

THE END GAME

Ordering Information:
pragya.m.pradhan@gmail.com

Copyright © 2015 by Yogi Mahajan
All rights reserved
Cover design by Sona Agarwal

Dedicated to
Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi

Prologue

Tatiana's rich soprano voice reached beyond the walls of the Bolshoi theatre and echoed in the ears of Kremlin's handsome young general from Kremlin. He courted her with great fervor. But, charmed though she was, Tatiana would not relent; for with a dream debut just behind her, she was intent on her dream of excelling in opera singing. But fate intervened.

A severe attack of bronchitis cruelly wrenched the timbre from her voice. Torn between a mind brimming with despair and a heart full of love, Tatiana finally gave in. She consented to marriage and moved to Kremlin with the ecstatic general.

She was always passionate about anything she chose to do. And so it was that she poured all her energies into her new life. She gave the general everything he wanted – her charm, her love, an orderly home, a well managed estate, peaceable relations and social cachet. He in turn fulfilled her every whim – built her a stately dacha, furnished it with Swedish furniture, bought her a Lada car, took her traveling to Europe's cultural capitals, delighted her from time to time with prize jewelry...

He also learned to steer clear of her willful and strong opinions about how certain key decisions of their life, the family and the home

would be taken and executed. He stopped bringing work home and holding political or military meetings there; he had the family hunting grounds cleared and leased them to a farming contractor (and this meant his favourite pastime had to be given up); he had to fire his aging estate help and get used to conducting regular reference checks for the constant flow of new hires, thanks to Tatiana's imperious and demanding nature.

He also quietly acquiesced to giving a wide berth to the family music room which had now become her private opera den, on those days when she would descend into a private funk on certain evenings and spend hours steeped alone amid haunting strains of classical overtures and interludes, and the sopranos, contraltos and choruses that would lift and plunge her despairing heart mercilessly. He could never manage to console her over her loss of voice, nor that of her deep lament of an unrequited art.

A year later as she sat alone in her cozy nursery tending to her bonny baby boy, she began to feel the weight of prestige and family heritage keenly. Before he even learnt to walk she decided his career. And thus the boy grew up believing he had come into the world solely to fulfill the noble mission of a doctor. When he earned his degree in medicine, Tatiana knew she could rest assured that the family's status was in good stead on her watch.

She began focusing on her next goal, his marriage with an heiress to a noble house of Kremlin ancestry. Suddenly her husband died in a plane crash, leaving behind a fortune. Tatiana willfully gathered

herself. Thanks to her fervent machinations, her son married dutifully into the right family and soon begot a daughter, Olga.

And that was when the long festering void deep in her core reared its head with vehemence – her unfulfilled passion for opera. At last, her desire would be channelized, thanks be to providence, through the fresh and ready vessel of a granddaughter. Tatiana decided that Olga will not fail her dream of becoming an opera star. And as soon as the child began speaking, she started her training. When the second granddaughter came, Tatiana was overjoyed with what she considered a surfeit of fortune. The elder girl was shaping up nicely indeed; however, the younger one took longer to learn to speak, and in spite of her best efforts, Tatiana had to admit that the little girl was merely normal, hearty and healthy with a woeful lack of talent for carrying a tune. She deemed it pragmatic to not waste either attention or affection on her and instead, turned the bright beacon of her focus on Olga.

Lena loved to follow that bright spark of an elder sister, Olga, everywhere. She was eager even more to partake of the fascinating personality of her grandmother. But a seed of sadness had already taken root in her soul. She could see that the grand and majestic force of nature – her Granny – favored Olga. It would cut Lena more deeply every time Granny would ask Olga to firmly shut the door to the music room in Lena's face.

She would run whimpering to her parents; her father – busy with his growing medical practice – and her mother – with her social events – knew it was useless to raise the issue with the willful matriarch; they recognized Lena as an introvert by nature and that she revered her powerful grandmother. But she was not born to be a singer would only bruise her heart end up bruising herself trying to meet fit into a and so they strove to divert her towards new dolls, girls’ clubs and art projects.

Lena soon began to understand: she lacked the special talent that would make Granny proud, love her, and even showcase to the world like she did Olga. Granny’s callousness chipped away at her self-worth, replacing it with a nagging sense of insufficiency.

Emotions dwelt deep in Lena’s heart, and stayed longer than most children, with more gravity to her emotions than her will; a soul with a strong emotional energy field – yin, the subconscious. Her yin became unbalanced without the counterweight of its polarity, yang – the mental energy field in the supraconscious, the native force of will and action. And Lena gravitated to loneliness and withdrawal.

She was an insecure teenager by the time she learned to find emotional relief in pets. Cats hung around her balcony, and stray puppies trailed behind her. Birds enjoyed free passage through the windows of her room. She basked in the uncritical companionship the creatures offered, healing her delicate self, even if for a while. She was a shelter for the lost and wandering, but little did she know that they were, in fact, a refuge for her soul.

As she grew into a young woman, Lena began to give herself over to a serious consideration of care giving for animals. She would regularly look forward to post dinner chats with her father in his study, when she could freely discuss with him her interest in animal welfare and rights.

He, in turn, gladly indulged his daughter's enthusiasm, for he had sensed long back in her a natural inclination to care giving. After all, he had enjoyed, for many years, acting as a pet physician on call and helping young Lena tend to her various animal friends.

On many nights, they stayed up late together talking into the wee hours of the challenges in the line of animal rights; caring for animals at home in comfort was vastly different from getting other people to care for them in demanding life.

One night, he made an intuitive yet off hand suggestion that she start visiting the new pediatrics wing in his growing clinic. He casually told her that there wasn't much difference between kids and animals when it came to taking care of them: they were both innocence manifest in this world, and they deserved all the compassion they could get. Lena was tentatively intrigued; she agreed.

Months went by. Lena was completely consumed by her interactions with the medical professionals and the challenges they faced in caring for patients in the pediatrics wing. One evening, she breathlessly waited for the postprandial *tête-à-tête with her father and when the time came, she told him that she felt a quiet but deep calling*

to serve children. With his blessing, she took a nursing degree, specialized in child care and joined the clinic full time.

She was passionate about everything she did, and marriage was no different. She gave the general what he wanted – a social icon. He in turn fulfilled her every whim; built her a dacha, furnished it with Swedish furniture, and bought her a Lada car. A year later she gave birth to a baby boy. Before he even learnt to walk she designed his database. He was left with no other choice but to believe that he'd come into the world to fulfill the noble mission of a doctor. Upon attaining his medical degree, Tatiana received her lifetime award. But that did not satiate her ambition of an opera singer. A few years later her husband died in a plane crash, leaving behind a fortune.

Her son married and begot two daughters. Tatiana's sole ambition was to make them opera stars. No sooner had they learnt to speak than she started their training. Lena, the younger one showed little promise,

and she cancelled her as a non-achiever. Her hopes pinned on the elder, Olga.

On Olga's thirteenth birthday she took her to the mall and bought her whatever caught her fancy. The child was overwhelmed with gratitude, and Tatiana fired her ambition, "What makes you different from others? A notch higher, a cut above - it is the talent you are born with! But the world is littered with talented people who have frittered away their gift due to negligence or laziness. But when I see your talent, I know that you are a legend in the making. Talent may be enough to be good at what you do but in order to be legendary you must work hard."

She fixed Olga's attention to her mental yang channel. If her attention waivered or shifted back to her emotional yin roots, she mesmerized her with expensive gifts, "It is better to be known than be anonymous. Once you taste success, you will make any sacrifice. It's a small price to pay for the adulation you will receive from the public!"

Olga worked doubly hard to win her adulation. Tatiana relentlessly pushed her on to a punishing schedule, and if she cribbed, she quipped, "Never be complacent, you can do better."

But Olga's single-minded focus left her outside the parental emotional net, and without that emotional quotient her mental yang energy field parched. As she turned twenty-one, her yang buckled under its intellectual overload. She became easily fatigued, irritable and short tempered. Happiness did not come with success. In her low moment she realized that she was trapped in a never-ending rat race.

And that led to dejection. She tried to dodge her dejection with drugs. Soon that eroded the timber of her voice. Then she met Sasha. He was the lead singer. Her controlling Yang sought comfort in his yielding yin. Their polarities knotted.

However, the yang-yin honeymoon was short lived. The controlling nature of her male yang did not allow space to his feminine yin; each time Olga caught Sasha talking to younger singers, a nervous note twanged her heart. Without the soothing yin touch, there was none to comfort her nervousness. Of course, the younger singers were by far prettier. Not long after, her nervousness broke into jealousy. Her yang imagination ran wild, and bereft of the yin brake, there was nothing to check the accelerator. Its galloping pace broke all boundaries. Parents kept opening windows to show her the reality, but she only saw what her imagination showed her. Her yang would not allow her to step outside its energy field and see the open sky. Love turned to hate. They split.

Thereafter, she took multiple partners. Indiscriminate indulgence in physical intimacy took its toll and left her yang energy field barren, causing high levels of anxiety, insecurity and depression.

Emotions dwelt in Lena's heart deeper and stayed longer than most children. However, as she had no special talent for Granny to showcase to the world unlike her sister, Olga, Granny cancelled her as a non-achiever. It left Lena with a nagging sense of insufficiency. Insufficiency led to insecurity and insecurity bred fear. Her yin energy channel sucked her attention to depression. The yin became lonely without the yang and sought refuge in pets. Cats hung around her balcony till let in, and stray puppy always trailed behind her. Animal rights became essential to her outlook to life.

Initially she wanted to be an animal activist, but as she interacted with patients in her father's clinic, she felt a call to work with children. She took a nursing degree and specialized in childcare.

