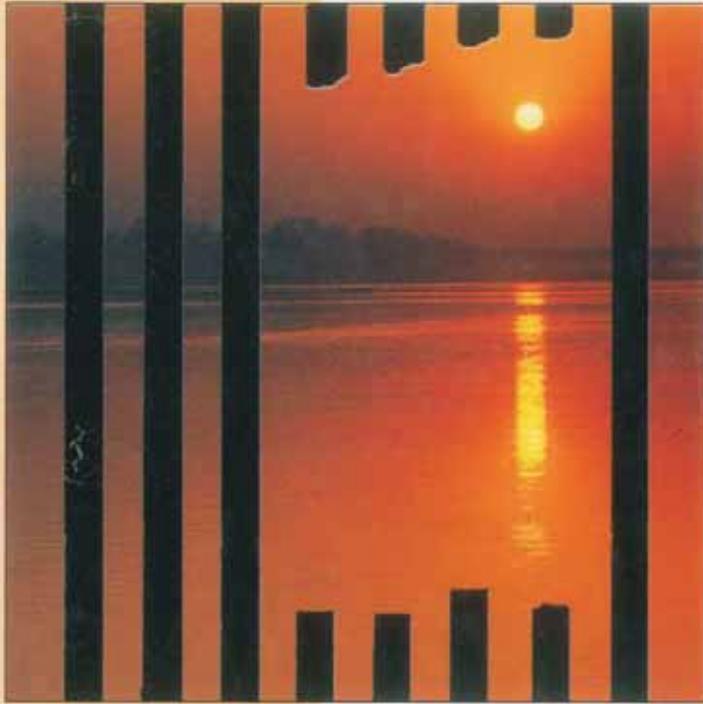


JAIL BREAK



AND THE ART OF MEDITATION

A Novel By
YOGI MAHAJAN

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DEDICATED TO HER HOLINESS SHRI MATAJI NIRMALA DEVI

Author's Note :

Whatever our intellect knows is through our two eyes and two ears. But what about all those things that cannot be heard or seen, like for instance unconditional love. Unconditional love is beyond the intellect. Because the intellect cannot fathom it, does that imply that it does not exist? If intellect were to be the yardstick of truth then we would be trapped in its jail like a spider caught in its own web. Maybe there is something greater than our intellect which has escaped our attention because we allowed our intellect to overshadow it. Maybe the time has come to introspect and examine how far our intellect has estranged us from the Truth. The Truth could be something so obvious like unconditional love. It is so simple to connect with our own reservoir of unconditional love, through an instrument inbuilt in us.

What if there is an instrument within us through which we may enjoy unconditional love.

What if through that instrument we may receive all the knowledge of the unconditional love.

What if through that instrument we may know the Absolute

Truth.

What if through that instrument we may receive Divine Blessings.

What if that instrument overflows with compassion and love.

What if we connect with that instrument in the course of an afternoon.

What if we give that instrument a name.

What if we call her “Kundalini”.

Yogi Mahajan

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Chapter 1

The seat belt sign had turned off. It had been rough weather since they left New York. Royd Harvy pushed back his chair and relaxed. It was a good opportunity to catch up with some sleep. A couple of drinks first to turn off the mind and then he could lie back till Milan.

The Connoisseur Class cabin was unusually busy. A party of elderly Americans had been keeping the flight attendants on their toes. The blonde bearing the name of Veronica Johnston looked particularly wiped out. Her professional smile was gradually fading. She was recoiling from the break up with Steve. The reality of her rejection had not sunk in. She loved him and did not know how to extinguish her love. Could love be burnt to ashes so easily. If it dies what fills the emptiness of life. She could not find any weapon to pierce her love. She had heard him say, "I don't love you", but she could not bring herself to say the same words to him. Mere words could not dry the fertility of her love into a dry desert. She could not blow away her love by words alone. Love was her total being, she could be no other way. She could be only herself, she could not be another person. To bury love would be to bury herself.

She had let go of him but the deep feeling inside the innermost recess of her being remained. A recess that was born through parental love or maybe even before that. A recess that

is nurtured by love and never forsakes. She felt the flow of that feeling agonized by a thwarting pain. She did not know how to stop it. She was utterly helpless. Each time she thought of Steve, a thousand arrows pierced her heart. She did not want to think of him. She forced her mind to keep busy in her work. In the process she had become frantic and exhausted. She went through the ordeal of her work mechanically. Her mind was completely blank. “Martini on the rocks, yes Sir, and you Madam, right Madam.” She did not register in her mind the tall man from some Asian country, probably Indian, request lukewarm water. No one asks for lukewarm water. It was not on the programme. She bypassed him. She pushed the trolley down the aisle anxious to reach her seat. She finally managed to reach an empty one at the back and collapsed. It seemed a quarter of an hour before she noticed a tall man leaning over her side as if raise energy up her spine to the top of her head. She faintly remembered a very gentle feather like touch on top of her head and she fell into a deep reverie.

An hour later she felt some one nudging her. Her colleague Anne was shouting in her ear, “we are about to land”. She jumped up and tidied her hair. She was surprised to find the pain from her heart gone. A light floating feeling elated her. Thoughts of Steve came without tears wetting her eyes, no bitterness remained. She could not bring herself to hate him, her body was not made that way. True love does not suddenly turn into hate. Love is innate without any polarity. Flames of love warmed every cell of her being. She knew she would always miss him.

The passengers were passing through the exit door. Something inside her wanted to run after the tall Indian man but he was already through the door. The Italian stewardess was bidding, “arrivederci”, have a nice trip to Cabella” and he disappeared through the door quickly.

Chapter II

The crew had a layover in Milan. They checked in at the Savoy a magnificent hotel in renaissance style. Veronica held her breath at the sight of the spectacular stained ceiling of the antrium. The lobby was filled with some Arabs. One of them held a queue of wives behind him, waiting for the lift. What kind of faces were hidden by the veils, she wondered. Inside the lift she had a closer look at the Arab, he had a stern face, but the eyes were gentle. He was accompanied by a body guard and an interpreter, must be a Sheikh of some middle east kingdom, she presumed. As she got off the lift he wished her Islam Alekum in rapid Arabic.

Veronica's spirits cheered with the artistic ambience of the Room. The Room was pannelled in Rosewood interceded by paintings of Italian masters in ornate gilded frames. The furniture was tastefully upholstered in Bourdeaux Velvet. Elegant Venetian lamps lit, shimmered through the crystals. Veronica had a quick shower and dressed for dinner.

The dinning Room was like an art gallery decorated in Florentine style. The crew was at the table busy debating sight seeing plans. One group wanted to visit Florence and the other group was excited about Venice. Eventually Venece was the popular approval and they decided to catch the morning 8' O

clock express direct to Venice and return in the evening.

Veronica opted out, she had other plans. She noticed the Arab Sheikh on the next table smiling at her. After a hearty Italian meal, they were happy to seek the comfort of their beds.

Veronica had slept well and woke up feeling fresh. The Italian sun always cheered her up. She could see the Duomo Cathedral from her window, some tourists were feeding the pigeons. But her thoughts were elsewhere. They kept returning to the tall Indian man. Most of all she wanted to thank him. She felt an inner desire to be with him. She recalled that he was going to a place called Cabella. The maid brought in the breakfast tray. She tried to question the maid about Cabella but there was little response, the maid had not heard of it, she promised to fetch the map of Italy.

Breakfast in North Italy is largely coffee, one gets addicted to a delightful concoction, "Capuccino". A Capuccino armed Veronica for her morning task. She carefully unfolded the map of Italy and peered at it. There was no sign of Cabella, she had to think, ah yes, there was her old friend Ella Patroni who would know. Ella Patroni lived around the corner and was adored for her delicious pastas. Veronica quickly got dressed and made her way to Ella's house. The children were playing in the garden. Ella was at home. "Bon journo amicomio", Ella greeted her with a warm hug. Ella was always happy to see her friend who she knew from many years. The children rushed to plunder the hamper full of little surprises that Veronica always saved from the plane. Ella had just baked fresh pannini bread and served it with olive oil. In an Italian home, it is customary to partake the

love expressed in the cuisine before turning to business; serious matters usually follow coffee.

Ella had not heard of Cabella but she would ask her husband Marco. Marco was a well-known photographer and worked for a furniture magazine. His family originally came from Genova. After the war, the shipping business had slumped and his father moved to Milan. Marco's family lived with his mother, marriage further strengthened his devotion to his mother. Italian mothers can be very possessive of their sons. A newly wed wife has to yield a variable degree of the husband to her mother-in-law depending on the tenacity of the attachment between them. The Italians are a family oriented people and enjoy the elders of the family along with their siblings. Pigeon hole flats in skyscrapers are gradually hindering the family establishment but on weekends and holidays they return home to roost.

Marco had gone to school in the neighbourhood. After school he used to spend most of the time sketching tourists at the Plaza San Marco. At twenty he discovered he could photograph with as much skill as sketch. It was never clear whether his photographs looked like his sketches or his sketches looked like photographs. They caught the eye of the editor of the local magazine and that started Marco's photography career. Marco was popular with his friends for few reasons. Whenever they asked for something, he always had it. If he did not have it, he could get it. Secondly, he had answers to every question, if he did not know the answer he invented one but he never made the mistake of disappointing friends. He was loved for his humour and generosity, but no one took him too seriously, nor did he

expect to be taken seriously. For that matter, it would be a sin to take anyone too seriously in Italy. Seriousness is for more important things like pasta and the age of wine. To pronounce a sound verdict on such matters requires a serious amount of study. One's station in life rests on the style of one's dress and the make of one's car. Useful hints on good cheese and olives can cement the bonds of friendship. With a keen sensitivity on such affairs one can get along famously in Italy.

With a beaming smile Macro greeted her, "How can Signora look sad on such a sunny day?"

One is not expected to be sad in Italy, a country with sunny beaches on three sides. Perhaps, one has missed the point somewhere or lost the sense of right perception. One must be joyous for the bounties of nature Italy has been so blessed with. What with the treasures of Art, Venice, Florence, Rome, Sienna, Tuscany, Balogna, etc? The paintings, sculptures, frescoes and architecture enralls the spirit. With such a heritage of both nature and art, Italians do not allow serious matters to eclipse the joy of life. "Dommani", takes care of all the problems and with a little hit of luck 'tomorrow' never comes.

"Allora, it must be the Cabella Ligure, Signora. My father worked for Prince Doria of Genova. I heard he had a castle at Cabella in the province of Alessandria. If it would make Signora happy, I will driver her in the evening".

Veronica was very excited about the trip, but "could Marco please go earlier, say after lunch".

After lunch is not the most exciting time for adventure in

Italy. It is a luxury to take a short nap or siesta in the afternoon. The sun is too strong and a little pause after pasta prolongs its flavour.

“But if Signora insists, let us leave now and we will have lunch in Arquata.”

Marco had a small Italian Fiat in which everyone including Marco's mother squeezed in. Sleek cars in narrow streets is the nightmare of Milan. With the rise of mercury, tempers soar, drivers fire fists and hurl volleys of abuses at each other. Eventually after an hour of a harrowing battle through the traffic they hit the highway.

