolate and deserted. Not a sound anywhere. I paid the fare, opened the gate and crossing father's favorite flower creeper, knocked on the door. The old-time cook, Panchurma, opened the door. She stood staring at my face in surprise. I asked her, "Have I changed a lot in three years?"

Without replying to my question she said, "Nobody is at home. All have gone to your elder sister's house in Gariahat. Your father is in hospital. If you go to her house you will know everything." Soundlessly, I pushed my tired, sleepy body in unwashed clothes of a two-day journey, towards the crowds of Kolkata. Reaching my sister's house, her first question was, "Did you come by plane?" I asked her in turn, "Why are you asking me this?" She replied, "Father has been admitted to P.G Hospital; he suffered a heart attack. I was not sure what the outcome would be so I sent you a telegram yesterday." While taking off my shoes, I answered in a mild tone, "I do not know anything. I have come by train. When I reached home, Panchurma told me that you all are here, that father is in hospital." Everybody was staring at me in surprise. My mother did not speak a word; her eyes were brimming with tears. The burden of the huge family was now on Ma, my older sister, Didi, and her husband. Ma made arrangements for my food and then asked, "Really you did not get the telegram?" I replied a bit forcefully, "You all sent the

telegram yesterday. It takes two days to come from Bangalore to Kolkata by train; I booked my train tickets last week." Ma was perplexed and talking more to herself she said, "You have come home after so long in this strange manner. Who knows what God's wish is?"

In the morning, all of us together went to P.G. Hospital where my father was in the Intensive Care Unit. The doctor gave me permission to go alone inside the room. Father's face had completely changed. He was a handsome man, but now he was very pale, no color in his face. Perhaps many years before, his body had begun to weaken, and his health deteriorated, but we were unaware of this. He had such a sweet singing voice, but now, when he called me by name, his voice was totally unfamiliar. I was filled with deep grief. From childhood, we all used to worry about mother's health because she frequently fell sick. We never worried about father's health but seeing him today I felt he had very little time to live. In this fragile condition, he gave me a full account of all the instruments that were attached to his body and the function of each one of them. Finally, he said, "The treatment for a complete cure of this sickness has still to come from western countries here." My grief increased, and I felt utterly helpless. A staff member came into the room and asked my father very respectfully, "How are you doctor babu?" Hope you are eating properly." After I was introduced to him, he took me aside and told me, "For the last two or three days I have been assigned to do the cleaning here. To tell you the truth, your father is such an unassuming man; even in this condition he is thinking about my welfare. I have not seen anybody like this. Your father told me about the importance of trade unions, where they were useful, our rights as human beings, how we are subjected to social problems and how we are being exploited; he explained everything. It is my greatest good fortune to have been able to speak to a person like your father." I wondered how my father could speak so much in this condition.

There were many people now in my sister's house. I could more or less feel that the chances of dad coming back from the hospital were less than 50 percent. We were all united in the opinion that even if he came back from the hospital there would be a sea change in the daily routines of our family. Our minds create a future in a strange manner. If we are not able to create a meaningful stable picture, then the thinker passes his days in an uncomfortable situation, searching all around for rays of hope. The state of mind of the people in my family was so fluctuating and emotional that no scene arose on the screen of my mind that could be termed hopeful. As it was, I was scarred from inside after talking to dad, and added to that there seemed to be no hint of even a faint ray of light on the other side of the dark tunnel of the future. I had fallen into helplessness. Only one bit of knowledge was comforting, which was that all three of my sisters were married now and each son-in-law loved the brothers and respected my parents.

Thus things went on for a few days. I felt bad whenever my elder sister had to spend money on medicines and other necessities. I was the eldest son yet the money I had for higher studies was barely sufficient for my own survival, so no question of helping financially. I felt helpless in this situation due to lack of money. If I had been totally unemployed I would have felt less mental suffering, the reason being lack of expectation makes it possible to be free from the pricks of responsibility. Still, everybody in the family was so proud of me. Various relatives gave different kinds of advice. Some said at this moment it was necessary for me to get a job and take on the responsibility of the family. But I knew my father

would never want that. He would have lived on borrowed money to allow me to continue my studies, if he had to. I never commented about my future plans.