A friend introduced her to Operation Smile - a children's charity going where most charities feared to tread. It entered a kaleidoscope of critical events that offered free medical care, surgery and proper equipment to chronically disabled invisible children and needy babies in deprived lands. Founded in 1984, it spread to over 60 countries through the voluntary services of surgeons, nurses and medics. Strict quality control and evaluation ensured that only the most experienced and skilled medics got accepted. Soon after she signed up for their project in a remote Himayayan hamlet of Dharamsala.

Chapter 1

Lena's flight landed in Delhi. Her colleague had scribbled an address of a friend for an overnight halt before boarding the bus to Dharamsala. She hopped on an auto-rickshaw and showed the address to the driver. Before she could say another word, the driver took off like a rocket. He jumped the traffic signal, till a cop caught up with him. He did not wait for a verbal exchange and simply slapped a wad of notes in his palms. He grinned impishly, "Why waste time arguing. There is a bribe fixed for every rule you break. I keep ready cash in my pocket."

The penalty did not deter him from jumping the next traffic signal, "Greater Noida is in the outskirts of Delhi and still a long way to go."

"I'm in no tearing hurry."

"Neither am I."

"Then why are you tearing crazily and jumping traffic signals?"

"See those swanky car drivers? They are such show offs! They think no end of themselves! Because they drive swanky cars, they think they own the roads, and never give us way. If we don't fight for our rights and tear past them, they will push us off the roads. We have to teach them a lesson and that is the only language they understand. Our vehicles may be smaller but, we are by far smarter."

Experience with her sister had taught her not to argue with a yang temperament, and she reconciled to making most of the rollercoaster ride, holding on to her dear life.

Thankfully the rollercoaster ride ended outside a princely villa. She rang the doorbell. A middle-aged matron answered with a motherly smile, “Namaste! You must be Lena. I was expecting you earlier. I am Uma. Please come in.”

You must be hungry. We just finished dinner, but I kept some for you.”

She led Lena to the dining room.

What does Namaste mean? enquired Lena.

The first desire of a human being is to connect to another human being, and we say Namaste to evoke his spirit.

They crossed a row of dormitories where children were preparing their beds, “Is this a boarding school?” enquired Lena.

“No my dear, this is an orphanage and a home for destitute women.”

“Wow, it appears like a princely villa!”

“It is a gift from the Holy Mother Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi. She believed that if you give quality to children, it would affect every part of their lives, and so she built this beautiful heaven so they could imbibe aesthetics and enjoy its vibrations. ”

“Vibrations?”

“Everything living has vibrations. Similarly, there is a vital energy within us, which is a font of vibrations. It is the place we come from. Shri Mataji described it as the kundalini. It looks after us and much like a GPS its vibrations guide the children at every step. For instance, if they feel cool vibrations, they know they are on the right track, but if

the vibrations are hot, they are off track. Thus the vibrations enable the children to decipher the positive and the negative. In a sense their kundalini is their first home, and she not only protects them but also engenders self-confidence.”

A little girl caught Lena’s attention. The girl tucked a teddy bear underneath a blanket and smiled with contentment. Then she kissed the teddy good night. Lena admired her motherly instinct. Uma blew kisses at the girls as they exited the dormitory. Lena turned to her, “These girls seem so confident and full of purpose. You know, self-confidence is precisely what I lack. My granny wanted me to become an opera star, but I chose to be a child nurse instead. I punished myself with a lifelong low esteem because I had no talent that Granny could showcase to the world. She was disappointed in me, but I could be no other way; it is just not possible to be everything to everyone, everywhere! It left me depressed and haunted by a nagging doubt, ‘did I make the right choice?’”

Uma comforted, “You have to follow your heart, and let go of other paths, because they are just not you. The person you are is the product of the choices you made in life. Your choice provides the material with which you paint the portrait of the energy centre in your heart. When you start feeling those responses spontaneously in your heart, you can never go wrong.”

“How do you feel those responses?”

Uma explained, “Well, whatever is good in your heart emits cool vibrations. So, if you use your vibrations as a reality check, then the

whole panorama changes. The response of our vibrations is what matters, and not what people say and think. We realize that those who reject us as ‘useless’ do so from their own narrow perspective. Why allow someone else to have the last word? I think your granny never saw your true potential or good qualities because, she was too busy chasing her own hypnosis.”

Lena hugged her, “Thank you for boosting my self-confidence. I lost it because I got misled into believing Granny’s poor assessment of me, and that rejection played out and kept me under ground. ”

Uma laughed, “There is no reason to live half-lived lives. Come on, let’s get on and do some moral boosting with food!”

The cook loaded her plate with a variety of dishes, “When the heart is open, it gives energy.”

Lena heartily enjoyed the meal, “For the moment I’m energizing myself with food!”

“You must be tired after a long journey. I have prepared your bed in the woman’s dormitory for destitute women. They will be returning shortly. Sleep well!

Chapter 2

Lena overslept and was woken up by the burning sun streaming through the window.

The dorm aunty was sorting out the clothing, “Good Morning.”

“Good Morning! Where are the children?”

They left for morning meditation. You may join them if you like.”

“Would love to!”

She quickly dressed and headed for the courtyard.

Uma was instructing the children. “Close your eyes. Now withdraw your attention inward and connect with the flow of your kundalini.”

They raised their kundalinis from the base of the spine to the top of their heads. Lena followed the instructions step by step. Not long after, her forehead buzzed with a volley of thoughts. She was habitually inclined to attaching a personal identity to every thought. She tried to stop her thoughts, but each thought spawned more thoughts and perpetually ran after each other. She began witnessing their movement like a slow motion movie. In the first episode she saw Granny starring in a Hollywood movie. Next Granny wanted to star her, but she could

not match up to her image. Granny felt betrayed, and that left her with a nagging sense of insufficiency. Gradually strands of her kundalini curled up from the base of her spine and dissolved the thoughts buzzing inside her head.

Uma instructed the children to affirm, ‘I am the spirit’, and she followed likewise. Suddenly, a new movement triggered in her consciousness.

She experienced a whole new part of herself she had never sensed before. Her consciousness evolved to a high resolution and allowed her to see more clearly the pattern of her conditioning. She found herself smarting from a reaction to Granny’s rejection of her. She tried to disentangle it, but something would not let it go. She focused more closely and discovered fear stuck to her yin channel in a painful time zone. The fear of loss of Granny’s love left her insecure and weak. Nevertheless, her kundalini’s high-resolution consciousness functioned as an arbiter of truth, and trumped everything that was not wired to unconditional love. And so it was with her programming. Though she had no conscious plan to overcome her programming, something within validated her. The love of her kundalini trumped her fear, and her yin channel yielded to the throbbing on the left side of her chest, as if her heart were renewed and energized. Every cell in her heart hummed with vibrations. A cool gale blew atop her head and hands.

Her kundalini also had a special capacity to empower and balance both her yin and yang channels. Little by little, she experienced inner peace. The peaceful silence expanded into timeless space. The space

was not empty but danced with particles of love. Each child was a particle of love. The love felt both personal and yet beyond it at the same time.

In no time the collective vibrations of the children rippled into an ocean of unconditional love. Waves of joy cavorted and kissed the hugging shores. They riveted Uma's words inside her head, 'their trust in their kundalini gives them security and self-confidence.' How else could it be? She was drenched in the joy of their collective love, and though it was not confined to any form, it needed a body to embody it.

From a distance she heard Uma softly intone, 'Jai Shri Mataji', and it flashed past her that the embodiment was the Holy Mother! The recognition was affirmed by the grace flowing as cool vibrations on the palms of her hands. The joy of the kundalinis sparkled in the eyes of every child. She had never seen children with such shining eyes and radiant faces. It assured her how much each child was loved by the Holy Mother, "It is a temple of love."

"Yes, that's why it is called, 'NirMaya Prem Ashram'. NirMaya is the name of the Holy Mother. NirMaya means pure, and 'Prem' means love. The innocent heart of the children emits so much love that it purifies everyone who comes here.

Lena responded, "But where I come from there is so much mental stimulation, fear, angst and distrust that it eclipses our attention from the innocence of the heart."

"What is there to be afraid of anyone? What is there not to trust anyone? What is there to be angry with any one? The easiest thing in

the world is to give love from the innocence of your heart. You don't have to pay for it!"

"But if the heart is not clean, how does it give love?"

"When you see these children pouring out their love to everyone, you realize there is no love that is not of this world, and the only reason we are here is to love."

"Coming here feels like a spiritual journey. How did the Holy Mother find this place?"

"It's a long story. Let's get some breakfast before the dining hall closes."

Lena helped herself to fresh orange juice, eggs, bananas and cereal.

"Tea?"

"Coffee please."

Coffee was not on the menu. However, Uma rummaged through the kitchen and found remains of Brazilian coffee left by an American visitor, "This coffee may be a little different from what you are used to."

Lena smiled gratefully, "Any brand of coffee is a life saver!"

They sipped coffee under the shade of a Tamarind tree. Lena feasted her eyes on the beautiful garden carefully tended by the children.

Uma narrated, "In the early eighties when the Holy Mother was travelling in the country side, her car broke down near a Muslim village. She was overwhelmed to see a long queue of women to draw water from a single village tap. It was very hot and they barely had any

clothes to cover their modesty. The women had been divorced by their husbands by the mere verbal ritual of Talak-Talak-Talak, and their children were abandoned by their fathers. They had no money and eked out a living by breaking stones. They had no proper place to stay and took refuge under a shelter of thatched gunny bags. She was deeply pained and wept at their plight, ‘What will become of these children? Who will look after them? Who will educate them?’”