Veronica fell in love with the Italian countryside. Her eyes travelled to fields of golden maize intervened by grooves of poplar trees, occasionally dotted by a cluster of farm houses plastered with mud, tiled with terracotta. The larger villages were marked by church spires popping in the skyline. As they advanced towards the higher terrain she was pleasantly surprised by Medieval castles perched on hill tops. Some of them were occupied by old families but the one they stopped for lunch had been converted into a resort by an American company. They ordered minnestrone soup with garlic bread. Ella introduced them to a delicious dish of 'Pasta al pesto'. After coffee they continued their journey through a narrow road, passing a gorge. The river had sharply cut through the mountain and the road had to wind around the mountain slope to reach Cabella.

The sun was still high when they parked at the large square of Cabella. Cabella consists of a row of old cobbled stone houses opening into a large central square. A river chattered across on

the other side. Facing the square Veronica was surprised by a majestic medieval castle, perched on the hill. She was instantly drawn towards it. Paulino, the owner of the hotel told her that an Indian Princess venerated as the 'Holy Mother Shri Mataji' lived there. Paulino took great interest in the castle, it was the pride of the village. Before the war he had been the chef to the Prince of Doria who owned the castle. The Duke of Genova had built it over 400 years ago. The castle had several underground vaults and a secret tunnel opening somewhere near the river which could be used for escape during emergency. During the war, it was used to hide ammunition. The village was gradually dying, only a few old people were left till the Shri Mataji bought the castle ten years ago. Thereafter the village was suddenly blessed with great prosperity and become famous

When Shri Mataji first arrived in Cabella, Jovani had the opportunity of preparing her first meal in the castle. When he returned to his hotel, he saw her image on his coffee machine. Then he remembered an ancient prophecy some Christian missionaries who visited Cabella several years ago had told him "towards the dawn of the new millennium, the Holy Spirit would come to Cabella to live there". When some fundamentalist tried to oppose her universal religion, there was such a downpour for several days, the river swelled and flooded the village. The villagers love her very much and every thanksgiving offer her fruits and flowers.

A large procession of joyous people was advancing towards the square. It seemed that their spirits were dancing inspired by some Divine force. They were young and old, from every part

of the world, dressed in most vibrant colours. Veronica found herself spontaneously drawn in their midst. They didn't seem to mind. She felt she had always known them. They were rejoicing the festival of the holy mother, "Jai Mataji", they chanted. She again felt her body become light and elated, like reveling in the ocean of love. She felt as though the whole procession was one body and each one was a cell oscillating in it. She recognized the tall Indian man who had been in the aircraft. He was smiling at her. She wanted to express her thanks, but she could not find the words. He seemed to be leaving for India the next morning and scribbled his phone number on a piece of paper. His name was Siddharth, she felt great peace and contentment in his presence, and then she lost him in the crowd.

The procession started climbing towards the castle. As it reached the courtyard outside the castle everyone sat down and went into a deep silence. The Australian girl next to her explained that they were connecting with their inner source and meditating, Veronica watched their faces gradually become serene and peaceful. She again felt a feather light feeling sweep her into a state of ecstasy. She could not remember how long she was there, when she opened her eyes found Ella and Marco urging her to hurry. It was getting late and they had to get back.

Chapter III

Veronica slept through the flight home. She woke up to the familiar sight of San Francisco Golden bridge looming majestically over the azure bay. Joy poured from her heart and reflected in the ripples into the ocean waves of love cascading into multiple waves. She could hear the whole body of the ocean roaring inside her in full crescendo. A chill ran up her spine, a cool breeze of vibrations enveloped her body. She had lost the sense of time. The sun was beginning to set in the distant horizon. The sky was filled with a soft, pink hue. Veronica drew a deep breath. She was experiencing inner peace like she was in the castle at Cabella. Her only desire was to live this moment forever.

She heard the captain announce ‘We have landed at Oakland airport. The ground temperature is 30 Degrees. Hope you had a pleasant flight. Thank you for flying United.’

Veronica was excited to get back home. She lived with her mom in Mill Valley. Mom would turn 70 next week. Driving home some new resolutions were crossing her mind. The pain of a broken relationship should not be allowed to resurface. She could not to live in the past. But the Bay Area was so full of beautiful associations – the mad drives in the early hours along the bay, the nostalgic sea food restaurants of Sausalito. Could

it all be erased so easily, she wondered. Slowly another thought crept behind her mind, 'why not move East.' She was brought up in New York and loved the energy of Manhattan. But she never took impulsive decisions, she was in the habit of sleeping over important decisions and allowing them to take their own course.

Mom was in the garden. They owned a split-level home, the living room overlooked the bay. The view and the temperate California weather had attracted Veronica. She enjoyed her neighbourhood and the brisk walks she took every morning. Mom sensed a shift in her, the usual anxiety was somehow missing, there was a feeling of ease and relaxation. Veronica described her experience of Cabella. It was like a dream. Mom listened intently and observed her eyes light up. They discussed plans for the evening. Tom and Carol would be coming shortly.

Tom was popularly known as the singing rabbi in the neighbouring synagogue. His friendly counseling rather than preaching had won him many friends. He could talk on any subject and quote any religious text. His favourites were Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Eastern mysticism fascinated him. He had gone far beyond religion. Religion was only a step towards meditation. He felt close to God during meditation. His liberal style had alienated him from the orthodox school. His wife Carol would join him on the guitar and they would compose their own lyrics. Veronica loved their latest "Sitting in the heart of the universe".

Veronica knew that Tom and Carol would love her story of Cabella. She quickly cleared the table and Mom retired for the evening. The bell rang.

“Hi everyone”, cheered Veronica.

“Hi Veronica, you look great, had a pleasant trip?”

“Oh, I can’t wait to tell you the news”.

Veronica offered them Tom’s favourite Italian biscuits and Carol’s Raffaellos. She brought some coffee and she started chatting about Cabella. “It was the most amazing experience. You know, whenever I talk about the Holly Mother I get chills up my spine.”

“Did you actually meet the Holy Mother?”

“No, we all sat in the courtyard of her castle and her love was so tremendous it engulfed us. We were lost in ecstasy till Marco nudged me away. But that feeling continued to expand. I never realized the cool vibrations of the bay before. I am suddenly becoming aware of the vibrations around me. It’s a whole new experience to realize that everything is living and connected through vibrations. I look at a tree and I hear it talking to me. It’s kind of weird, but a warm feeling emanates from nature, almost as though it was a part of me or I was it’s part at some level. You know, I start getting the same strange feeling with people. Like I feel very connected with both of you, almost as though three of us sitting here are kind of one. But with some people I just want to throw up my hands and yell ‘Stop, don’t come near me.’ I feel either completely connected or totally alienated. It’s like living in two different worlds – the one I belong speaks to me in my heart whereas the other is cold and distant. People from out there look like coming from space.”

Tom and Carol listened in fascination. “Sometimes, I felt

the same but couldn't figure it out. I had read some Zen masters and Sufis describe that this feeling comes from the spirit within us but to connect with the spirit requires precise guidance. I have been to many spiritual groups but they mostly play around with the psyche. Some of my friends got hurt in their games. I picked up a few things here and there like I can divert my mind to relax but that's as far as I got."

Carol remembered a powwow she attended with some native Americans. "They sensed I was of native origin and invited me to join them. They get to sense not from my appearance but more by a feeling of the spirit within. The native Indian chief talked of a lady of all powers in whom light appears will come from the east. She will have the medicine to cure the sickness of America. There were Divine signs of the White Buffalo to the people of the Sioux that she will appear before the dawn of the new Millennium."

"Where is Canajourharie?"

"The Indian chief said it was sacred Indian territory north of Albany."

Tom and Veronica looked into each other's eyes. The same thought crossed their minds.

"I wonder". Whispered Tom.

"Wonder what?"

"Could they be talking of the same Holy Mother at Cabella?"

They all felt a chill run up their spine and a cool breeze blow over their heads. They became thoughtless. They

experienced a force rising from the top of their heads and connecting them. They became inseparable, a slight movement, a faint thought, even a little shift of emotion in one would reflect on the other. They became completely transparent. In the transparency there was no hiding place for secrets or private thoughts. Veronica detected a quiver of fear rising in Carol's heart, she reinforced her support to Carol and the fear subsided. Tom was getting restless so Veronica put her attention on him to ground him and he became quiet. They stayed in that joyful vacuum for quarter of an hour. The phone rang and broke the silence. Tom and Carol had to tear themselves apart, from their visit with Veronica they finally split with a feeling of elation as they sailed out of the front door.

Veronica was too high to fall sleep. She went through the trip of Cabella in her mind again and sent thankyou vibes to the Indian man on the plane. Slowly she dosed off. She usually enjoyed her dreams. The aircraft was taking off, she was with the pilot in the cockpit, the pilot lost his way and she was searching for familiar landmarks, but the plane kept going. They were flying over England, she looked down, there were jersey cows lazily grazing on green English pastures. A car overturned on the highway and a young boy was thrown out. He fell down a steep slope and lay unconscious. A lady in white saree stepped out of a white car and picked up the boy. She lovingly took in her lap and stroked him gently then she carried him to the road and drove away.

Veronica woke up in the morning in a holiday mood, she decided to indulge in the luxury of coffee in bed. Mom passed

her some coffee with the newspaper. As she turned the pages of newspaper she came across news from abroad. Suddenly, she halted. Her hair stood up. The headlines read “a fifteen year old boy miraculously saved by a lady a white saree in Bath.

Veronica quickly noted the details and jumped out of bed. She grabbed the phone and called a friend Helen in England. “Hi Helen, It’s Veronica. How are you? Listen there is a story in today’s Telegraph about a fifteen year old boy who got saved by a lady in white saree.”

“White saree?”

“Yes, it’s the Indian dress, they call it a saree.”

“Got it”

“Yes, can you do me a favour, get me the address of the young boy.”

“Okay.”

“Thanks a ton, I will be there by the next flight.”

Veronica called United, “Hi, this is Veronica Johnston here, I would like to bid the next flight to London.”

“Let me see, sorry madam, all bids are taken till next Friday.”

Veronica decided to take British Airways night flight to Heathrow. She made her reservations quickly, she felt impelled to get to the bottom of the story. She threw in a few clothes and packed her travelling bag. For some reason she could not tell her Mom the reason for her hasty departure. “Oh Mom, I forgot to mention, I have to leave for London tonight. I just got a pickup call.”

Mom, too, kept her secrets, The Doctor suspected breast cancer. She did not want to tell Veronica. There are many secrets that lie buried in a woman's heart, which she must bear. Mom belonged to the German stock of migrants. She was an Opera singer when she met her husband during the war. He was an American Corporal serving in Europe. American soldiers were not allowed to marry German girls. The war office turned down the permission. They decided to wait till the war was over. The war dragged on. Their colleagues tried to talk them out but love is a strange paradox that nurtures in adversity and becomes stronger when challenged. They seized every opportunity to meet at great risks. He was sent back home. There was no news for a year. She became desperate. She tried to get information through friends but they started to back off. There were rumors that she was a German spy. Her phone and mail was interceded but love has it own communication when the hearts are pure. Hope ebbs from the innocence and lends courage. When the war came to an end he quit the army. They married and moved to Manhattan. He found a job with J.C. Penny. Veronica was born a year later. She grew up in the west side of Manhattan.

Chapter IV

Veronica took the tube from Heathrow to Helen's flat in Ealing. They were delighted to see each other. They were in school together till Helen joined the theatre in London. Helen had called the Newspaper office and got the address of the fifteen year boy who was saved by the lady in the white saree. Veronica had taken two days off and had little time to lose. The address was in Bath, she caught the 10.30 train and found the place. She stood before an old Georgian white building, with her heart pounding heavily she rang the bell. An elderly lady answered the door, probably the young boy's mother. Veronica showed her the newspaper article and enquired if it was her son. "Yes that's my son, he was miraculously saved, do come in."