In the hospital, opinions of renowned specialists differed about my father's condition. Some said if a few problems could be controlled, tackling others would be easy but would take time. Others said there was no option but surgery and the chances of survival after that were at best 50/50. My father's present malnourished state was such that it would be difficult to survive even minor surgery, and a major surgery would be almost impossible. But all of us agreed that he must stay in the hospital for a few more days. I understood then how complicated things are in a man's life, how difficult to arrive at a decision. Whenever my father was in a condition to talk and had an opportunity to meet us, he would tell Ma that it was not possible for him to get any better than he was and it would be better to spend his last few days at home. Ma would turn to me with a sad questioning look in her eyes. In order not to forget what would be the best decision and in a flow of emotions, I would keep on asking questions to the doctors. Dad knew discharge was not possible in this condition, but if we signed a declaration personally absolving the hospital of all responsibility then it would perhaps be possible to take him home. This was a critical moment.

If we took him home and he died, we would blame ourselves for having taken the wrong decision. The reasoning being that if he were in hospital for some more time, perhaps he would have become better. Then, if he had been taken home, perhaps he would have recovered. Ultimately, we left it to the doctors. Father did not want to stay there any longer, but when he came to know that we had arrived at a decision as per the doctors' advice, he gave up internally and that brought about a tremendous change in his condition.

Dad was kept alive by modern technology. We tried to guess how his condition was from behind the glass. His face was lost behind various machines. Truly, there was nothing to see or understand. Whenever we spoke to a doctor who had been treating my dad, we were getting the same reply for the past two days ... it was a critical situation. That day his old friend and astrologer Naresh Chandra Bhattacharya came to visit my dad. We called him Naresh Uncle. To others he was known as NCB. He loved Ma as a younger sister and was very fond of us. As soon as he saw me he said, "I have something to tell you." He took me aside from the crowd and said, "You are the eldest so I am telling you. When your father fell ill and was hospitalized I went to visit Sulekha (my mother). As soon as I got down from the rickshaw I saw a strange thing, as if a sacred protector was leaving your house and going towards the Ganges." I was surprised. I remember NCB had told me a long time back that there was a special grace of god on my father (by god he meant Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa). Absolutely astounded, I stared at his face. Keeping a hand on my shoulder NCB said, "You have to take care, you are the eldest. Be ready. It is time." That day the last breath left my father's body – June 20 – my dear friend Lakshmi's birthday.

My desire to serve as a Physics teacher for a paltry sum in the J Krishnamurti School and to conduct my spiritual practices in his company was postponed indefinitely due to my father's death and the necessities of family life. I am thinking of the events surrounding my father's death. I am thinking of NCB's prediction, and that he had a special ability in these matters was clearly proved later. After getting

a job as a scientist in the Space Research Center at Bangalore, I had invited him to visit us. At the dining table, he suddenly said that I would not last long in this job and that I would settle abroad. I said, "Perhaps Bangalore is my foreign land." He interrupted me and said, "Within two years you will have to cross the seven seas." His prediction came true to the last letter. I am thinking this is man's special ability, not the result of astrology's thorough knowledge. Man can learn addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and can experiment with large numbers but if someone can multiply 87 by 87 to the power of 7 without a moment's pause, and rattle off the numbers, he himself does not know how he is doing it. Due to lack of knowledge about how consciousness works people think this is due to god's grace. Ramanujan, our famous mathematician, used to attribute his special ability to the blessings of the goddess of his clan. When world famous scientist Einstein heard 12-year-old Yehudi Menuhin play the violin, he embraced him saying, "Now I know that there is a god." NCB used to say, "Your father could diagnose illness looking at a person's face. This ability of Doctor Babu was due to the grace of a divine power." Whether or not it was the grace of a divine power I do not know, but an event that took place in the cremation ground, I was very happy to witness, even amidst my sorrow.

The cremation ground was filled to capacity for my father's funeral. From the common man to well-known local personalities, all were present. Many people were personally expressing their condolences. Dad's body was now ready for cremation. I was about to be the first to offer the sacred fire to the funeral pyre, when a sudden commotion stopped me momentarily. My friend came and told me that someone urgently wanted to meet me. Before we could finish the conversation, I saw a man standing before me. He had a very dark complexion, eyes red from weeping and was bare-chested; he looked at me and said "Bada Babu, let me do the last rites of Doctor Babu." A friend whispered that the man stayed in the cremation grounds, selling wood and burning bodies. He again said, "Kindly let me do this work. You do not have to pay me a paisa." I closed my eyes and consented. He stood beside me and staring unblinkingly at the fire, said, "I am a poor man, belonging to a low caste. My life is full of suffering. Once, my daughter fell ill. Nobody could cure her. Due to lack of money I could not take her to a good doctor. When I was convinced that my child would not survive, someone told me to take her to your father. Your father treated her and cured her free of cost after hearing of the work that I do." The man was talking while tears flowed down his cheeks. I thought the tears of a man who earns his livelihood by burning dead bodies is much more profound than my tears.