Her pain could not be unburdened till she found a place to protect and nurture the destitute women and children. About that time a new township sprang in the outskirts of Delhi. It offered concessional rates for charitable non-profit organizations known as NGO’s. Hence she formed an NGO and purchased this land. She personally drew the plans, and supervised every detail for their comfort. Like a doting Mother she clothed it with the garment of her love. She decorated it with beautiful artifacts from her personal collection. Today you see how these beautiful flowers have blossomed out of her love. ”

Lena shared the anguish of the Holy Mother and dissolved her tears. She knew her pain could not be unburdened till she eased the pain of all destitute women and orphan children, “Is it possible to comfort destitute women and orphans everywhere through their kundalini?”

“Of course! Much like a candle lights another candle, your kundalini spontaneously ignites the kundalini of others. I have realized overtime, and with experience, that no matter what happens, our kundalini remains forever loving us. Nothing is hidden from her, and

without her protection it is not possible to run this orphanage. There is no government support, and we depend entirely on private funding. On days when our funds dip, we worry about our next meal, but somehow the consciousness of our collective kundalini always works it out. And that has set me thinking that collective consciousness knows, thinks, understands, organizes and above all loves us.”

“Collective consciousness?”

“You can put it in a lot of ways. For instance, our evolution has not stopped, we still think in a relative way, but the power of divine love is absolute. Fortunately, the advent of the holy Mother made a breakthrough in our evolution. She connected our kundalini to the all-pervading power of collective love, and drenched us in cool vibrations. Thus the new awareness of vibrations gives us collective consciousness. We can feel the vibrations of our energy centers called chakras on our central nervous system. Furthermore, we can also decode their vibrations.”

How?

“Each finger is a barometer of a specific chakra. For instance, if we blindfold ten children and ask them where the problem lies, all of them will feel hot vibrations in the same finger, which is the meridian of the blocked chakra. Furthermore, collective consciousness empowers them to give healing vibrations to clear the block.”

“Wow, collective consciousness sure appears like a super computer!”

“Not just that, it is the epitome of our grand evolutionary process!”

Chapter 3

Lena boarded the overnight bus to Dharamsala. When she woke up in the morning, the breathtaking beauty of the majestic snow clad Dhauladhar range enthralled her. The fresh mountain air warded off her fatigue, and she drank deeply its pristine beauty. A tribal Gaddi porter in a woolen tunic carried her luggage to Grace Hotel where Operation Smile team awaited.

A high-flying star surgeon drawled, ‘good morning’ in an American accent. His entourage comprised an amusing mix of the encyclopedic old-time pros, aspiring young medics like her, and non-medical members. They were American, Swiss, Norwegian and British. “The operation is scheduled to begin shortly, so everybody better get cracking.”

Lena grabbed a quick breakfast and accompanied the team to the nearby hospital. She was overwhelmed by the long queue of gentle folk coping with unimaginable traumas, and yet, still able to smile. It was inspirational. They had waited for years for their dreams to become a reality. The star surgeon’s smile soared the glint of hope in their eyes.

Lena plunged into the hospital ward like a fish to water, and raced to prepare the patients for anesthesia. There were also students, socialites and philanthropists trying to help. The vibrations were heavy, and she picked up the vibrations of fear coming from the patients, what with her heart chakra throbbing. However, her kundalini empowered her, and she did not absorb their heavy vibrations, and hence her attention was not weighed down by their negativity. To somehow have a part in profoundly changing a life for the better and to share the joy of a family experience kept her shining for eight hours without a break.

After a fulfilling day, she relaxed in the balcony of her hotel. Night fell, as she gazed at the snow-clad mountains bathed in soft moonlight. As she watched the snow clad mountains shine in the full moon, her yin channel came alive and her hands started singing with cool vibrations. She recalled Uma mentioning that the moon governed the yin channel in the left side and the sun governed the yang channel in the right. The vibrations of the moon were enhanced by the soft wind notes of a flute floating from the village across. Her kundalini danced to its lilting melody, and not long after, she fell into a dreamless sleep.

She woke up a few hours later completely refreshed. It was too early for breakfast, and so she decided to take a walk. A mud track wound its way through a thick forest fragrant with Rhododendrons. She observed the birds offer their morning thanksgiving to their creator. “Everything that is created says thanks to its creator”, smiled a

mountain maiden as she balanced a load of firewood atop her delicate head.

Lena smiled back, “You are right, and we too must thank our creator for bestowing such wonderful bounties of nature.”

The maiden shyly offered her a four-leaf clover.

Lena was deeply touched by her spontaneous gesture, and reached out to offer her a Lapis necklace. The maiden politely declined, “Thanks, but Lapis necklace suits the beauty of your beautiful blue eyes better.”

“Hey, I am Lena.”

She folded her hands, “Namaste! I am Maya.”

“Where do you live?”

“Nadi village.”

“Where is that?”

“Just above Dal lake. Today evening we have our annual village fair, please do come?”

“I will try.”

“I must run. My mother is waiting for me. Namaste!”

Lena waved back, “Till we meet again.”

Lena felt the hills alive with the sound of music, and hummed her favorite tune back to the hotel.

Chapter 4

The star surgeon briefed the team at breakfast, “With all the random factors that occur in such desperate environments, no two days are the same. We must be prepared for every eventuality. Over the years I have experienced one thing that when I gave I came alive with an overflowing abundance of joy, and that taught me that giving is much more joyous than receiving. ”

Lena nodded, “You’re right- making others happy multiplies our happiness.”

No sooner had they arrived at the hospital, a tribal woman went into labor. She had a long history of miscarriages, but the family had implicit faith in the mission’s God sent doctors. Her husband and mother prayed fervently in the corner. Investigative journalists were following the case, and waited outside to report in the morning columns.

The tribal woman was immediately rushed to the operation theatre. Suddenly the electricity turned off. The surgeon had no choice but to continue the operation with the help of emergency lights. Not long after the batteries ran out. Not knowing if help was coming, the surgeon battled in the dim light of his mobile phone. Within a matter

of minutes the neighbor next door offered his portable generator. A baby boy is delivered safely!

Lena was in the children's ward putting drip on weak children to keep them alive during surgeries when loud cheers coming from the verandah distracted her. The relatives of the newborn were rejoicing. Tears of gratitude rolled down their cheeks as they distributed sweets to the staff. Lena felt her kundalini respond to the beauty of thanksgiving, and realized that thankfulness was a shared inner reality with all humanity - thankfulness not for returning anything but just to feel its joy.

She was reminded of the beautiful moment of thankfulness she shared with Maya in the forest and thought of visiting her village.

Nadi village was perched on the shoulder of a ridge. The rambling hillside had been terraced by several generations for paddy cultivation. Sheep were kept in the ground floor, and the heat from their bodies provided warmth to the upper floor during winter. Every house had a wooden balcony for the elders to gossip and smoke hookahs. The houses were not numbered nor bore any nameplates.

An elderly woman with an ancient face sat outside a mud hut and wove intricate patterns. The wrinkles on her face tightened as she her rough hands attempted to wrap fine wool around a large wooden spindle. She wore a threadbare handloom shawl not warm enough to ward off the strong chill winds from the icy HiMayayan peaks. Lena offered her a warm synthetic shawl.

She politely declined, “I’ve spun this shawl out of my own hands; my mother has woven it. The warmth of so many fingers has gone into this, how can machines make anything warmer.”

Lena was drenched in cool vibrations, “Indeed how can machines replicate the warmth of love!”

Lena took directions, “Follow the cobbled path till you arrive at a cluster of mud huts.”

The path opened into a courtyard where a lone buffalo held court over a couple of hen. Mindful of court etiquettes, Lena humbly seated herself at a discreet distance. The buffalo stared at her disdainfully till Maya came to her rescue.

She was overjoyed to see Lena and warmly embraced her, “Welcome.”

“I brought a dress for you, I hope it fits.”

“Oh its lovely, you shouldn’t have bothered.” She yelled for her mom.

Maya’s mom appeared balancing a picture of water atop her head, “Namaste.”

Within minutes the whole tribe assembled and usurped the lone buffalo’s domain. The place of honor shifted to Lena, and though there was very little to celebrate in their lives, it did not deter them from rejoicing over the arrival of a foreign guest! Maya’s family took out a trinket from their treasure and paid homage to their honored guest. Lena knew they lived hand to mouth, but none of her protests could dissuade the neighbors from offering a fist full of walnuts, a farmer his

fresh crop of corn, and the children their precious store of wild berries. Maya's brother lit a fire to roast fresh chestnuts. Lena enquired, "Tell me about the fair?"

"It is an ancient tradition, as old as the lake. Externally, it has changed a great deal; its substance, however, remains unaltered. Overtime the festival has grown into an animal fair trading cows and buffaloes, but the lake still holds its secret."

"And what may that secret be?"

"For one, a dip in its sacred waters is said to wash off sins."

"What is so sacred about its waters?"

"It is interconnected to the sacred waters of Mani Mahesh, the sacred lake of Shiva."

Lena caressed the lone buffalo and reflected, "Perhaps the ancient myth reveals how interrelated we all are!"

Maya's Mom narrated as she milked the buffalo to make tea, "According to legend there was a saint Durvasa who was smitten by excessive anger, and pronounced curses on the smallest provocation. Without emotional nourishment his yin dried up, and hence was unable to balance the yang. Thus his yang became aggressive and spilled anger. The Mother goddess appeared before him and implored him to cool his yang anger in the Himalayas."