She introduced her son Andrew. Andrew was the youngest of five children. He was a pleasant looking boy with red hair. He went to school in the neighbourhood and was an aspiring artist. He was returning home that night with his friends. It had been raining heavily and their car skid over an oil spill, when his friend tried to apply the brakes, the car overturned and he was thrown out. He could only remember the beautiful face of a lady in a white saree gently caressing him and lifting him back to the road. As turned around to thank her she was gone in a white mercedes.

“Have you seen her before?”

“No, I never met her before or since. Every time I see a lady in a white saree, I look up expectantly but it is not her”

Veronica described the face of the Holy Mother from the photograph she had seen at Cabella. She could not forget her smile. Andrew nodded, they both felt a chill go up their spine and a cool breeze below on their head. Veronica recognised the sign, it was her. She told Andrew about her and Cabella, tears of joy rolled down his cheeks, his heart wept with love for the Holy Mother. He yearned to meet her. It was getting late. Veronica and Andrew hugged each other like long lost brother and sister. Veronica promised to write when she heard more about the Holy Mother and parted.

It was too late to catch the evening flight to Oakland. Veronica decided to spend the night with Helen. Helen was having a drink with her boy friend. She introduced him. Allen was a theatre director and was leaving with his troupe to perform off Broadway, next week. They were excited about the new contract and ofcourse they needed help in Manhattan for arrangements. Veronica found herself getting involved in the arrangements. “I would love to take a week off flying and lend a hand to the troupe”.

Helen and Allen appreciated her support. Veronica narrated the events of the day. “I got Andrew’s confirmation of the Holy Mother and in my dream. It is very important for me to know who she is.” She narrated the native Indian prophecy Carol had told her. Her eyes lit up and her face became radiant. Helen and Allen felt her joy pouring into them and they experienced her

state of joy within them. They felt swept by a feeling of lightness.

They remained thoughtless and felt very close together. Communication continued without words through a subtler intensity. They were enjoying the love of collectivity. Allen looked at his watch, it was past midnight, he kissed Helen goodbye and left. Veronica helped with the dishes and Helen pulled out the sofa to make her bed.

Chapter V

The New York Papparazzi were not so severe on Allen, in fact they were rather generous. Allen's play was a hit, one critics even commended it for the Tony Award. To beat it up Allen's agent had thrown a big splash. Allen introduced Veronica around. They were mostly Broadway people, one group was discussing the Tony Award. "A new generation of American playwrights are making it, heard of Warren Leigh. He took home the Tony for best new play 'Side Man'. Frank wood was superb as the weary jazz musician."

"Did you see 'Death of a Salesman', it raked 4 Tony awards, Brian Dennehy surpassed himself "

Veronica moved on to another group, they were discussing Tom Christopher's recent paintings.

"The guy has caught the pulse of our city. He paints its brand of electricity. He takes it on the street mirroring its new energy. Rupert Murdock commissioned Tom to paint to paint a large mural for fox T.V's headquarter building."

The speaker was getting more and more excited "Did you see 'Tom's Beuys on Lexington', hanging in the City Hall office of the Mayor".

Veronica found herself drawn in by the gentleman's

enthusiasm. He was middle aged of theatrical appearance. Every time he talked about the artist his eyes sparkled. Allen introduced him.

“My friend Jonathan.”

“Hi, How do you do!”

Veronica felt comfortable with him and was amused by his raving about Tom. “I liked his paintings because I share his love of Manhattan. Every time I leave the city I can’t wait to get back. I come alive in the city.”

The music was too loud, the room was getting filled with smoke, a group was smoking cocaine in a corner. Veronica was picking up the vibes and feeling dizzy. She stepped out for some fresh air. Jonathan sensed her discomfort and followed her, they decided to take a short walk. They had hardly crossed a few blocks, it started to rain. They took refuge in a little Italian restaurant. The rain continued, Jonathan was hungry, they ordered some pasta.

“How is your family?”

“I have two sons but we are going through a divorce” said Jonathan.

“Oh! I am sorry”

“Oh, I am quite relieved. We are very different people, opposites, she never followed what I was doing. I know I am odd ball. She used to ask me what I was doing, and I’d tell her when I figured it out, I’d let her know. She thought I was a crazy, obsessed with junk.”

“Junk?”

“I kind of collect old stuff, they call me King Pack Rat. It’s all about my roots, my entire life went past me. I had this calling to chronicle the America, I knew in the 20th century. This was the beginning of my dream to someday build the museum for regular people. I decided to buy back stuff that reflects the golden age of American postwar consumerism. Objects that provide a window into who we are as a culture. Through these artifacts I might better define who we are as a people. This is about this country’s social mosaic its problems, its hopes, its desires, its unfairness. I celebrate America. I’m patriot who does not waive a flag. I am a cultural anthropologist if you like.”

“How do you choose your objects?”

“I don’t know what I am looking for until I see it. I buy from the gut, using my own criteria of value. I never buy a repainted object or a reproduction. The surface must have integrity. It must be well designed, too, exhibiting common sense ingenuity over technological prowess. I am thrilled by novelty items inspired by fads. It could tickle my humour or could be just spontaneous sense of can-do. I never buy labels. I mostly go in for consumer-oriented and useful objects, even if they are absurd and silly like I love the Hula Hoop that was the rage in 1958.”

They broke into splits of laughter. He was fun to be with.

“Where do you pick up most of your stuff?”

“It’s a hunting expedition to flea markets, garage sales and

sometimes regional antique stores. I avoid auctions, but the luckiest bargains are when ladies are in a hurry to empty a house or an attic and there may be a Pink Mixmaster in the original box, my pulse rate lowers in here, I relax here, I love these ladies. A lot of my desert storm memorabilia comes out of these places.

“But where does this take you?”

“This is very serious to me. I’m very focussed in terms of my vision. I see my artifacts as icons of the future. This country needs to get its pride back. I’ve got the premiere archive of the American life style in the 20th century and it’s wonderful. Nostalgia for the 20th century will sweep the U.S. and ignite demand for my services in the new millennium. Many T.V. channels and magazines are finding me out like I was in hiding before. I have an interview with the New Yorker next week.”

Dinner was over. Jonathan insisted on paying.

“If you care to have a look I live a few blocks away.”

Veronica hesitated, but her curiosity got the better of her. He lived in a six room apartment westside Broadway. But every inch of the apartment was stacked with over thousand objects. One room was full with old kitchenware.

“I decided to buy back the American kitchen, the same way a designer like Ralph Lauren buys military twill pants and vintage sweaters and then reintroduces them as something new. Actually there is nothing new in design. But look at this giant skate. It’s from a roller rink in Denver. It was landmark in 1950’s and all the kids would say, ‘meet me at the giant skate’. It was a major

vow! It celebrates who we are. It's where Mom met Dad at the local Rink, and it's a significant piece of roadside pop culture. You went right from your Chevy into the Kitchen and had dinner by the wheel. All of your appliances enabled you to never leave your 57 Chevy.

Mom was all dolled up to sit in the shotgun seat. Dad began to look like Elvis. Your entire life was '57 Chevy'."

He pulled up a blue carduroy Jacket with the name Sharon embroidered on the pocket. "I am endlessly curious about the people behind the objects. I can't tell you how much I'd love to know where Sharon is today."

The Kitchen was full of empty Cartons of Banana Boxes. Jonathan was embarrassed. There was no space even to make tea. Veronica was amused. He offered to drive her to the hotel. "I'm a thinker, a conceptual artist, building a college of America in the 20th century". Veronica was not listening. She was thinking of tomorrow.

"Any plans for tomorrow?"

"Just want to offer flowers at Dad's grave."

"I am easy tomorrow, may I drive you there?"

"Thanks."

"Bye."

Chapter VI

Veronica woke up with a start. She had a weird dream of her dad trying to communicate something. He appeared to be very unhappy. Dad had died in a car accident. It was a sudden death and a great shock for Veronica and Mom. Veronica always suffered a sinking feeling in her heart whenever she thought of her dad. Perhaps because she was going to his grave, her mind had drifted backwards bringing his memories. She was quite uneasy and was relieved to see Jonathan.

Veronica picked up a bunch of Dad's favourite narcissi. But she had an uneasy feeling that his soul was not at rest. She started feeling very heavy on the left side of her body as she knelt down to put the flowers. She was so drained out that she had to take Jonathan's help to rise. Her head was dizzy, Jonathan helped her into the car. They drove through a green park. She asked Jonathan to stop the car, and wanted to sit on mother earth. She remembered the group at Cabella squatting on the earth with both their hands on the ground, praying mother earth to suck their negativity. A blurred vision of her father trying to enter her passed through her. Gradually the communication with mother earth began, the earth suddenly became alive, a current of vibrations went through her left side dispersing the heavy load. A chill ran up her spine clearing her head. She felt light

and relaxed. Her face returned to normal, she smiled at Jonathan who was staring at her shell shocked.

“Ever since the Indian man on the flight raised my inner energy I feel chills going up my spine and a cool breeze blowing on top of my head when I put my attention within. The cool breeze clears out everything, I feel very peaceful within and rejuvenated.” She encouraged Jonathan to try. For a while he struggled with some inner resistance, then he settled down.

“I feel it, feel it!” he yelled.

He opened his eyes and met the light in Veronica’s eyes. Their eyes met in thoughtless awareness enjoying the subterranean beauty that flows in all human beings waiting to be tapped. They enjoyed the new connection of compassion, it reinforced their bond and filled their inner abyssess. In the new awareness all the past hurts and grievances dissolved. The connection continued to expand, the fir tree, earth, Jonathan, Veronica and an alsation dog gaping at them were interconnected. They had the power to connect with everyone. It seemed so easy because there was no mind to obscure the connection, no intellect to divert its flow. The Marathon race across Brooklyn bridge was over. Jonathan’s mind switched off yet he was totally aware of everything. It was a smooth flow of a river of unconditional love merging into an ocean of collective consciousness. Tears of compassion rolled down their cheeks, they were so blissful.

They stopped for lunch at a delightful Portuguese restaurant, run by a Portuguese couple who specialised in home cooking. The menu consisted of pumpkin soup with garlic bread and chicken cooked in Port wine. Jonathan ordered a screwdriver,

Veronica passed, she had lost the urge for hard drinks since her return from Cabella. They enjoyed chatting with the Portuguese Couple. The wife brought some starters. She was complaining about the decline in the marriages. "Marriages are down by forty percent. They are saying that happiness among married couples has also gone down the drain. It is estimated at 37 per cent. You can buy everything in this country but you cannot buy happiness. From where I come, family happiness comes first."

Veronica commented, "Today, many young people, especially young women, doubt that they can achieve a satisfying long-term marriage with the same partner. It is safer to live together."

Jonathan was telling them about his last find,

"The lady was emptying her attic and threw away her daughter's crib. I found a Barbie doll sleeping there" they laughed.

"I tell you Barbie doll is the icon of modern times. The wives want everything that Barbie has, they even want the same model car she drives." Laughter continued.

"You can sell anything in this country in the name of Barbie" Jonathan had made his point.

Every one nodded in agreement. The wife brought some interesting deserts, they sampled the Portuguese flans and fruit pies.