Most of what is captured in our awakened consciousness gets slowly eroded by the flow of time and finally vanishes into the womb of the earth, and when, how and why whatever remains dormant may float through the mist onto the screen of our mind and give birth to various stories; perhaps we will never know. Perhaps the mystery of consciousness will never be solved. How a fragment of the vast external world emerges in our consciousness is extremely difficult to understand. In the case of man what appears in waking consciousness from the object from where it arises gets detached and in the course of time it deforms and begins to give birth to various images. When scientists go into the depths with their instruments in an effort to understand this, they will see various patterns in the electric field of neuron clusters in different parts of the brain. Like in a glowworm-filled forest on a deep dark night, somebody is searching for the feelings of Kumar Sambhava of Kalidas (Kalidas was a great Sanskrit poet and dramatist and *Kumārasambhava* was one of his finest works.) Those extremely curious and



tortured scientists enmeshed in the mystery will definitely find something. If by some “fortuitous confluence of atoms” (to quote U.G.) someone’s self-consciousness merges into consciousness itself, then instead of the discomfort caused by the presence of the mystery, it will bring absolute peace.

Take a look around.



U.G. in Palm Springs, California

## CHAPTER 21

### Guru's Work Is Over

After trying innumerable times since morning, I at last reached U.G. on the phone. Hearing his voice I was overwhelmed with emotion. With great enthusiasm the dialogue started:

G: "U.G., how are you?"

U.G: "It is not possible to be better than this."

G: "Very good U.G. I feel so happy just listening to you."

U.G: "Where are you calling from?"

G: "From the office."

U.G: "Why are you calling it an office? Say the university."

G: "I have a separate room in the university. People here call it the 'Office'."

U.G: "Oh, ok. So how is the world treating you?"

G: "Better than expected. However, I could be so much better ..."

U.G: "So you want to be in a much better state?"

G: "Of course."

U.G: "Other than thinking, what are you doing to get it?"

G: "That is what I am thinking. How can I get much better than this?"

I felt I didn't want to continue along these lines. I changed the topic and said, "What happened in Palm Springs and whatever is happening after that is an utter surprise to me – I can never forget it." U.G. is never interested in personal matters. If anyone questions him they will get a suitable answer taking into account the question, time, place and the questioner. There is no certainty that the same question, if asked again, will be answered in the same manner in the future. U.G. heard me out and asked, "Do you think you have a hand in whatever is happening or whatever happened?"

G: "Of course I have no hand in it."

U.G: "Then believe me when I say that I too have no hand in it."

I was truly astounded. U.G. continued, "When no one has a hand in whatever has occurred then please wipe out thoughts of controlling it with your mind. But listen to me, you ain't seen nothin' yet."

I was shocked, and shuddered, and then thought now the plot was becoming interesting. I was very excited and wanted to hug the old man. I said, "I am remembering the past after seeing a vivid dream yesterday night involving my father." Then I briefly described the dream to U.G. After listening, he said something that surprised me even further.

"Your holy scripture says that the last word happens with the guru. When a real guru sees that the capable disciple is ready, then his work is over. He bows to the disciple and disappears."

Silence reigned on the other side of the telephone. Still I held it to my ears. I could only hear sounds like chirping of a cricket. Slowly, I put the phone down. A strange energy seemed to be unleashed. I felt like giving the body a good shake and roaring like a lion. Still, I sat quietly on the chair. Within a few minutes my body seemed filled with the nectar of devotion. I became aware that a tune was reverberating inside me. I began to sing in a full voice Tagore's Bengali song, *Rabindra Sangeet*:

(You) flowered in the heart of the devotee, enchanted the mind

Your expression is ever new, yet in the space of consciousness you are the eternal lord of the heart.

Sometimes you are the destroyer of desire, like the blazing *Maharudra (a fierce form of Lord Shiva)*.

Sometimes you manifest as a giver of the elixir of peace and remover of all fear.

On the fickle waves of life's happiness and sorrow, your form is the embodiment of well-being (mangala)

And eternally steadfast within.

Oh Lord, manifest yourself to me as the image of love.

Let me behold your beautiful and complete form through my meditative eyes.

**THE END**

## BACK COVER

*Each one of us is a unique creation of nature and an incomparable movement. A great intelligence is continuously working to maintain this living movement and its equilibrium with the external world. If somehow, a complete trust—in Bengali we call it paripurno astha — develops in us, the naturally-induced order that is pre-programmed at birth, will begin to unfold. Life then begins to function in a very different way. The internal power that is associated with the pre-programmed order is so far beyond our imagination that its exhibition and extension are incomprehensible. Everything that you need to move in the field of living is very naturally supplied by that power, the power that comes out of that order.*