Lena mused, 'Without emotional nourishment his emotional quotient dried up, and hence was unable to balance the mental quotient. Thus his mental quotient became aggressive and spilled anger.'

The fair was an anxiously awaited event - the children looked forward to the digital toys brought by the city merchants, the village maidens waited too show off their high fashions, the women vied with each other with their exquisite sweetmeats, and the elders were not far behind to reap a rich harvest from the sale of woolen shawls.

The lake embankment was swarmed by ash-smearred hermits with dreadlocked hair, God-men, wandering minstrels, jugglers, tramps, fortune-tellers, tourists, gypsies and pilgrims. Maya urged, "Lets hurry, the devotional music has started."

They inched their way through stalls selling bangles, silver jewelry, toys, fancy sunglasses, shawls, scarves, incense and sweets. The village bard sang in an open courtyard facing a Shiva Linga. Maya translated, "He is describing the mood of the Goddess as she battled the evil forces."

"And what was her mood."

"Wrathful and compassionate."

"Isn't that's rather a strange paradox?"

"The wrath of the Goddess stems from her compassion. Her compassion is such that it does not intend to punish the wrong doer but rather endeavors to make him rise above it, and realize his misdeeds. When he atones his misdeeds, she blesses him. For instance, the village bard's song recounts how the Mughal emperor Akbar walked bare feet from his capital to the Temple of the Goddess to offer an umbrella of gold. The Goddess brought down his ego by turning the golden umbrella to copper."

“Dharamsala must be an ancient town.”

She smiled, “Oh yes, according to legend it was named after the seat of Dharama on which the local rulers dispensed justice. His court was called Dharamkot and that is the Deodar clad hill that you see rising above the lake. The people were God fearing and honest, no one locked their door and rape was unheard of. But all that changed with the inflow of half clad foreigners hungering for nirvana, satori, moksha and drugs.”

Maya’s mom yelled “Hurry, the Jalebies have turned golden yellow.”

“Wow, they’re so crisp and sweet!”

“Have some more.”

Lena was distracted by a group of half clad Tribal lads dancing wildly to blaring music.

Maya’s mom lamented, “Our sons are of an impressionable age, and are mesmerized by the breed of half clad, hashish smoking foreign tourists. The other night my son returned home stoned saying, ‘Heck... why should life all labor be? Why sweat morning to night and save money to wed sisters? Why break our backs lugging fodder for the winter?’”

Her emotions were real and raw, and Lena’s eyes moistened.

Maya’s mom continued, “Our sons deserted the paddy fields to work in tourist cafes and taxis. They converse in slang with native accent, they tattoo their bodies and bikes alike in motifs from Bali, Tibet and Harry Potter movies, but their attachment to native diet gives

them away, and leaves them out of the half clad white-skin club. However, as you can see, it does not deter them from forming their own hybrid club.”

Her eyes appeared like still pools that ran deep to a culture that took pride in its ancient Aryan heritage that predated the Anglo-Saxon culture by 5000 years. But unfortunately from the debris of that culture emerged teenagers in skinny tight jeans, logo T-shirts, and dark circles under their eyes.

Maya led her to an exclusive bathing site for women. The vibrations of the lake stilled Lena’s busy head, and she decided to return to the hotel and rest.

The star surgeon met her at the hotel gate, “We’ve been looking for you. Where were you?”

She chuckled, “A dip in the purifying water of Dal Lake is the perfect recipe to chill out!”

He looked up enquiringly.

“The annual dip is a kind of atonement the tribals follow to cleanse their mind.”

“I don’t understand how a simple dip in lake water can cleanse the mind without any introspection, meditation or rationality? For me divinity lies in truthfulness and goodness of heart. If they want God but not the goodness of heart, what would they avail in any lake, temple, mosque or church?”

Lena responded, “God is not what you profess but what you experience. We live in a relative world and cannot know the absolute

unless we experience it. However, it is possible to experience it on our central nervous system.”

The American reflected, “More than you know, compassion is what redeems us. However difficult the situation may be, we must not lose hope and carry on the good work with a smile and lots of love and compassion. To my mind that would be the true measure of our worth in the divine realm.”

It set Lena introspecting on what brings people to such places as the Dal fair? Was it the search for truth, socializing, fun, or family values? She wondered if there was something more behind the symbolic ritual of dipping in the sacred water than what meets the eyes. Had she missed out something? Her recent trip to Greece came to mind, and she remembered the figure of the Earth Goddess Gaia. The guide had explained that the Greeks revered the Earth as a conscious entity. The secret behind the metaphysical landscape dawned upon her that the idea of the earth as a living organism was vital to the preservation of their ecosystem. She drew a parallel with the tribal ritual, and concluded, “Their implicit faith in the purifying waters of the lake, and reverence to Mother Earth, air, the flora and fauna is what drives them on. Perhaps their faith can guide us back to what our ancestors knew about the Feminine Principle, and thus help turn our ecological crisis into a catalyst for transformation.”

The twinkle in the surgeon’s eyes brightened, “You’re right, we have to leave behind our old paradigm of dominance and control, and

seek answers in interconnection, ones and inclusion, and that is the lesson for us coming out of the Feminine Principle.”

It struck a chord in the Feminine principle residing at the base of Lena’s spine. Her kundalini empowered her to leave behind her old paradigm and helped turn her introvert nature into an open dynamic personality. Not just that, its joy spilled into her daily life effortlessly. It gave her the awareness that her faith was born from a source of love that would never cease. As the cool vibrations on her hands affirmed the actualization of her kundalini on her central nervous system, she felt a whole part of her being was shared by all humanity. It evinced that just as her kundalini awakened in her, it could be awakened in all humanity, and thereby provide the catalyst to spread collective love.

She mused, “It is no different from the Maya’s ancestors, the early Aryans, who to this day worship Mother Earth as a living organism. Mindful of her protocol, they live in harmony with nature and thus despite the discomfort of the body they find comfort in their spirit.”

Chapter 5

Lena had barely been away from Moscow, but from the window of her new consciousness, everything appeared significantly different. The vibratory awareness transformed her perspective. She felt the world more than saw it. The cool vibrations of people attracted her, and the hot vibrations distracted her. Her choice was not mental but spontaneous. Of course it altered her relationships with friends- she was drawn to those with cool vibrations, leading to a more positive and joyous zone. And she receded from those with hot vibrations- who would lead to a more and more negative and regressive zone. This included her granny. She was uncomfortable with her vibrations, and consequently, her visits became less frequent. But Granny was not an easy one to be ignored.

Olga was busy with her great event of the year at the Nord-Ost musical. She secured first row seats for Granny and Lena.

Granny enjoyed the first act immensely, “At last my dream is fulfilled!”

The second act opened with the dancing of military pilots. Lena spotted a man in the left-hand corner of the stage wearing a khaki

military uniform. At first, she thought that it was a part of the show, but then she saw more men like him appear in the stalls and on the balcony. The show stopped abruptly, and the man on the stage made a speech, “Do you know that the war in Chechnya has been going on for four years already? We demand the Russian government withdraw its troops from Chechnya. We are not going to kill you, but you are going to be our hostages until our requirements are executed!”

While the terrorists discussed the future course of action among themselves, Olga, along with the musicians, seized the opportunity to escape from the back stage window, and inform the police.

After a heated debate in the Chechen language, the terrorists arrived at the decision to segregate the foreigners, and began assembling them on the stage. Next they separated males from females in the hall. They checked IDs to look for military men. One of the terrorists yelled out gleefully, as he found a police officer among the hostages. It was his dream to take a police officer captive.

The terrorists allowed the hostages to use their cell phones and call relatives to inform them of the happenings. Lena could not help overhearing her neighbor telling a relative about his bank account numbers, the secret place where he had hidden his money, and so on. Another informed his son of his Will after bidding him a tearful farewell.

Granny’s hysteria caused her bladder to leak. The terrorists allowed her to relieve herself in the toilet. By the time she returned, Lena found a dismantled armchair to settle her. If the terrorists heard a

suspicious noise, they opened fire immediately. They kept firing shots to frighten the rescuing army waiting outside.

Chechen women stood around the hall, wearing bomb belts. They placed a big bomb in the center of the hall, ready to be detonated any minute by a Chechen woman sitting next to it.

Lena was drawn by the vibrations of a group of schoolchildren in the row behind. Their teacher was taking great care of them. She seemed a brave woman, and was driving the terrorists mad, pestering them for pills and warm clothes. They ordered her to sit down and shut up several times, but she just did not care.

It reminded Lena of the children at Nirmala Prem Ashram, and she spontaneously lent her a hand. The children did not understand what was going on. Lena raised their kundalinis to calm them down. They relaxed and began reciting nursery rhymes. Their vibrations attracted other children in the auditorium. The children did not know each other, but they connected through the language of vibrations, and made friends, laughed, played and had great fun.

The vibrations of their kundalinis worked like magic and lifted the collective gloom. Everyone opened up and helped- the men took off their jackets and put them on the women, one of the terrorists even found a pen for a little girl to draw and another brought food from the café for the children. Lena filled the bottles with water from the bathroom taps, and prayed fervently to the Holy Mother for their safety. Finally the terrorists released the children, along with pregnant women, Muslims and foreigners.

Chapter 6

The following day, rumors trickled in that the authorities were hard at work trying to convince the stubborn terrorists to abandon their inhumane stand. They would only relent to allow Red Cross to deliver food and water to the hostages. The siege was taking a terrible toll on the captives racked with anxiety.

The following day Red Cross delivered food and water to the hostages. Just then a 25-year-old girl started insulting the terrorists, driven by hysteria by the terrifying ordeal. Granny put her hand on her shoulder, “My child calm down. Get a hold on yourself. Don’t push it. Life is relatively a short dream, and there is only that much length you can go.”