The husband was worried about the surging suicide rate in Japan, "In one case last year, three businessmen rented out rooms at the same hotel, shared a final drink and hanged

themselves. Earlier, this year, a fire company worker who felt pressurised into early retirement stabbed himself to death in the company president's suite."

Jonathan, "But Finland breaks the record for suicide and now they are having a sex festival to encourage old people to have sex."

"They are crazy!" said the wife angrily.

Jonathan paid the bill and drove Veronica to JFK. They had shared a very intimate experience. Their experience left a permanent stamp on their consciousness. They knew for certain that there was no going back. Their consciousness had crossed new frontiers igniting inner transformation. They were beginning to see things differently and a whole new realm of awareness was emerging like a rebirth. They did not know what lay ahead, it did not matter because there was no fear. They found themselves converging towards an axis of unconditional love that was completely nurturing and fulfilling.

Chapter VII

Veronica described the weird feeling she had experienced at the cemetery to her mom. For a split second she thought she saw a dark shadow eclipse her mother and disappear. Her mom's eyes had dilated like a cat. The left side was again becoming heavy. A thought crossed her mind, was there a connection between her dad and mom, like she experienced a connection between herself and dad in the cemetery. The connection had snapped when she grounded herself to mother earth. They chatted into the night, "Mom I met a cool guy in New York. His wife dumped him cause she couldn't figure out what he was doing."

"Have some idea what he is up to"

"I guess so. He is a very kind and compassionate, that's what matters"

"A guy has to make a living"

"I guess so"

"Any ties?"

"Doubtful,"

chuckled Veronica, "He calls Barbie doll our new icon!"

She had a trip to Moscow in the morning and dosed off.

Moscow was unusually hot in July. Veronica loved her Russian friends she had made over several trips. They were so unassuming, Sergei and Ludmila were genuinely attached to her. They enjoyed her carefree American style and open heart. Sergei was an artist. He did fine miniatures on wooden boxes and then coated them with a very shiny layer of lacquer. They sold well in gift stores. Ludmila was a opera singer at the Bolshoi Theatre. It gave her an opportunity to travel. She had several offers from the Vienna symphony company, but Sergei did not want to leave Russia. He did not mind the hardships but his heart was Russian “I love its seasons. In the fall the trees change colours, a crisp nip in the air tastes like wine to my lips. In the winter I enjoy the snow flakes falling on my coat and when spring comes the countryside is filled with myriads of flowers, their fragrance drives me in mad exultation.”

He broke into a song about his home town in Togliatti.

“The waters of Volga are the purest.

There is no place like the banks of Volga.

The berries of its mountains are sweetest.

My people who live in its little hamlets wear the bravest hearts.

Who comes to Volga never goes back.

Oh Volga, Oh Volga I Love You.”

The Nostalgia filled him with tears. For the first time Veronica realised the strong bond these people had with their land, she had never known such love for the motherland.

They had invited their friend Andrei who was an activist inspiring young people to boycott foreign goods.

“We should encourage our own handicrafts, we produce everything in our own country why should be buy European junk.” He was not a Marxist but a patriot. He did not have a regular job and was mostly supported by friends. But this was not important. Russian people are brought up in a culture of sharing. It is no big deal if you lived off friends. Coming from the west Veronica always had a problem with this attitude. “How can you take advantage of somebody”.

“We are by nature collective, the idea of possession in terms of ‘my private space’, is alien to us. We are very poor people. Sometimes we don’t even have a meal. But what little there is we share. Sharing nurtures our spirit.” Replied Sergei.

“Your country was a superpower but now people don’t have money to buy food. What happened?” asked Veronica.

Andrei said, “We have the world’s largest resources but the mafia is running a parallel government. They are extorting protection money from businessmen and also siphoning government funds. In my city, people have not received salaries for two years, the government sent salaries but the mafia embezzled the money”

“In Togliatti, the Fiat collaboration manufactures the Lada. After I purchased the car I drove out of the factory. Two kilometers down the road there was a mafia checkpost. They demanded five hundred roubles, when I resisted they threatened to smash my wind shield. I had no choice.”

“Who is this mafia?” asked Veronica.

“Well, they are basically an offshoot of the disbanded KGB. They are old hands at espionage and know everything. In the vacuum that was created when the communist system disbanded, the smart cookies flexed their muscles and took control. They got some of their people elected in the government who cover them. They have their people in the police too.”

“Gosh, this sounds like the mafia from the God Father movies!” exclaimed Veronica.

“Its worse, they have no ethics. They shoot ruthlessly, they tried to snatch my friend’s car, when he resisted they shot him point blank. We reported to the Police, they did nothing, we have extensive diamond and gold resources but they are in the hands of mafia cartels. Not even one fourth flows into the government treasury.”

“I think Gorbachev made a blunder in dissolving the Soviet Union. He should have created the infrastructure first and gradually introduced free market.” Said Sergei angrily.

Andrei was getting heated, “No one understands Gorbachev. In the old regime the KGB was all powerful, they ruled the country with terror. Their power was totalitarian. Somehow Gorbachev managed to wrest power in the Supreme Soviet and when he got a chance to free the Soviet Union from the shackles of KGB, he jumped at it. It was a sheer chance that comes by providence and he took it. The old guard and KGB would never have allowed it. Don’t you see, they would not sound their own death knell. Do you think any one likes to shed such tremendous power voluntarily. To get back their power they even staged a

coup against Gorbachev.”

“But don’t you think it was a big gamble.”

“It was a gamble he had to take. He had’nt the faintest clue that the Bandwagon of KGB would step in from the back door and grab power creating a mafia. Such a idea did not enter anyone’s brain at that time. We were too emmersed in the ideologies of glasnost and Perestrioka to think so far out.”

“Why don’t the people want Gorbachev back.”

“He was the man for that moment. Now the country needs a different metal like Winston Churchill was the man for war time but not for peace time.”

“Why doesn’t the country appeal for foreign investments.”

“Oh we did. A lot of joint ventures came like hawks but most of them have packed off because they could not handle the mafia.”

“How do you handle the mafia?”

“There is no immediate solution. Firstly, we have to vote a strong honest President and the Duma. Then the wings of the mafia in the government will be clipped. This will be followed by mafia wars.”

“You mean street wars between the mafia Dons.”

“May be, but also the iron hand of Justice can expose the mafia-political nexus like it happened in Italy.”

Veronica could feel her rightside becoming very hot, she kept drinking water to stay cool. She commented “You sound pretty optimistic!”

“We Russian people have tremendous resilience. During the war we had nothing left but we fought back the Germans in every street of St. Peterborough with staves, stones, fist fights”.

Veronica felt conscious of her German origin, she coloured a little, “But it was the Russian winter that saved St. Peterborough.”

“It was not the Russian winter” exploded Andrei “it was the Russian spirit.”

Everyone became silent. Ludmilla tried to change the subject and break the silence by announcing “dinner is ready”, she had made potato salad with chicken a la kieve, a special preparation of whole chicken dressed with crumbs and stuffed with butter. Stephane was very touched by her gesture. She knew how much they must have saved to give her this treat. She had brought some wine from the trip but the men mostly drank Vodka.

They warmed up over dinner. Sergei was talking about his parent’s dacha. They had sent him delicious sun ripe, fresh tomatoes and celery.

“I am looking forward to visiting the dacha next week.”

“How do you get there”

“I take a train to Vckzalnaya and then walk seven kilometers.”

“Do your parents work?”

“My father is an engineer but found employment only as a labourer. My mother is a doctor.”

“Are doctors well paid.”

“There is not much difference between their salaries. A doctor could earn between sixty and hundred dollars. But they manage. They own their apartment. On weekends they like to work at the Dacha. On the first Sunday my mother goes to church.”

“Church?”

“We have our own Russian Orthodox Church.”

“I thought under Communism you were not supposed to believe in God.”

“It was simply a mental projection. How can you forget God. We have worshipped the Madonna for centuries. She is a part of the Russian psyche. She is embedded in our art, music and the mosaic of our heritage. Lenin swept us into a new way of thinking. It was an experiment worth trying, everything else had to be shelved. But now the experiment is over, we are back to normal. We wear God closely in our chests, people are hungry for knowing the knowledge of the absolute truth.”

Veronica narrated her experience of Cabella. They were eager to know more. “Take off your shoes, put your attention on top of your head.” She closed her eyes and meditated. A chill ran up her spine and a cool breeze blew on top of her head. She felt very relaxed.

“Are you feeling the cool breeze on top of your head?”

They nodded. Sergei and Ludmilla were ecstatic, their eyes were shining. Andrei felt the cool breeze but he had many questions, “I need a logical explanation.”

“But the spirit is beyond mind, logic and the brain. If you

are experiencing it why do you want to mentalise it.”

“I don’t buy that. Everything has to be proved.”

“The proof of the pudding lies in the eating, now you have had the pudding so why you want its recipe. You can’t enjoy the recipe.”

Sergei sensed another heated discussion ensuing. He nudged Veronica to drop it. Ludmilla brought some black tea. They dipped homemade Black berry jam instead of sugar and the conversation drifted to the Coup.

Sergei said, “the situation was so tense, we did not sleep that night. The army was every where. The streets were barricaded. There were tanks on the road. Foreigners were trying to leave the city. There was such a jam at the airport. One Englishman was very angry because people who elbowed him forgot to say ‘sorry’. ”

Everyone burst into peals of laughter. They enjoyed jokes about foreigners, specially Englishmen.

“In the hotel I saw two amazon prostitutes chasing an Englishman in the lobby. The Englishman started running for his life, they chased him. He found a room at the end of the corridor, opened the door and locked himself in, he did not come out for two days.” Everybody broke into splits of laughter.

Veronica remembered she had to buy a birthday gift for mom. She hastily savoured the black berry residue in the tea and took leave. She waved good bye to Andrei.

The streets were linned with posters of Pushkin. The Russians were celebrating Pushkin’s bi-centenary. She remembered reading

his work a few years ago. The evening was pleasant, the atmosphere in Moscow was relaxed. The streets were decorated with colourful lights and flags. People were smiling and friendly, she found herself enjoying Moscow. She stepped into an old shop in Gum. Russians made the most exquisite tea sets. She instinctly picked up a cobalt and gold set. Her mother would enjoy her morning tea in cobalt!

Chapter VIII

Tom and Carol had driven down from a seminar in Silicon Valley to wish Veronica's mom a happy Birthday. They had hand picked a basket full of the best California grapes. Mom was deeply moved. She was indeed fortunate among the older Americans to be so dearly loved and cared for. It had to do with her beautiful selfless nature. She lived for others, not for herself. She never complained, she had not told anyone about her cancer. She kept herself well informed and took genuine interest in other people and even went at great lengths to help them.

"Mom, you are growing younger," kissed Carol.

She laughed "I enjoy my age and don't want to hide it. Having reached a certain age, women try to look younger than their age by using hair dyes, wrinkle reducing potions and trendy clothes. But they give themselves away by using expressions of fifty years back, they impersonate the ethos of that era, like they would mention long-dead actors as if they were still alive. At first glance they might deceive you but inside they are my vintage, wanting to look younger at my age is absurd. But let me tell you that one can be dynamic and creative even at ninety. My spirit is young. The spirit does not age. In the Orient they believe that the spirit does not die.

My own mother lived to be ninety six. She had a large family business in Bavaria. Till the last day she worked harder than her grandson. We were in awe of her. But let us talk of your seminar in Silicon. How did it go?"