She yelled, “What do you know about life?”

“You know something, as a child my mother took me to the park every evening. My favorite was a merry-go-round, and I waited for it to move fast before jumping onto it. I loved running along with it and waited for the right moment to jump on. But there were times when my steps mismatched its rhythm, and I would land hard on my bottom. It taught me something that I would like to share with you. There is a time to advance, and a time to retreat, and this is the time to allow the authorities the space to negotiate.”

But the girl had lost control of her yang, and went amuck, hurling abuses at the terrorists. They just took her out of the hall and shot her dead.

At about three o'clock in the morning news spread of the president's aid coming to negotiate with the Chechens.

Suddenly the air thickened. Lena's eyes smarted from something foul in the air. The vibrations became heavy, and hot. Her breath slowed down, and her lungs gasped for breath. Her heart started pounding, and she clutched at her chest afraid it would collapse. She thought this was it, and folded her hands to pray. She bid a tearful farewell to granny. Just then a pulsation at the base of her spine rose and calmed the pounding in her heart. Her attention was suffused with a life-affirming awareness that she was still alive.

Not long after she felt the flow of her kundalini rise to her throat. It began pulsating with an intensity that almost choked her. Her throat felt like a war zone; the vibrations fought the toxic gas that was penetrating her windpipe. The fighting parched her throat, and caused a burning inside. She grabbed a water bottle lying nearby, but it was empty. She attempted to put out the fire with her saliva but even that had dried up. She was seized by a violent bout of cough. She put her handkerchief to her nose to breathe through it. Suddenly strands of kundalini rose atop her head and unfolded something that seemed like petals of a flower. It subsided the burning in her throat. She opened her eyes and searched for Granny. Granny had swooned in the dismantled chair. She yelled, "Granny breathe through the handkerchief."

Granny did not respond. Her body had grown limp, her face was waxy white and drawn, and eyes open and blank. Then it hit Lena – it was the toxic gas! She checked Granny’s pulse – it was weak. She thought the terrorists had pumped poisonous gas, but they too were swooning. She checked the pulses of people in her row and got mixed signals – some were weak and some had stopped. She wondered, ‘How come I am the only one alive?’

Then it dawned upon her that the vibrations of her kundalini had protected her from the chemical gas. She cried out aloud, “Help! Help!”

Suddenly the auditorium door burst open. In stormed heavily armed Russian troops wearing gas masks and giving out muffled assurances, “Nothing to worry. Everything is under control. It’s just a mild toxin in the ventilation system to sedate the terrorists. Every one will be fine.”

Lena rushed Granny to a waiting ambulance. Her teacher friend who lay on the stretcher besides Granny remembered that one of the female terrorists was ordered to blow up her belt bomb. She did not have enough time to do that, because the gas knocked her out.

Chapter 7

The doctor struggled to revive Granny, but she was long gone. He cleared the lump in his throat, “I’m sorry.”

Tears brimmed in Lena’s eyes, “Did the gas kill her?”

“No. She succumbed to self-induced asphyxiation. In such a position, her tongue prolapsed.”

He never disclosed the identity of the gas.

Olga was devastated and blamed herself for Granny’s death, “If I hadn’t invited her to the theatre, this would never have happened!”

She shut herself in her room, and took refuge in drugs. Lena entreated her, “Olga, open the door. Please... please...”

Three days later she opened the door, her eyes listless, her hair grayed, and she looked aged well beyond her years. Mom baked her favorite apple pie, but she had lost her appetite and barely nibbled a slice. She tried to persuade her to answer the opera company’s calls, but she refused and cancelled all her performances.

Lena consoled, “Olga has lost interest in the opera. As you know she succeeded to curate the digital image Granny wanted the world to see. Perhaps you are also aware she did not take to the opera of her own choice. Granny mesmerized her with her yang wand, and she

became a toy inside Granny's head. With Granny no more, the opera game is over."

Mom responded, "I think Granny's domination came from the conviction that she knew better than others what was good for them. It's no different from the Soviet regime which thought it knew better about what was good for us, and therefore superimposed their ideas on us."

Lena reflected, "While the former regime put ideas in your heads, today our space is drummed by uncanny ideas from books, media and entrepreneurs. But the space could still be ours if we strip away all received ideas."

Mom sipped coffee thoughtfully, "It is also important to understand that we are all wired differently and need to give space to others."

Lena responded, "Of course it is natural for us to understand everything through the rationale because a part of our awareness has not yet awakened. In our shallow awareness, we tend to search for the proof of everything through our intellect. However, after our awareness is awakened, we access our intuition, and it enables us to perceive beyond the rationale."

"How is our awareness awakened?"

"All we need is a certain tuning-in to the energy within us, a willingness to heed its signals and a faith that we can do it. During my recent trip to India, I spent a night at an orphanage in Delhi. It gave me that experience that altered and broadened my world altogether."

Mom cast a confused glance, “I remember my grandmother used to narrate bedtime stories to inculcate family values.”

“I saw children meditating by connecting with their innate energy called the kundalini.”

“Kundalini?”

“You can put it in a lot of ways. For instance, she is known by different names in different traditions. The Bible calls it the cool wind of the Holy Ghost, the Hebraic scriptures call it *Ruach*, and the ancient Indian texts called it the Kundalini. But what’s in a name! The key thing is to connect with her. It enhances our awareness to feel each other’s vibrations. Cool vibrations reflect a person’s positive state and hot vibrations the reverse. Initially, my vibrations were hot, but after my kundalini cleared my blocks, my vibrations became cool. It empowered me with a more humane tool than the rationale to make the right choice.”

“My dear girl rationality is the only tool I know!”

“You’re right, rationality is an important tool but it is mental, and hence like all our mental facilities, it enables us to perceive only the partial reality. Whereas, vibrations are interconnected with the cosmos, they are the software of cosmic consciousness, and hence their capacity to mirror the reality is absolute. Moreover, unlike rationality, they do not lie, and cannot be manipulated or mesmerized. Thus, it is safer to follow vibrations. When I make a choice and the vibrations are hot, I drop it and if they are cool, I go for it. For instance, when the authorities released the toxic gas in the auditorium, I was not bothered

as I had no mental conception about it, but the vibrations knew and suddenly became hot. Thus they alerted me of the impending danger, and my kundalini resisted the toxic gas from penetrating my lungs by causing me to cough it out. I drew my handkerchief and began breathing through it, and that got me out of the blanket.”

“And now closer home, we have to pull Olga out of the blanket.”

“Her problem is that she is unable to forgive herself. She holds herself responsible for Granny’s death and its guilt is killing her.”

“Why the guilt? “How can a yang person like Olga, who had it all, feel guilty at all?”

“You may think she had it all, but no one has it all without losing something in the bargain. By having a lot of some things she had too little of others, like she lost out on her Yin. Her yang trumped her yin emotions. It is difficult for yang people to endure the pressures, stress, emotional oscillations and upheavals without their yin. Olga has hit rock bottom, and become so depressed that without the resilience of her yin, she can’t bounce back.”

“Guilt is self-defeating and regressive. What is the wisdom of feeling guilty? She should harness her yin and snap out of it.”

“You know what? It is her yang that embraces the guilt and not her yin. Yin and yang are like the two wheels of the cart - opposite yet equal and complimentary. Overload on one side throws the cart off balance. Similarly, granny upset Olga’s cart by overloading it with ambition. It bloated her yang balloon; conversely her yin was neglected, and hence became numb and vulnerable. The shock of

Granny's death deflated the yang balloon, and guilt happily stepped in the vacuum left behind.

Now her deflated yang hangs on to the guilt: it is the game her ego plays for its defense."

Mom reflected, "One thing that really sucks is negative feelings about oneself. She ought to break away from her yang and weed out the negative feelings consciously."

"It requires immense courage to face one's yang and consciously weed out the negativity."

"Often removing ourselves from the situation helps, exploring exciting destinations opens our mind and helps to understand ourselves better.

"Do you have any particular destination in mind?"

"It depends on your next assignment."

My next assignment is in India."

"Wow! How exciting!"

"Let me find Olga and talk to her. I'll be right back."

Chapter 9

Olga sat in the balcony smoking cannabis. Her room reeked of drugs, and made Lena dizzy. Her initial reaction was to jump in and throw out all the drugs, but then she remembered granny's example of the merry-go-round; 'there is a time to advance and a time to retreat.' She realized her reaction would alienate Olga, and unless she came out of her trauma she would not be receptive. The drug issue could be addressed later.

Sister to sister, she held Olga's hand lovingly, "I know it must be difficult for you, but isn't it better to walk it and talk it?"

Olga sobbed, "I feel like a criminal."

A chill wind blew and Lena wrapped her shawl tenderly around Olga, "Everything will be alright, just stop beating yourself! Terrorism is being played out all over the world, and you cannot punish yourself for the victims of its violence. When you love somebody from your heart you can never hurt that person. Similarly when you start feeling those responses in your heart you can never be wrong."

Olga went for another cannabis.

Lena continued, “Over the course of our lives, our choices make us the person we are. My choice was to work with children and it brought me tremendous joy. No doubt its hard work under trying conditions, but it took me to place like India. During my stay in an orphanage in Delhi, I attended a morning meditation. I suddenly experience a part of me that I had not experienced before. Later I learnt that that part was my kundalini. The kundalini is our pure desire and nothing, not even guilt can blemish it. In the light of my kundalini I saw that my reaction was a lie. Perhaps you too need to heed your pure desire and come out of your guilt trip.”

Olga reflected, “From childhood I was too busy pursuing granny’s desires, and had no memory of wanting anything else.”

“You know what; I never saw Granny so happy as after the first act. You gave her the moment that she had lived for. She did not want anything more; you fulfilled her greatest ambition!

“Thanks kiddo! I already feel better.”

Lena put her arm around her and comforted her, “My next project is in India, and I am sure its soothing vibrations would work for you. The more we distance ourselves from nature the more we become mental, and miss out the joy of simple things. Nature is the greatest healer, and a connect with it can unravel your root desire.”

“I need time to think about it.”

“You don’t have to wait till it gets worse.”

Olga stared vacantly at the hollow sky.

“Don’t forget to give yourself positive self-strokes!

Chapter 10

The excitement of Lena's arrival set Nirmala Prem Ashram abuzz. The younger ones anxiously hand crafted colorful welcome cards, the older ones hung balloons, and the senior girls choreographed a surprise performance.

The younger ones were curious to catch a glimpse of Lena's sister, and peeped from the window. Darshi was saying, "Every time I see these innocent smile of children it makes me realize what I had lost as an adult – the capacity to wonder about things!. They are like an ocean brimming with so much love, I just jump into it."

Lena bubbled, "But once I jump into it, I don't want to come out. When I returned home it felt like I had left my soul behind."

An older lady reclined on an arm chair smoking cannabis; the only similarity the children could detect with Lena was that both were white skinned and wore golden hair. They guessed she must be the sister, "But why does she looks so sad?"

"Because she is tired and wants coffee."

"Lena said she would die without coffee."

They sprinted to the kitchen and fetched coffee. Lena was overwhelmed, “The little things children do fills my heart with love.”

For the first time after a long time Olga felt something stir in her heart.

No sooner had the sisters arrived for the performance than the children wanted to hug them. However, their dorm aunties had instructed them to wait for the next day. But they could not wait; before the aunties could stop them, they hugged them. The excitement mounted and the children cleared the furniture to make space for their surprise performance.

The dancers bowed down to the Mother Earth. Uma explained, “The respectful greeting to mother earth is both an apology for stamping on her and a gratitude for her sustenance.”

Following the invocation, three fairies dressed in gold border sarees made floral offering before the Holy Mother’s photo. Next they greeted their distinguished guests with hands held in front of the heart in a traditional position.

A narrator appeared, “Each fairy represents an energy channel within us; the fairy to the right donning a white saree, represents our mental side, the pink in the centre - our power of ascent, and the black to the left - our emotional channel.”

“The dance style originates from the Temples of Odisha.”

“Where on earth is that?”

Uma responded, “In the east coastal region of India.”

The narrator continued, “The theme is the awakening of the kundalini, but first the fairies have to fight the negativity lurking in the seven centers of energy or chakras to ascend to her abode atop the head.”

The full moon, the soft evening breeze, the blissful music of jingling bracelets, the tinkling bangles and the ringing anklets cast their spell on Olga. She was provoked, astonished and delighted by their agility, swift footwork, expression and passion. She did not understand the words but their body language spoke to her. As the delicate movement of the dancer’s hands gracefully opened the petals of a lotus atop their heads, she felt the petals of her heart stir. But burdened by guilt, the petals could not open.

She hugged the girls, “It was awesome! I would love to stage you in Moscow!

She unwrapped the Russian dolls, “I have a surprise for you.”

“Thank you sooo... much.” They girls cuddled the dolls, christened them, dressed them in fine satin and lace dresses, fed them, spanked them and finally requested Olga to find Russian spouses for them. As Olga watched mesmerized by their playful mirth, her childhood innocence came back. Her defense fence caved in, and her nerves soothed. Her limbs ached to dance the steps granny had taught her in childhood. She played out her childhood, and the children followed her steps. For a time beyond time she danced with the shadow of granny looming in her mind.

Chapter 11

Olga danced to the end of her dreams. The moon forgot to give way to the sun, but when it did the dorm was empty.

The dorm aunty cheerfully greeted, “Good morning! I hope you slept well.”

“Sorry I woke up so late, I was dancing in my dreams!”

“The children have gone for their morning meditation.

“May I join them?”

“Of course!”

“Thank you.”

She dressed quickly and hurried to the courtyard.

From a distance she heard Uma telling the children to forgive everyone. It triggered the monologue inside her head;

I have no issue forgiving others,

But how can I forgive myself?

Unless I forgive myself, there is no way my ego would let go my guilt.

What is the way forward?

She was reminded of the night before where she danced with the children, and her childhood memory of innocence stirred something deep within.

Why not take the same route?

Her childhood journey led her to the roots of her innocence. The transparency of her innocence reflected the love of her parents. There was no expectation or anything to be gained in the purity of that love. Gradually her attention drifted to Granny's love; surprisingly its transparency did not reflect innocence.

“Why the heck is my innocence so confused?

Why can't it understand granny's love?

She dwelt deep in the purity of her innocence, and discovered granny's self love superimposed her yang channel. Furthermore, her guilt was none other than a reaction to Granny's ego. Her ego stood like an unyielding rock that obstructed the flow of her yin channel. No sooner than it yielded her attention swung like a pendulum in the opposite direction and unleashed the desire bottled in her yin channel.

‘ For the first time after a long time I feel a hunger to dance.’

Uma concluded the meditation with a prayer;

‘With innocence we see the world

Awakened from its troubled curl.

It makes us enjoy what God gave

And brings us out of our dark cave.’

The light in Olga's eyes brightened, "Last night when I danced I felt I was going deeper into something. It has woken a hunger in me for Indian classical dance."

Lena responded, "We have to leave for Odisha tomorrow, and it would not be possible to take lessons on this trip, maybe the next time."

Uma interrupted, "In fact you are going right into the heartland of Indian classical dance - Odisha. Our previous dance teacher, Guru ji hailed from there. Unfortunately, after the demise of his mentor he had to move to Puri to take over his academy. I will call him up."

"Wow! I am so excited!"

Chapter 12

Lena huddled Olga into an auto rickshaw to catch the train for Puri. The train station was located in the old city of Delhi. It was peak hour and there was traffic jams everywhere. Just as the driver of the rickety auto rickshaw skillfully navigated through the sea of tourists who thronged the Red fort, a motor cycle darted from nowhere and collided with his rickshaw. Olga flung out by the impact. Lena jumped to her rescue, “Thank God there are no injuries.”

Within minutes the accident site turned into an arena of a bull fight. The drivers argued, blamed each other, and exchanged curses. As tempers soared a fist fight ensued. A mammoth crowd cheered the bull fighters. Finally a matador appeared and honed the bulls. He argued resolving the issue by taking them to a nearby police station.

Time was running out, and the train to Puri was due to depart shortly. Lena remembered the trick of the auto rickshaw driver who drove her to the ashram, and pulled out a wad of notes, slapped them in the motorcyclist’s fist, and hurried the auto rickshaw on.

Lena panicked, “If we make a dash for the train we might still catch it.”

Just as they reached the platform the train started to move. Olga chuckled, “Kiddo, remember how as kids we used to love jumping on to a moving merry-go-round?”

Lena laughed, “Yes, and too often I would miss the appropriate moment and land hard on my backside! But after kundalini awakening

I figured out that the understanding of that appropriate moment comes from our innocence.”

“I guess I lost it long ago!”

“The quality of innocence is never lost because it is the innate quality of our kundalini. However much we may have damaged our innocence but when the kundalini rises she restores it back in us. ”

Olga ran alongside the train till her pace matched that of the train, and then her innate innocence gave her the understanding of the right moment to jump on.

It was an uncommon sight for the passengers to watch two foreign women achieve such a feat of valor. They cheered as they got on, and gave them a heroine’s welcome. Hardly did they find their seats, the barraged them with questions;

‘Where do you come from?’

‘How many siblings in the family?’

‘Where are you going?’

‘Have you seen the Taj Mahal?’

‘Do you have mangoes in your country?’

‘What does your husband do?’

Upon learning that they were unmarried an elderly matron promptly proposed her nephew. She proudly showed off his photo, “All the girls in the village are after his blood but I tell you they are not a patch on him.”

He looked like a jerk and Olga and Lena could not help giggling. But the matron was undaunted. Lena found an excuse, “You see we are already engaged and will get married on our return home.”

They never saw her again!

Not long after the passengers began opening their tiffins with great expectations. Each one offered his choicest dish to the sisters. Of course the sisters were embarrassed and they politely declined. But the passengers had adopted them and they would not take no for an answer, “Try my mom’s Aloo Parathas, they are sooo ... yummy, you will never get them elsewhere.”

Another brought sweetmeats, “My granny makes the best ladoos in the world!”

“Wait till you taste my great grandmother’s Saffron barfi, she handpicked the saffron in Kashmir.”

“You know what, last year my dad bought a Jersey cow for twenty thousand from his cousin, and yesterday she delivered a calf. This sweet is specially prepared from the creamy rich milk from the first lactation!”

“I grow everything organically. The carrots are fresh from my garden and the tomatoes are sun ripened.”

“This vegetable dish is from a secret family recipe handed down by my ancestors who served the Maharaja of Jaipur.”

His neighbor boasted, “The recipe of my Mughalai chicken is even rarer, it hails from my ancestor who was the favorite chef of the Mughal Emperor.”

Lena's palate had grown accustomed to Indian spices, but Olga's was on fire. No sooner than the train halted at a station, she made a beeline for ice cream.

Upon her return she discovered her purse was missing, "I left my purse behind at the ice cream vendor. All my credit cards, traveler checks, passport, and return tickets are in it."