"The guys out there are getting burnt out. Long hours before the glare of the computer has caused several cases of blurred vision, cervical spondylitis, back problems and acute mental stress."

Carol added, "Young kids sweat out for the dough but they get wiped out. One kid developed pink patches on his eye due to constant exposure to the computer."

Tom explained, "When one has to constantly focus the vision on the screen and simultaneously perform with ones hands, it leads to both strain in the eyes and to mental stress."

"Was the seminar productive?" asked Veronica.

"We talked at length on preventive measures, my subject was relaxation through music. One should take short breaks between workouts to listen to soft music in a dark room. It soothes the nerves."

Veronica knew that her kind of meditation could provide instant relief but she needed to learn more. She told them about her trip to Moscow. "I think they are undergoing a cultural renaissance."

The phone rang.

"Hello"

"This is Jonathan, I am in the Bay area scouting around."

“Come over”

“I’m going to L.A. tomorrow, we could take the East Coast highway if you would like to come.”

Veronica thought for a second. It could be interesting,

“Great!”

“See you tomorrow at nine.”

“Bye!”

Veronica told Tom and Carol about Jonathan. “He wants to open a museum to house his collection of the American life style in the 20th century. He has amazing energy and a great sense of humour. A fun guy to be with but absolutely nuts about his collection. He thinks them to be icons of the future. He is one of those rare people who easily sacrifice themselves completely to a small fancy of a friend, such as innocent guy.”

Carol shot a quizzing glance.

Veronica laughed. “He told me he loved women, but he does not like men in women’s clothes.”

Carol’s antenna dropped.

Tea was served in the Russian cobalt set. Holding up a cup, Carol exclaimed “Ain’t they pretty!”

Russian caviar on wheat crackers was passed around.

“You know what I found about the Russians, they are very focussed because they live for a cause, like patriotism, ideology whatever. It inspires sacrifice. While our attention is so scattered in materialism we do not subscribe to a cause, you know what I mean.”

“I guess so,” said Tom.

Every one was preoccupied with the delicious Black Forest cake. Mom did not want any birthday candles. The light of love from the dear and near ones fulfilled her. Tom and Carol kissed her good bye. Veronica and Mom moved onto the deck. The light from sail boats was reflecting on the water against the silhouette of fisherman’s cove. There was a little nip in the air. Mom wanted to prepare Veronica about her cancer, “I saw Doctor Goodheart the other day, he suggested I should move to the hospital for a few tests. He says its nothing serious, just routine.” Mom was most precious to her. They held hands for a long time, silently enjoying the bond that mothers and daughters have cherished since creation.

Chapter IX

Jonathan picked up Veronica at nine. They drove past green hills covered with lush California vines. He turned on some music. She enjoyed it, "its great."

"Yanni, a Greek composer performing before the Taj Mahal."

"What's the agenda?"

"I have no particular agenda, lets look at some Ranch sales."

"What do you want to buy?"

" I buy what speaks to me. It's a love affair, a passion."

He stopped at a grocery store to pick up a bottle of coke. "Take a look at the grocery store. The store and your refrigerator are museums of the popular culture. I want to open a museum that exhibits the ingenuities of the regular guy, his creativity. See this ash tray, its trench art, crafted by soldiers out of spent artillery shells and cartridge castings during war time."

He spotted a billboard, 'garage sale' and followed the sign to an old barn. His singularly focussed mind scanned the place rapidly and turned back to the car.

"It does not speak to me. The dealers have already raked the place. I detest dealers." he muttered.

Two hours later they stopped at a flea market. His eyes

trained from years of shopping zeroed in on certain booths. He was like a dog on his track, smelling the stuff he wanted. He made his way through knickknacks and bric-a-brac, model trains, paper weights, five-and-dime-store toys, electric lunch boxes, household appliances specifically designed to make house work alluring to women. A boyish grin lit up his face, he fished out a rare corning “Silver Streak” pyrex glass iron. The jewel like irons were made of glass during the second world war because of metal shortage “What would Sotheby’s say to this! For \$500 a piece how can you go wrong.”

At another booth he pointed to musical instruments soldered out of used tin cans. “This is an example of American resourcefulness in the face of poverty.”

Pointing at some handbags, “these were meticulously woven out of thousands of cigarette wrappers by prison inmates. Shows how the waste basket and lots of free time can inspire art.”

He held up a suitcase filled with an inflatable swimming pool. “Post war Americans filled their suburban homes with gadgets, labour-saving appliances and convenience products, the door-to-door salesman carried the above ground swimming pool in their suitcase and rang the bell when the husband was sure to be away. Then they got the housewives to buy their stuff”. Veronica could not help laughing at the impromptu stories he concocted. At another booth he snapped up a Heinz ketchup flashlight and Hershey’s Chocolate milk telephone for \$20. As they started to leave he made one last purchase, a bouffant wig for little girls who wanted to look ‘just like mommy’ the lady in the booth gave him a bonus of two tickets for a rock show

in L.A. “My grandson gave them to me but I am passed out and won’t make it to L.A. for the evening.”

They loaded everything in the trunk of his chevy. Veronica could see from his sparkling eyes and widening smile that he was pleased with the deals.

“Oh, it was spades.” He chuckled.

He was in great spirits, and started humming an old tune. He became like a child and waved the tickets at Stephane, “Like to go”.

“Counting Crows concert at nine p.m.”

“We would have to drive non-stop to make it.”

“Say the word go!” he started to speed.

They made it in good time but lost quarter of an hour in parking as the parking lots were full.

The group was in full swing. Kids were freaking out. Veronica focussed on the bass guitarist. He was short, stocky guy having a wail of a time. She could feel a chill run up her spine and a cool breeze coming from him. “May be the psychedelic light, the deafening music was creating a hallucination. She pulled Jonathan aside and yelled “Can you zero on to that guy, playing the bass guitar”.

Jonathan immediately got chills up his spine and a strong whiff of cool breeze, “Wow, he is fountain of vibrations.”

“Jonathan, I gotta talk to him”.

A crowd was storming them. There was no way she could

Matt was embarrassed, he was uneasy with compliments.

His wife laughed, “You see Matt is a very shy person, when people praise him he goes into hiding.”

Veronica took the cue, “actually we wanted to talk to you about something personal.”

She narrated her experience of receiving cool vibrations from him.

Matt answered, “I had received my self realisation, from the Holy Mother. After self realisation we emit vibrations and can feel other peoples vibrations. I saw the Holy Mother in Canajoharie a month ago. Her followers from seventy five nations of the world had congregated to seek her message of world peace.”

She said that we cannot have world peace unless we find peace within. She told us that we can find peace within ourselves through a power resting at the base of our spine which the ancients called Kundalini. She awakened the power in us en masse and we all felt. A cool breeze blew from the top of our heads and also on our hands. Our body relaxed and we became thoughtlessly aware. We felt a feeling of tremendous love and joy swell from it into collective compassion. We were at peace within and could emanate peace to others. This was new consciousness we had attained. We could use this to transform ourselves and also others.

You can say it works like a laser which beams through your attention. Lets say if you put your attention to negativity, then the Kundalini enlightens our attention and the attention exposes

the negativity. Enlightened attention functions like a super computer. It has recourse to the all pervading collective consciousness. All data and information is stored here. Through our Kundalini we can plug into the mains of collective consciousness because she is its receptor and thus picks up whatever information we need. In the same way the working of Kundalini is very precise. It functions through a network of channels and electromagnetic centers which we can't see.

Veronica said "I have been having chills up the spine, since I met that Indian man on the plane."

"It verifies that your Kundalini was awakened by the follower of the Holy Mother." Whenever our Kundalini is awakened we can awaken the Kundalini of others, we can do this consciously but it may also happen spontaneously in the presence of such a person. The movement of the Kundalini is through the centre channel which is located in the spinal cord. When it ascends towards the top of the head we experience its vibrations which manifest as cool breeze on top of our head and on our hands. Veronica realised how her friends could have shared the experience of cool breeze in her presence.

"I felt heaviness on my left side, almost like a heavy load when I visited my Dad's grave."

"In the left side there is a channel which looks after our emotions and our past. When there are emotional disturbances or problems with relationships this channel gets heavy. A constant overload can lead to serious health problem like epilepsy, cancer, heart problems. Possibly your father was not happy when he died, so his spirit is not at peace. May be when you went there

it latched on you, creating a load in your left side. That's why it is dangerous to hang around graves."

Veronica recalled the distorted image of her dad as she closed her eyes to release her left side on the earth. She had caught a shadow of his image on her Mom for a split second. Could that explain her Mom's failing health?

He continued, "Most psychosomatic problems plunge from left side overload or excessive right side activity. There is a channel in our right side that looks after our mental and physical activity. When we plan too much we exhaust our right side and our liver becomes hot. The heat from the liver spread in the body creating all kinds of stress related problems."

Veronica remembered her right side heating up during the argument with Andrei in Moscow.

Matt continued, "the movement of music could take people to the left side making them melancholy, nostalgic or emotional like Elvis or Frank Sinatra. Modern music stimulates our right side. Over stimulation heats up the right side and people go crazy, they eventually blow up in violence like the violence that ensued in the aftermath of Woodstock'99. But music can play a very positive role in bringing inner peace and evoking joy if it is structured to connect our central channel which gives us inner balance."

"Kundalini awakening brings us in balance and spontaneously cures most of our ailments. Over activity in the right side swells our ego because we start assuming that we do everything. The 'I' bug bites us. People who go too much to the

left side get caught by their conditioning and super ego. In reality we are not free. Actually, we are slaves of our ego or conditionings. We think that they are our ideas but actually we are ventilating other people's ideas. We may have picked them from books, school, T.V., newspapers, friends, family, etc. Original ideas are born in new consciousness whenever Kundalini pierces the limbic area and gives us this consciousness. With the new consciousness we become very creative personalities bringing joy and peace within and to others. It escalates our talents to the height of perfection and genius. Normally we are reacting all the time. We are voicing other peoples ideas and quarelling about who is right. From our microcosm the dispute waves up into national dispute and international warfare. The Holy Mother told us that if every one is able to come into balance then he will be in peace with himself and others, from the individual to the collective, thus achieve world peace. The awakening of the Kundalini brings us into balance. We cannot balance ourselves through the mind or the intellect because both are in the hands of the ego and conditioning.

The intellect button unleashes ideas and linear thinking at the individual level and does not allow room for the thoughtless awareness. The Kundalini delinks our attention from the mind and the intellect, and gives us freedom. In that state our spirit is free to enjoy its own beauty and the beauty of others. Earlier our eyes could not see the beauty of others because of blinkers of the ego and conditioning. When the blinkers are removed we are able to enjoy the vast beauty of creations.” In the new consciousness we do not fall into false identifications-I am a

rich person or a successful person etc., because there is no competition. Who is the other but ourselves?”

“But don’t you think each one of us can find the truth our own way?” asked Jonathan.

“It is not a question of my way is better than yours. It has to be the way that works for the ascent of the Kundalini. If the Kundalini does not respond then it won’t rise. Thats it.”

“How do you know what it responds to?”

“Through vibrations you can checkout at every step. You can ask a question, am I doing the right thing? If it is the truth the Kundalini will respond by a flow of cool vibrations on your hand. If it is not the truth it will respond by hot vibrations. This is the verification. There must be a way of verifying the path one chooses otherwise one falls into the trap of the mental projections and self certification. Like every one thinks that he is on the right path. What is the test?”