Lena felt cool vibrations and comforted, "It is too late, the train is moving, but I am sure something will work out."

Just then they spotted a man running along the train. Olga remarked, "The train has gathered speed and there is no way he can get on."

To her surprise, he leapt on like a graceful ballet dancer. She recognized him "He is none other than the ice cream vendor!"

"Madam you left your purse behind."

"Thank you so much. Please allow me to make a small gift offering for your kind deed."

"Madam, I did not do it for any reward, it was my duty."

Before she could dig into her purse he was gone.

The deed of the man opened her heart and tears of joy rolled down her cheeks.

After a hearty meal the adults retired for a collective siesta while the children made merry. The girls brought Lena their dolls, and requested her to find Russian spouses for them. A shy little girl hovered around and then struggled to open a bag of chips. Others vied it, but she firmly held onto her treasure and refused to share it.

The boys taught Olga card games. They wagered, “The loser buys everyone a round of Massala Chai and Pakoras.” There was a lot of excitement as they won all hands down but soon Olga caught on to their little tricks. No sooner than they started to lose, the excitement died. Nonetheless, she treated them to a round of Massala Chai and Pakoras.

Before the passengers disembarked at their respective destinations they bid warm farewells with souvenirs, scarves, embroidered handkerchiefs, chocolates, and fruits. The family bond was sealed with addresses, mobile numbers, e-mail identities, and promises to visit on their return journey. At the next station, the little girl who hung on her bag of chips gave Lena a warm farewell hug. Before disembarking she bestowed upon her the precious treasure of chips. Lena could not hold back her tears.

She watched the sun sink in the distant horizon. Shepherds were returning home with their cattle while the women folk were busy lighting fires for the evening meal. To her post modern eyes it appeared as another world; but a world full of love, nonetheless. And everyone understands the language of love, nonetheless.

Chapter 13

The train arrived at Puri in the morning, and they took a rickshaw to the hotel. They crossed myriads of temples set apart by rows of shops selling exquisite handicrafts, scrolled paintings, stone carvings, terracotta, lacquer ware, paddy corn-crafts, bamboo articles, Igat silk sarees, silver filigree ornaments, and flowers.

Olga admired the appliqué work canopies, “Look at their vibrant colors!”

The rickshaw driver responded, “One of the most important cottage industries is appliqué work. Enormous appliqué canopies are traditionally held aloft the venerated Lord Jagannath and his sister.”

Lord Jagannath?

He is the Lord of the universe, the presiding deity of the Puri Temple.”

After a quick lunch they took a guided tour of the city. Lena was drawn by scrolls depicting scenes from Indian mythology. The shop keeper was enthusiastic, “Over a hundred craftsmen preserve this 900-year-old art form called Pattachitra. Before the artist can apply his brush to the cloth, an elaborate ritual is followed to prepare it. The cloth is soaked in water and tamarind seeds, and then coated with a paste of chalk and gum. Another layer of cotton is added to it, which is rubbed with stones to achieve a glossy finish.”

Lena smiled at Olga's stone-washed jeans, "Probably your 900-year-old stone wash technique travelled to the west!"

The guide pointed to the main temple, "It is one of the most magnificent monuments of India.^[3]No birds or planes fly over it. It contains at least 120 smaller temples but there are four distinct sectional structures sculptured in the richness and fluidity of the Oriya style architecture."

Two lions guarded the entrance to the main temple. The guard stopped them, "I am sorry madam but foreigners are not allowed inside."

The guide intervened, "Not to worry, you are free to visit all the other enclosures."

They stepped into a pillared enclosure, the guide elaborated, "It was used for the development of Odissi dance. Dance is a big part of Odisha's culture not only for worship but also for thanking the deities."

Lena was elated, "I love the graceful images of dancers sculptured on the walls."

Olga enquired, "When did dance originate?"

"It originated in the Temples of Puri about 200 B.C. From the earliest times, the dancers were both healers and priests. Girls from elite families took to it as a respectable profession."

"How come the orthodox society accepted them?"

"They were held in high esteem. The female priestesses known as [devadasi](#) worshiped different aspects of the Divine through the

elaborate language of mime and gestures. They performed exclusively for the deity in the sanctum sanctorum as part of the daily ritual, and occasionally at temple processions.”

Lena was excited, “I would love to see the Devadasis perform!”

“The British abolished the tradition of Devadasis long ago.”

Enveloped in mythology, Lena lamented, “Oh no! The passing of the tradition has been such a great loss!”

Chapter 14

Next morning Olga put Lena on the train to Bhubanewar, and thereafter, set out to find Guru ji's academy. She made enquiries at a chai shop in the outskirts of the city. The chai boy pointed to a hamlet of clustered homes.

Before long, she picked up the rhythmic jingle of anklet bells beating against stone floor from a nearby house, and gingerly rang the door bell.

A girl about her age answered the door.

"Hello, I am a friend of Uma, and would like to meet Guru ji."

"Namaste, I am Reena. Please be seated. I will inform him.

"Thank you."

She was seated facing a mud plastered wall. Her attention was drawn to a niche in the centre where an antique bronze icon stood poised in dance.

Reena returned shortly with a tender coconut drink.

"Thanks."

"I am sorry Guru ji is taking a class, but he won't be long."

“The coconut water is delicious!” She pointed to the icon figure dancing on the body of a demon.

“May I ask, who is he?”

“He is the lord of dance. All the myriad forms we perceive are brought forth by the maya of his cosmic dance.”

“Maya???”

“Maya is the spell or illusion that arises from our perception of the myriad forms created by his cosmic dance. Out of ignorance we step out of the fluidity of life and get attached to these myriad forms. We then divide the perceived world into separate objects that we see as permanent, and cling to them, forgetting that in reality they are transient.”

“You are right! The world we see is none other than the world we bring forth with others. I have realized over time, and with experience, that my outer world is nothing but the projection of my inner world of abstract thoughts and concepts. My rigid conditioning has left me completely frustrated, and I do not know how to come out of it. I was hoping through your dance technique I might find a pathway to step back in the fluidity of life.”

“To realize the fluidity of life and break through the spell of maya, a dancer must first study the various movements of his cosmic dance that suck her attention. The two most common movements that suck her attention to the past and future are yin and yang respectively. Yin activates the flow of emotional energy, while yang manifests a fiery dance.”

“A fiery dance?”

“The fiery dance triggers mental movements that form various patterns. Her voice became more passionate as she delved further into the subject. “But when yin and yang converge their dance triggers a dynamic flow of vibrations that perpetuate themselves in quantum. The quantum appear like chakras that break through dysfunctional patterns, to form new ones.”

“Chakras?”

“Yes, the patterns take a wheel like formation, and hence are referred to as chakras. They are vortexes that transmit nurturing vibrations to everything living, and thus sustain life.”

“Are you suggesting that there are chakras within all of us?”

“Not just that, but our chakras are also influenced by both the negative and positive vibrations of the chakras of people around us.”

“Does that mean that I can pick up negative vibrations from my friends?”

“And vice versa! Positive vibrations propel our evolution whereas the negative ones weaken us.

“Mmmm... that implies that somehow we must be interconnected.”

“Of course! How else could the cosmic dance of vibrations create the outflow and inflow of vibrations? Rhythm and motion are essential aspects of the cosmic dance. You know what, while the phenomenal universe of illusion is forever in motion, the eternal witness remains unchanging. The eternal witness within us is forever in the present,

and there is no past or future. In fact it is our very conceptualization of these two artificial constructs that the dancer seeks to transcend. As she transcends these, she spontaneously flows back to the fluidity of life, and perceives the unity underlying all these forms.”

She pointed back to the icon, “Why does he dance on the body of a demon?”

A sharp voice tore across the room, “Because he plays out the end game.”

Olga turned around to encounter the intruder. She was taken aback by an elusive figure that seemed to grow taller moment by moment. She did not wait to be introduced, “The end game?”

His hand movement appeared as though he held a weapon in one hand, and struck deep into something, and then rose triumphantly to a towering height.

She was intrigued by his steps which seemed to choreograph a bit of magic out of the mundane. It reminded her of the Hula dance in Hawaii where the dancers use hand movements to tell a story. “Were you telling a story?”

He spun around roaring with laughter.

She was not amused. “What’s so funny?”

“You didn’t see my dance; you only saw what was in your mind!”

Her yang impulse instantly became defensive, and she felt the necessity to oppose his authority, “There are infinite levels of the mind, and there are infinite ways of seeing the same thing.”

His eyes twinkled mischievously. “Ha ha... you have come to teach me about the mind? Ha ha... what do you know about the mind? Ugh... It is just an old junky instrument! Stop playing its ugly game.”

Her enquiring mind reacted, “Ugly game?”

He snapped his fingers “Yes, the game of camouflage!!!

“Camouflage???”

“The ego appears to be everything that it is not - a camouflage, without an independent existence! And the demon under the icon’s foot is none other than our ego which must be conquered before liberation is achieved. The fact that the Lord of dance places his foot upon ignorance denotes that the dance is not a destructive act but an end game of liberation.”

She was seized by a pang of insatiable yang curiosity. “How the heck does the camouflage play itself out?”

The twinkle in his eyes brightened, “Through self-hypnosis. Too often we hypnotize ourselves into believing we are this, that, or the other, then cast a digital image, and start playing it out!”

Her radar instantly picked up the signal. She thought of her granny, and wondered if she had camouflaged her ugly game by hypnotizing her.

He read the question in her eyes. “But wait, a person who suffers from self-hypnosis is more susceptible to being mesmerized, like the one who tries to impress others gets more easily impressed. It works like a magnet that entraps everything in its magnetic field.”