“How long does it take to get there?”, asked Jonathan.

“You can get it in the course of an afternoon. It is your own power, the only thing is that a realised soul has to ignite it.”

Veronica narrated her dream about the fifteen year old boy, and his description verified that he was rescued by the Holy Mother.

“How could the Holy Mother be in Cabella and Bath at the same time?”

“There have been many miraculous rescues. She can operate in multiple dimensions. She is at one part of the world and

suddenly appears at another part to save a seeker. In Switzerland a lorry backed into a young man, everyone thought he was crushed, but at that time the Holy Mother picked him up and lifted him above the truck. In India she has a very large following, then there are so many accidents but her followers are miraculously saved. Their presence also saves others. For instance a bus rolled down a sharp ravine, after taking several somersaults it stood back on its wheels. Can you imagine no body was hurt, her followers just prayed to her and they saw her put the bus on its wheels.”

“Incredible!” echoed Veronica and Jonathan.

Matt’s wife dished out some photographs, “Have a look at this, see the lights coming out of her body – these are vibrations. In, here the sun appears on her right hand, in that one the moon comes on her left side. In this one can’t see her face, there is only light. In this photograph her image appears above the stage in her absence”.

“Wow! Were these taken by a special camera?”

“Oh no, they were taken by ordinary cameras by different people in different parts of the world on separate occasions”.

“Can you see vibrations in normal sight”.

“Not normally, but sometimes against certain light they appear as luminous inverted commas. But her face has appeared on many occasions. When I was debating about buying my new house, I suddenly saw her face reflected on the window pane. I did not trust my eyes so I called my wife and few friends, they all saw it. That made up my mind, I bought the house.”

“Ya, I remember the hotel owner in Cabella mentioned that he saw her face appear on his coffee machine. He called his family, they all saw it”. Said Veronica.

“These vibrations have the power to protect us and solve our mental, physical and emotional problems. I raised the Kundalini of a drug addict and he gave up drugs. I get many letters from people whose health, domestic and material life has improved after I helped to raise their Kundalini. I advised them to meditate regularly to keep it up”.

“How should we go about it?” asked Veronica. Demonstrating the technique Matt said, “You must raise your Kundalini daily like this and meditate on top of your head. When the Kundalini comes up you would get an affirmation of a cool breeze blowing over the head. Sometimes there may be a hot breeze, because such people have a hard time forgiving themselves and others.

One has to forgive everyone including oneself.”

“When will the Holy Mother come to Canajoharie next?” asked Jonathan.

“She comes every summer, I will call you as soon as I get the dates”. He promised.

The group was calling Matt, he had to leave, he gave them a warm hug. Veronica and Jonathan felt their Kundalinis shoot up. This time it was more powerful, they were blissed out. The sound guy brought them some sandwiches. They sat for an hour witnessing everything around but focussed in another dimension of new consciousness. Now they knew for sure how to get there

and loved to stay there. They discovered that even while chatting and interacting with other people they could stay there. It was a thrilling new experience.

“Lets try staying focussed in the new consciousness there while we drive” said Veronica.

They drove down the Western Highway waving to the crystalline waves, the sea gulls, the pelicans in the wee hours of the morning when the chariot of the Sun God had not descended on the coast line. Veronica looked enquiringly at Jonathan, his boyish face broadened, into a grin, “the focus is there”.

Her shining eyes met his, she smiled, “Mine too”.

They drove blissfully in harmony with the crystalline waves, the sea gulls and the pelicans, in a space where the sun does not set, the sun does not rise. Where there is no beginning, no end. Where nothing is created. Nothing is destroyed. Where a thought does not rise, a thought does not fall. There was only love...

Chapter X

The party was in full swing. The room was dark and full of smoke, a few couples were on the dance floor. Veronica had to focus her eyes to spot Joe, the sound man.

Joe was listening to a group that had just returned from upstate New York Woodstock Festival'99. "We were passing peace candles, then suddenly hell broke lose, some people set fire to an overturned car. Inspired by the car fire, hundreds of young men used cigarette lighters to start bon fires around the stage with tables, tent fabric, boxes - anything that could burn. It was actually scary, the whole place started going up in flames as marauding hoards of shirtless men started looting and tearing apart cash machines in search of money."

The lady in the black dress said. "The crowds joined the rampage, toppled light stands, speaker towers, smashed bottles and set fire to a dozen trucks."

Joe caught Veronica's eye. "Hi, come in."

Matt showed up holding an orange juice. Joe introduced Veronica and Jonathan.

"We wanted to thank you for last night, you were wonderful!" said Jonathan.

Matt was embarrassed and turned red.

His wife laughed, "You see Matt is a very shy person, when people praise him he goes into hiding."

Veronica took the cue, "Actually I wanted to talk to you about something personal."

She narrated her experience of receiving cool vibrations from him.

Matt said, "I received my self- realisation, from the Holy Mother several years ago. After self- realisation we emit vibrations and can feel other peoples vibrations. I saw the Holy Mother in Canajoharie a month ago. Her followers from seventy five nations of the world had congregated to seek her message of world peace."

"She said that there cannot be world peace unless there is peace within us. She told us that we can find peace within through a power resting at the base of our spine which the ancients called Kundalini. She awakened the power in us en masse. We collective felt a cool breeze blow on the top of our heads and on our hands. Our body relaxed and we became thoughtless. We experienced tremendous love for each other. The inner experience of peace taught us how to share it with others. Our consciousness entered a new dimension. Now we can transform ourselves.

"I have found that my attention has started working like a laser beams. For instance, if I direct it to towards a negative quality, then my Kundalini cleanses it by releasing the negative vibrations from that chakra."

"What are chakra?" asked Jonathan.

"The kundalini passes through 6 fields of electromagnetic energy called chakras and then surmounts at the top of our head where she enlightens our attention. She wires our attention to the all- pervading collective- consciousness which is the source of true

knowledge. Thereafter we become like a super computer that can be plugged to the mains of collective consciousness for all the information.”

Veronica said "I have been having chills up the spine, since I met that Indian man on the plane."

"It verifies that your Kundalini was awakened by a follower of the Holy Mother." After our Kundalini is awakened we can awaken the Kundalini of others, we can do this consciously but it may also happen spontaneously in the presence of such a person. The movement of the Kundalini is through the center channel which is located in the spinal cord. When she ascends to the last chakra at the top of the head, we experience cool breeze on top of our head and on our hands.”

"I felt heaviness on my left side, almost like a heavy load when I visited my Dad's grave," said Veronica.

"On our left side there is a channel which looks after our emotions and past. When there are emotional or relationship problems, this channel gets heavy. A constant overload can cause even serious health problem like epilepsy, cancer, heart problems. Psychosomatic problems arise from blocks in the left side channel. Possibly your father was not happy when he died, so his spirit is not at peace. May be when you visited his grave, it latched on to your left side. That's why it is dangerous to hang around graves."

Veronica recalled the distorted image of her dad as she closed her eyes to release her left side on the earth. When she returned home to California, she had caught a dark shadow of his image on her Mom, and then it vanished. 'Could that explain her Mom's failing health,' she wondered.

Matt continued, "On our right side there is another channel that looks after our mental and physical activity. When we plan too much we exhaust our right side and our liver becomes hot. The heat

from the liver spreads in the body causing all kinds of stress related problems."

Veronica remembered, "That's so true, I felt a burning in my right hand in an argument with Andrei in Moscow."

Matt said, "I have found that music has a tremendous influence on both the channels and thus effects our moods. For instance, pop singers like Elvis and Frank Sanatra could take us to the left side and where we became melancholy, nostalgic or emotional. On the other hand rock stimulates our right side. Over stimulation heats up the right side and people become crazy. The agitation in the right side eventually blows up in violence as we saw in the aftermath of Woodstock'99.

"But music can also play a very positive role in bringing inner peace. It can be a source of infinite joy if connected to our central channel. Many musicians became great maestros after their kundalini awakening. Their creativity surpassed their limits and they composed such great pieces. When I listen to them I am bathed in cool vibrations."

"I believe that music is the next thing that will foster the human spirit," said Jonathan. "It is a great way of bringing people closer. It cuts across all creed, gender and colour bars and bonds the human race.

"I agree that if the vibrations of the Kundalini flow through music, it speaks to our souls. It can happen if the musician is a seeker and if his kundalini is awakened. I have had the most amazing experiences when I attended concerts of Indian classical music held to felicitate the Holy Mother. As Her attention focused on the artist, his kundalini was awakened and he became a conduit for spreading her vibrations. As he felt the unison with her, we too felt it and we all become one organism, in the all pervading power of her love. There was no duality. I must confess it was the most

powerful experiences of my life.

“ For the first time I realized that the source of creativity lies within me. I was searching for it in bookish lessons but now I understood that I was only voicing the ideas of others. I realized that original ideas emerge when our Kundalini pierces the limbic area and wires us with collective consciousness. With the new consciousness we become very creative personalities, bringing joy and peace to the world. It shines our talents to perfection.”

“ We waste most of our life in reacting to others. We voice other people's ideas collected from books, newspaper or TV and quarrelling about who is right or wrong, good or bad. The Holy Mother taught us how to overcome this habit by coming in balance. When we are in the center we reflect the love of the Holy Spirit and spread vibrations of peace to the world. Thus, peace spreads from the individual to the collective and then world peace will follow.

“However, it is important to know that we cannot balance ourselves through the mind or the intellect when both follow the ego. As its conduits, they only communicate dead ideas but not love. On the other hand the Kundalini frees our attention from the joyless movement of their pendulum between cause and effect. She plugs our attention to the mains of collective consciousness where we experience joy. In that state our spirit freely enjoys its own beauty and of others and above all the infinite beauty of God's love.

“ In the new consciousness we do not fall into false identifications 'I am a rich or a successful person etc', because there is no competition. Who is the other but a part of our extended collective being?”

"But don't you think each one of us can find the truth our own way?" asked Jonathan.

"It is not a question of my way is better than yours. It has to be the way that works for the ascent of the Kundalini. If the Kundalini

does not respond then it won't rise. That's it."

"How do you know what it responds to?"

"Through vibrations. You can ask a question, am I doing the right thing? If it is the truth the Kundalini will respond by a flow of cool vibrations on your hand. If it is not the truth she will respond with hot vibrations. This is the verification. There must be a way of verifying the path one chooses otherwise one falls into the trap of the mental projections and self certification. Like every one thinks that he is on the right path. There has to be a litmus test."

"How long does it take to get there?", asked Jonathan.

"You can get there in the course of an afternoon or a life time. It depends on your pure desire."

Veronica narrated her dream about the fifteen- year old boy, and his description of the Holy Mother.

Matt nodded, "It was She who had rescued him."

"How could the Holy Mother be in Cabella and Bath at the same time," wondered Veronica.

"There have been reports of many miraculous rescues. Her vibrations operate in multiple dimensions in ether. She is at one part of the world and suddenly appears at another part to save a seeker. In Switzerland a lorry backed into a young man, everyone thought he was crushed, but at that time the Holy Mother picked him up and lifted him above the truck.

" She has a very large following in India, There have been so many accidents where her followers were miraculously saved. Moreover, in many cases their presence also saved others. For instance, in one accident a bus rolled down a deep ravine, after taking several somersaults it stood back on its wheels. Can you imagine no body was hurt! Her followers just prayed to her and they

saw her put the bus back on its wheels."

"Incredible!" echoed Jonathan.

Matt's wife dished out some photographs, "Have a look at these. See the lights coming out of her body - these are vibrations. In this one the sun appears on her right hand, in that one the moon comes on her left side. In this, one can't see her face, there is only light. In this photograph her image appears above the stage in her absence".

"Wow! Were these taken by a special camera?" asked Veronica.

"Oh no, they were taken by ordinary cameras by different people in different parts of the world on separate occasions".

"Can you see vibrations in normal sight," enquired Jonathan..

"Not normally," responded Matt. "But sometimes against a certain light the camera lens captures the subtle ether where the vibrations appear as luminous inverted commas. But her face has appeared on many occasions. When I was debating about buying my new house, I suddenly saw her face reflected on the windowpane. I did not trust my eyes, so I called my wife and a few friends and they all saw it. That made up my mind, I bought the house."

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"How should we go about it?" asked Veronica.

Demonstrating the technique Matt said, "You must raise your Kundalini daily like this and keep your attention on top of your head. When the Kundalini comes up you get an affirmation of a cool breeze blowing over the head. Sometimes there may be a hot breeze, if such people do not forgive themselves and others. One has to forgive everyone including oneself."

"When will the Holy Mother come to Canajoharie next?" asked Jonathan.

"She comes in the summer, I will call you as soon as I get the dates," he promised. The group was calling Matt, he had to leave, he gave them a warm hug and bid good bye.

Veronica and Jonathan practiced the technique of raising their kundalini and blissed out. The sound guy brought them some sandwiches. They sat for an hour witnessing everything around but kept focus on top of their head as Matt had told them. They loved it.

To their surprise they discovered that even while chatting they could keep their attention there.

"I got the hang of it," smiled Johnathan.

Veronica, shinning eyes met his and she laughed "Me too."

"Lets try staying focused there even while we drive" suggested Veronica..

They drove blissfully in harmony with the crystalline waves, the sea gulls and the pelicans, in a space where the sun does not set, the sun does not rise. Where there is no beginning, no end. Where nothing is created. Nothing is destroyed. Where a thought does not rise, a thought does not fall - there is only an infinite ocean of bliss...

Chapter XI

There was a message from Dr. Goodheart on Veronica's answering machine, Mom was in hospital undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer. Veronica was surprised to find her nerves calm and her attention in a witness state. She remembered Matt had mentioned that vibrations had worked miraculous cures. She called up the Indian man she had met on the plane.

"Hello! This is Siddharth."

"I'm Veronica, we met on the flight to Milan".

"Yes, yes, how are you?"

"Listen, I need your help; my Mom has breast cancer, can you suggest any cure?"

"We could try through Sahaj Yoga. Most patients have responded positively to vibrations, it primarily depends upon the patient's receptivity, their pure desire."

"What?"

"Pure desire, I mean, does she have any inner seeking?"

"Plenty, Mom is a very pure soul, she is the most compassionate person on earth."

"I'm sure it would work out, when do you want to come."

“As soon as possible”

“You could fly into Delhi and check in at Jukaso Inn, it’s a modest hotel in South Delhi, I’ll leave directions at the reception, I’m busy with a group in Tihar jail.”

“Jail?”

“Yes, jail, it’s a central jail in Delhi, I’am teaching the prisoners the art of meditation.”

“Great, we’ll be there, thanks a lot. Bye.”

Veronica quickly jotted the details, booked her flight tickets and drove off to collect Mom.

Delhi in the month of March wears a wedding dress with ornaments of myriads of flowers, and bright color flowers. Birds sing along the drive intervened by islands of exotic beauty as you enter Luyten’s city from the airport. Fortunately Jukaso Inn is located in the pretty part of the city where a novice may happily remain oblivious of the backsides of such metropolises. The majestic Presidential palace, a tribute to Mughal and colonial architecture crowns the helm at Raisina Hill giving direction to magnificent boulevards and lavish parks. The streets are shaded by Lilac and tamarind trees.

A few street urchins were shaking the trees and their party was gathering the falling tamarind on a white sheet that was spread under. They had cheerful faces and seemed to enjoy their profession. Traffic was in no hurry, the American speediness was missing. Veronica relaxed back in black and yellow hood taxi, she was enjoying the sight of beggars flocking at stoplights. She began laughing as an elf like urchin missed a coin but a

younger one caught it and ran away full speed, the older one began chasing him. Even Mom was enjoying the spectacle of the funny looking elf chasing the younger one. It was like a street circus.

A lot of fun goes on the streets in Delhi if one is not in a hurry. In the evening blue collar workers make several stops on the way home enjoying a variety of entertainment. One corner was filled with by standers listening to a sermon by a monk or a politician, a cluster of bicycles blocked a pavement where a fakir was demonstrating body skills ranging from walking on sharp nails to throwing flames from the mouth. At the far end of the street an accident was instantly evoking public concern, someone ran to fetch water, another person carried the victim to the nearest hospital, no one wasted time waiting for the police, human life is more precious.

Strangers easily talk to each other and enter into heated discussions while the bystanders campaign for either sides. The latest gossip of political corruption, exposures and the scandals of the film stars is much sought after. These street adventures relax the returning masses and the sharing of their daily woes helps to lessen their burden. The street shows are also a great way to pass time for the aged, retired or the jobless in the absence of home T.V.

Veronica and Mom were absolutely fascinated. They wanted to jump out and talk to these friendly, natural people so eager for conversation. Finally they arrived at a friendly, building posing to be a hotel. The lady at the reception was most hospitable, they felt immediately at home. Someone would take them in the evening to Siddharth, till then she wished them a good rest.

Chapter XII

The central jail of Delhi is located in the village of Tihar in the outskirts of Delhi. They were quickly whisked through a strong cordon of heavy security by the magical name of Siddharth. Everyone seemed to know him. They found themselves in a huge courtyard surrounded by yellow walls. This was jail no. 5. The jail was divided into several units housing 2000 inmates each. The lawns were manicured and the trees were in flower. The guide pointed to a group of young men between age sixteen to twenty squatting in the veranda, before an altar of the Holy Mother Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi. Siddharth was leading a meditation.

“Place your right hand on the left side of the stomach and say 10 times, ‘I am my own master’. Now move it a little down and desire your self knowledge. In your own freedom you have to desire the knowledge of absolute truth.”

“Place your right hand on the heart, its on the left side and say ‘I am the Spirit.’ Repeat it again and again.”

“Next place your right hand on the left shoulder and the neck joint, repeat 16 times, I am not guilty. How can you be guilty if you are the Spirit. The Spirit can never be guilty. Forget the past. The past does not exist. Be here and now. Don’t feel guilty.”

“Now place your right hand on your forehead and forgive everyone. Don’t think of anyone in particular. Forgive from your heart. Till you forgive this ‘chakra’ won’t open, the ‘Kundalini’ won’t ascend.

Whether you forgive or not, you don’t do anything to the other, it only blocks your ‘charka’, so better forgive – now, that’s better.”

“Finally take your attention on top of your head and stay there in thought less awareness. Enjoy the feeling. See if there is a cool breeze on top of your head, now check on the palms of your hands. Those have felt cool or hot breeze on their head or palms of their hands should put up both their hands.”

A thousand pairs of hands stretched out towards the sky. Veronica felt her own Kundalini shoot up and completely opening the chakra. This was the most powerful experience she had, she found herself submerged in the ocean of love with the sea of humanity in the Tihar jail. Siddharth smiled at her and beckoned her to join the group for dinner.

A delicious meal of piping hot rice, dal and vegetables was served in a spotlessly clean dining area. Everyone squatted on the floor eating in sparkling stainless steel plates. The jail supervisor explained that, “The prisoners do the cooking, cleaning, washing. They even have a library of 7000 books on varied subjects. The inmates learn computers, painting, stitching, shoemaking. Their products are sold and their accounts are credited with their earnings. Meditation has brought us very close together, now we live like a family and I move freely with the inmates.”

“But what about security, someone could attack you?” questioned Veronica.

“Meditation has made them very peaceful. All the aggressiveness has transformed into love. They love me like their father, how can a father be afraid of his children?”

Siddharth explained, “We think we are free but actually we are prisoners of our freedom. We are prisoners of our mind, ego, intellect. We are prisoners of our programming and conditionings. For instance because we are conditioned by our religion we cannot understand the essence of other religions and in that blindness we start quarelling with each other. More blood has been shed in the name of God than in the two world wars. Yet we continue to live in the prison cells of religion. In the jail the physical freedom of the prisoners is curbed but meditation has given them their real freedom. If you are free within then outside movement is of no consequence but if you are a prisoner within then the freedom of movement is only an illusion.

A Zen Master was having tea, he asked his disciples whether the cup was moving or his lips. Then the explained it was neither the cup nor the lips moving but it was the mind moving, we live in the prison of the mind, our sense organs are only it’s slaves.”

Siddharth introduced some of the inmates.

Jessiram was an under trial, in a heated domestic argument he pushed his brother against an iron rail, the brother hit his head against the iron and died of head injury, but there was no intention to kill.

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Kalyan Singh was teasing a village girl with some friends. They started getting excited and one of them assaulted her. When she yelled out the elders rushed to the scene. The real culprits ran away but Kalyan Singh was caught and accused. He was shielding his friends and thus bearing the brunt.

The jail supervisor said, “the jail is the mirror of our society. It reflects it’s failures like when you want to find out what a society consumes you should hunt the dustbin. If we don’t attend to our failings they will go on spiralling and explode into growing violence in the new millennium. Why did these young inmates become so aggressive, because society encourages aggressiveness. Multinationals want aggressive managers. The aggression in the management grows so much that it starts hurting the employees. So unions have to spring up to protect themselves. Even sales demand aggressive publicity. For instance alcohol brands are not allowed to advertise so they advertise whisky glasses and mineral water by that brand, which in reality is not even produced. The advertisers lie to the public, isn’t that a crime? But they go scot free, not only that in the name of aggressive finance multinationals evade taxes, isn’t that daylight robbery.

When aggression is the key word in modern times how can people be peaceful? They are in juxtaposition. Aggression is growing in leaps and bounds breaking into violence. The crime rate has escalated so immensely that we have to add a jail block every year. In one block we hold 2000 inmates, we already have 11,000 inmates in 5 blocks! These young inmates are a product of our aggressive society, to transform them our society has to become peaceful and I sincerely believe that meditation can do

this job. I've seen the change in just three weeks since Siddharth has been here."

Jessiram claimed, "I can't believe I am the same person, anger used to swell up in me so much that I would start hitting people, but it was not a killer instinct. I could not control myself, after meditation I feel so peaceful and tranquil within, people try to provoke me but I do not react, the anger has completely melted."

Satish Chand said "I had sworn to kill my neighbour for implicating me, I was seething with revenge, I lived for nothing else. After two weeks of meditation I've completely forgiven them. Now I ask myself, How could you even think like that?"

Siddharth was smiling with a light shining in his eyes. This was the result of his selfless love and patience for the prisoners.

The jail supervisor said, "imagine, 30% of the young inmates are undertrials for sex cases. It is the mischief of our T.V. and cinema. Sex is natural desire so what is the need to stimulate it through the screen. Do we need stimulation for a desire inbuilt within us? This stimulation has created changes in the mensuration period of young girls. In my time it used to start around 13 years of age but now because of constant stimulation it has started happening from 11 to 12 years of age. But why does our society allow it, why doesn't anyone protest? Why is the government encouraging sex stimulation of the adolescent. I blame our society for it and if they don't check it now it will be a galloping situation because at a tender age they are easily swayed. The adolescent, do not have the inner strength to resist and do not realise the consequences. Their exploits are a mirror

reflecting the degradation of our society's values.”

Siddharth explained, “through meditation the adolescent realize the importance of their innocence. Their innocence is their greatest strength and protection. It gives them balance, wisdom and also immunity. The body immunity system is largely dependent on our innocence. We had some Aids cases, we started giving vibrations to the first chakra at the base of the spine. Over a few weeks the immunity system started responding and the patient recovered.”

The bell rang, it was time for the inmates to retire to their dormitories. There were no beds they slept on concrete floors. With folded hands they said Namaskar, the customary Indian style of exchanging greetings. Siddharth promised to meet Veronica and Mom at the hotel for lunch.

Chapter XIII

Siddharth was a neuro surgeon and had a flourishing practice in one of Delhi's posh clinics. His wife was a musician, they had two children. He had attended a medical conference in Delhi fifteen years ago in which the Holy Mother explained how psychosomatic problems could be treated through Kundalini awakening. With an open mind he experimented on himself and his patients. The results were amazing. His own health improved dramatically and since then he plunged into it body and soul.

Siddharth began working on Mom in the hotel room. He opened both his hands along Mom's spine and slowly started raising them upwards. "My fingers pick up the energy blocks, each finger represented a particular energy centre in the body called chakra. A block registers as hot vibration on that particular finger. Ah, my small finger is feeling it, that means the problem is coming from the centre heart. Centre heart problems arise from insecurity in childhood."

Mom said, "I wake up at night from nightmares of the war. Our home was destroyed by a bomb blast. I was so frightened by the fire in my bedroom. I could not find my way out. I kept screaming for my dad. Finally my Dad broke in through the window and grabbed me through the leaping flames. I just passed out."

Siddharth said “I also get a burning on my left thumb. The left thumb represents the left side of the second chakra which is a receptor of the collective subconscious. This indicates that there is an outside interference like a virus but coming from the area of the dead.

“Isn’t that kind of weird,” remarked Veronica.

“It sounds weird because of our ignorance of the dead. Actually at our normal level of consciousness we know very little about the dead. Once we bury them we think they are gone. It is true that the body returns to earth but the soul never dies.

When a person dies in a sudden accident his soul is tormented and hangs around the loved ones. Sometimes their attachment draws such a soul into their body. The alien soul latches on to the body’s nervous system like a parasite and interferes with its normal functioning. It acts like a catalyst spurring many problems. For instance in Mom’s case, the problem is at the heart centre because it is weak but its catalyst is the outside interference. The cause is the catalyst and the effect is the disease, modern medicine treats the effect but is ignorant about the catalyst. They try to cure cancer but do not remove its cause. The catalyst is not easy to detect because it keeps moving. Till the catalyst is at large, it continues to interfere with the brain functioning. This manifests in physical, mental and emotional disorders.”

Veronica remembered her father’s face appear at the cemetery and the connection with Mom flashed before her. “I know what you mean. But how do you get rid of the catalyst?”

Siddharth, answered, “through Kundalini awakening. The Kundalini is our individual mother, she protects us. When she rises she nurtures all the chakras and throws out the foreign bodies. She rejuvenates the body’s immune system. Through her power of love she discerns our friends from foes and activates our body cells to throw out the foes. In fact the Kundalini churns out millions of antibodies, we don’t need antibiotics.”

Siddharth showed Veronica how to give vibrations from the back, ‘Move your right hand anticlockwise circling the centre heart till all the heat is released. When the heart centre comes in balance you will feel cool vibrations in your hands. Your Mom’s Kundalini is responding positively, it is sucking the vibrations. Give her vibrations two-three times daily, it will work out in a couple of days.’

They had lunch in the restaurant. The Hotel manager was Siddharth’s friend and had taken special care to avoid chillies. The tandoori chicken was mild. Mom was very relaxed and ate heartily. Siddharth explained, “As we are not masters of ourselves, we pick up all these problems from reactions. For instance we feel hurt for small things, such a reaction makes us vulnerable to outside influences and thus we pick up negativity easily. To attain mastery of ourselves we have to know ourselves. All the incarnations have said, ‘know thyself’. We must know that we are not this body, not this mind, ego or senses, we are the spirit. This realisation dawns on us when the Kundalini enlightens our brain. Then a new consciousness permeates our central nervous system, giving us self realisation. We feel the absolute truth. The absolute truth is one, it is pure love. In pure love there is

no duality. This self knowledge arises from self experience. When we gain this experience we become our own master. With the guidance from Holy Mother I have been blessed with this experience of inner joy.” Veronica said, “When my Kundalini is up there I experience the joy but again it drops back to the mundane level.”

“That’s because your attention goes to outside things and you start identifying with them, you forget your true identity that you are the spirit. Our attention travels towards our attachments and moves away from our inner reality. But you can establish a witness state by watching the movement of thoughts without attachment, like you are standing on the roadside watching cars come and go but you do not move with the cars. When the Kundalini rises it sucks the movement of the mind and makes you thoughtless. Also it rejuvenates the body through the chakras. A lot of new systems attempt to rejuvenate the body by trying to regulate the swirling movement of the chakra. But exciting or regulating the chakras is of no use unless the Kundalini is awakened. For example, just by rotating the fan the fridge does not cool, unless the compressor works. A friend of mine was trying to arouse the chakras through a crystal but without the nourishment from the Kundalini, the exercise was futile. Kundalini is the vital force, without its awakening all meditation techniques and therapies are incomplete.”

“But what about some people who imagine the Divine rays or Cosmic energy entering into the top of their heads and then they profess to pass it on to heal others,” questioned Veronica.

“Imagination is a mental projection. You can imagine

anything. For instance an ugly woman may imagine herself to be a beauty queen, a businessman may imagine that he is the cleverest of all by virtue of his millions, but he may be a mental wreck; a politician like Saddam Hussain thinks he is god but the world thinks he is a nut. Bin Laden imagines that he is doing Allah's work when he blows up people, but he tops America's list of deadly terrorists. This is also day dreaming. Once our Prime Minister visited a mental asylum. A mad man asked him, "Who are you?" he answered, "I am the Prime Minister."

The mad man laughed, "I used to say the same thing, so they locked me in".

There is a very thin line between imagination and madness. Our imagination leads to many crazy developments in our personality like jealousy and greed. For instance, a wife could be jealous of every woman her husband talks to, or vice versa. Her husband may be a sincere person, completely loyal to her, but it could be the wife's own insecurity. Insecurity is also imagining something that does not exist, this eventually leads to self deception. We deceive ourselves by believing our mental process to be the reality. The mental process is like a mirage, creating illusions.

A centred person can use the power of illusion for creativity. For instance, Shakespeare used his fertile imagination for weaving the plots of his plays. He was a master of illusions, he did not fall into the trap of the illusions, but played with them to reveal the difference between illusion and reality. As children we played many games from our imagination. I remember in one game we had to search for a black cat in a dark room, in which she did

not exist. We knew the fact that she did not exist, it was just fun, play. However, the problem arises when we fall into the trap of our own imagination, as in the case of greed. A person with a million dollar imagines that he would be content if he had a billion. When he makes a billion, he shifts his point of satisfaction to a trillion, and so on.

I will tell you a story. A King was envious of his barber because the barber was always carefree, joking and laughing, whereas he was always stressed out, unable to sleep. He called his minister to find out the secret of the barber's joy. The minister advised the King to tip the barber with a gold coin every day. In the beginning the barber was overjoyed, but after a few days he started worrying. He secretly desired to raise his savings upto atleast a 100 coins. Gone was his laughter and peace of mind, he spent sleepless nights tormented by the thought of a 100 coins.

The stomach can be satisfied by partaking food, but if the hunger is in the eyes then how can it be satisfied, because it is the imagination! Similarly, when lust enters the eyes it cannot be satisfied and drives people into all kinds of perverted crazy ways which estrange us from ourself. Fly by night entrepreneurs jump into the vacuum. They tease our eyes through a mirage of products that empty our pockets, and lure our senses. We are even tricked into purchasing new cars for their sex appeal.

You must have heard the story of the King who wore new clothes everyday. One day his tailor made him believe that the clothes he wore were so fine that only the wise could see them. So the King paraded the city and everyone lavished compliments

on the King's new clothes, till a child innocently shouted, "look the King has no clothes!" Eventually our mental processes makes us and the collectivity absurd, but after Kundalini awakens we get the guidance from our own Kundalini, then we become our own guru and a master of illusions.

Ego is also a product of imagination. When we get carried away by our imagination containing ideas about ourselves, then our ego starts growing. You can see that it is a myth because it has no foundation. Lets compare it to a kite flying in the sky, the more we loosen the cord the higher it flies. The unwinding of the cord is similar to the unwinding of imagination and the rising of the kite is like the ascending ego. The kite fight is like the clash of egoes. The defeated kite is lost in the sky because it had no anchor. In the same way when the balloon of ego is burst there is vacuum because it had no substance or reality."

"We imagine from our right channel whereas reality lies in the central channel. Therefore imagination cannot be reality, it is only a myth. Our mental power works up to a limit and then recoils back. Such people become vulnerable to serious health hazards because the right side gets exhausted and stresses the left side, thus the body becomes too weak to resist viruses. The body's immune system packs up and throws it open to all sorts of health hazards like cancer. But why not work through the power of Kundalini when it readily works out all our mental, physical, emotional and spiritual problems. It is our own power and it responds lovingly to all our needs, we don't have to pay for it. When the mental side is yoked to our Kundalini, it functions in balance and leads to creativity."

He gave Veronica a beautiful photograph of the Holy Mother. Her eyes were full of compassion. Veronica felt her heart opening to receive the Holy Mother's loving smile. Her Kundalini shot up and she enjoyed her continuous showers of Grace from the top of the head. Cool, cool vibrations descended like a fountain filling her with bliss. She pressed Siddharth's hand in deep gratitude. She realised that he too was sharing her state. Their Kundalinis were united and they had become one in their spirit. There was no thought but in a flash she could feel one with the Cosmic Spirit. Now she knew that she was one with the spirit of all humanity and it had no name. She knew her Mom would recover, everything would work out.

Epilogue

Dr. Goodheart was baffled at Mom's report. He adjusted his glasses several times to re-read it. He checked and rechecked the details, if they were true then it must be a miracle. But he had been in the medical profession too long to trust miracles. He simply nodded his head, there were no traces of cancer. He put the report down and stared out of the window in disbelief.

Veronica had just finished unpacking her suitcase when the phone rang.

"Welcome home, Veronica."

"Hi, Jonathan."

"How was the trip?"

"Great!"

"And Mom?"

"Dr. Goodheart is having a hard time trusting the reports, but Siddharth worked it out."

"Wow!"

"Did he say anything else?"

"He said we have to become our own master."

"How do you become that?"

"Check out through your vibrations."

"Gee, I am getting blown by a wave of cool vibrations!"

"Me too!"

They laughed.

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In 1978, a chance meeting with Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi changed the course of his life. Since then he has been meditating and has written several books. Some of them are:

**The Ascent,
Geeta Enlightened,
The Face of God,
New Millennium Fulfills Ancient Prophecies.**