She prompted, “Till the Lord of dance dances the end game?”

He snapped, “Oh no, no, no... till the Lord within us dances the end game!”

His one eye brow arched, as he majestically raised his forefinger and spun it like a disc. Directing it with acute precision, he hurled it towards her. She did not resist it, hoping it might release her Granny’s hypnosis.

His eyes widened, “Life is not a dreary circle of birth, death and rebirth. Each one of us has the choice to end the mind game and change the course of our journey. If we have the pure desire then it is not so difficult to come out of the received hypnosis.”

Just as she thought she got it right, he held up his hand to forestall her. “Hang on, I am not finished yet.”

The quick movement of his hands articulated the peeling of an onion. “First you have to peel off the super imposed layers one by one till you reach the core.” He then moved to caress the serpent adorning the icon.

She was curious. “Why the snake around his neck?”

His hand movements articulated a snake hood. “The snake represents the kundalini, which when aroused leads to the transmutation of consciousness, *and that is the key to the end game!*”

“Hmm... sounds familiar.”

Suddenly his eyes softened into still pools that ran deep. He humbly folded his hands. “Namaste! I am Guru Ji. I have been expecting you. You have travelled a long way to reach the destination,

but remember the process of learning is all about the journey, not the destination. Once you stop learning, you stop living. ”

The change in his demeanor disarmed her. She smiled, “I am sure I will enjoy the journey as well as the destination.”

He took jaunty strides up and down the room, swinging his arms characteristically. Suddenly he turned towards her, and glanced at her sharply from the corner of his eyes, “There is no way to reach the destination till you discover yourself.”

Chapter 15

Honed by a 2000 year old tradition, Guru Ji commenced the morning lessons with an invocation to the sun;

‘O Lord of light, the knowing one,
The golden guardian, giver of life,
Spread apart thy rays, gather up they brilliance,
That I may perceive thy finest and most splendrous nature,
The cosmic spirit which lies at thy heart,
For I myself am *That!*’

While her grey cells busily Googled for the meaning of the last phrase, *I am that*, Olga watched the students offer water to the rising sun. Soon, they concluded by folding their hands in thanksgiving, and bowing down to Mother Earth. One by one, they touched Guru ji’s feet, and reassumed their position in the veranda that also doubled up as a dance floor.

Unlike their earlier encounter, Guruji yielded more space to the students. We think with our body. Our decisions are never completely rational but influenced by emotions and also the unconscious. For instance, if you observe more closely people in conversation you will

observe that a subtle and an unconscious dance choreograph in coordination with the speaker's body and that of the listener. If the listener and speaker are locked in a close rapport their movement is rhythmic, whereas if they are arguing their movement appears out of sync. Hence, the minute study of gestures is vital for understanding our diverse emotions.”

He turned towards Olga. “Indian classical dance is a highly art form. It is structured around nine principal emotional responses; love, pity, anger, valour, awe, terror, mirth, sorrow and divine bliss. Unless a dancer possesses a beautiful mind, he or she cannot project clean facial expressions and hand gestures. Hence, together with perfection of body movements, a dancer should develop clarity of mind and for that one needs to remove the inner impurities. “

I am that’ intoned harder inside her head, and she decided to accept his advice in order to cleanse her mind.

The dancers began in slow tempo, and through a series of intricate steps gathered momentum. Their sublime movements and melody internalized a joyous mood. Their art form appeared as though it was almost a part of their DNA. It reminded her of blossoming petals of a flower.

Guruji juxtaposed steps to create new images and moods. “A dancer is free to choreograph from a wide range of pure dance compositions. Dancers make use of their head, eye, neck, hand, and foot techniques to express their passion; the yearning of the beloved,

her anticipation, preparation, waiting, disappointment, betrayal, reconciliation, and ultimately, union.”

Olga discovered that unlike Western classical dance that lifts away from the earth, Indian classical dance was very rooted to the earth.

The twinkle in his eyes brightened. “Indian classical dance is connected to the earth chakra. The footwork may precisely match the percussion of the melody while the upper torso liltily continues to shift throughout a rhythmic phrase, with a low centre of gravity expressing the mystical movement of –say- Radha’s love for Krishna, much like the soul’s union with the divine.”

This is where Olga got stuck, unable to go beyond, not knowing how to imbibe devotion and incorporate it into technique.

Guruji came to her rescue. “Dance is the sacred language through which we commune with the vast unknown. For instance, with the divine melody of the flute as her compass Radha’s soul finds its way into Krishna’s collective heart! Thus the theme uses the lyrical movement of human love to achieve the eternal flow of unconditional love.”

Though he addressed Olga, his attention was on all the students. Nothing escaped his hawk eyes, and he swiftly made corrections. “As body movements are perfected, your gestures will be inspired by the unconscious, as expressed in iconography. Much like Radha’s soul, your soul too will find its way to the divine collective heart, and enjoy its eternal flow of unconditional love.”

Chapter 16

Guruji's end game fired Olga's yang, and as it fast tracked she neglected her Granny's childhood drumming, 'slow and controlled', and hence found herself stumbling at the rehearsals.

Reena tried to calm her speedy yang, "Some days are like that but do not construe it as a failure, just treat it like another facet of the learning process. Be patient with yourself, and keep trying. Soon it will come together."

The students stood in a semi circular formation around Guruji as he showed some new movements, "As I was saying yesterday, the essence of your journey is to give into it your mind, body and soul. It is important to be in the present, here and now, in the class and not fast forward to the end game, else you are taking the wrong class."

Olga knew his arrow was directed at her, and it triggered an inner monologue inside her head;

'What am I doing here if I do not want to give in my mind, body and soul?'

‘Did I make the right choice or did Lena talk me into it?’

No, Lena had invited me to the orphanage.

Who put the idea of dance inside my head?

Was it borrowed? No.

Was it self- hypnosis? No.

It was not a head thing; it sprang from my heart spontaneously as I watched the children dance.

Heck, it was my thing!

But why not the opera?

Because that was Granny’ thing, *not mine!*

Guruji turned to ease the chaos in her mind. “May I ask you a question?”

“Of course!”

“What does dance do for us?”

She had the last laugh; ‘little does he know my granny drummed rhythm into my head while I was in my mother’s womb!

She smiled smugly, “It inculcates the sense of rhythm and enhances our response to the universal rhythm.”

“You are right, but more importantly it is a tool to connect with our inner being. Only our inner being can expose our self hypnosis.”

He patiently repeated the lesson. “Just observe the steps till you hear your heart beat with the rhythm. We are all on this inner journey together like cells in one body. Unless we cherish and respect each other, we cannot play out the end game together.”

He gave Olga an encouraging nod, and went on to unravel his finale for the Konark Dance Festival. Holding a lamp in both hands, he began with a prayer offering, followed by a rhythmic dance on a brass plate. The students followed suit and rehearsed hard to balance on the brass plate. However, it proved to be a tricky affair; it needed both physical and mental focus. Finally, as an older student made a breakthrough, everyone clapped joyfully.

The sympathetic movement of love whereby they rejoiced in each other's success, and genuinely encouraged each other, appeared alien to Olga's competitive programming. She got sucked into her past drama; the childish feelings that churned inside her drew comparison, and pressed the envy button inside her head.

‘Why not me?’

‘They may be doing much better than I am at his point.’

‘I deserve the same if not better.’

‘I want to sing like her, look like her, have a smaller waist, a graceful gait like her.’

Reena noticed Olga's distraction and affectionately put her arm around her.

‘I am so sorry. A tightening feeling gripped the middle of my forehead, and I heard myself screaming ‘why-not me?’

Reena stroked her gently, “My dear, it is true we constantly judge ourselves in comparison to others. Of course there is always someone better, more skilled or more gifted than us. That may trigger a feeling

of insecurity, but supposing we stop comparing and just be our self? Then, as we respect ourselves, others will respect us. ”

Olga shrugged, “I faced rivalry at every rung of the ladder. It was much like swimming against adversity, and from the prism of my competitive programming it is difficult to envisage how students can delight in the joys and success of each other without any lurking envy, rivalry or comparison.”

“The compassion of the kundalini dissolves all that primitive stuff.”

“My heart burns with envy, how can compassion soothe it?”

“Supposing you put your mind effort in the back seat and allow your kundalini to take over, you will find that your innate tendency of mutual aid and cooperation will manifest spontaneously. If you observe nature, the whole system resembles a close-knit organism where close cooperation and coordination exists among different species. For instance bees and ants act almost like cells of a complex organism with a collective intelligence far superior than that of its individual members. There is no rivalry or hierarchy, only relationships nesting within other relationships. Once, you understand how interrelated we are, you will realize that the others are a part of you.

Thereafter, there will be no reason to feel insecure.”

Just then Olga heard Guruji telling the class, “*I am that.* Unconditional love holds the key to this understanding of the ultimate reality. Hence, in the concluding piece the dancer aspires to experience

this state, not only for herself but also to share it with the audience. Thus the dancer uplifts the audience and also helps them to understand who they are. Thereafter, the game changes; the world appears as a stage, and the audience witness the vested interests that make unsuspecting people dance to their tunes. The end game is to liberate our self from other people's tunes, and to dance to the tune of our own inner being. The melody of our inner being brings joy back in our lives. ”

What a repertoire it was! The connect with the womb of the Mother Earth, followed by the inspiring invocation to the Divine, and the pure, expressive dance that formed the absolutely sublime finale of salvation ... it was as though a primal memory awakened in Olga the vista, *I am that*, The compassion in the dancer's eyes spontaneously melted her aggressive yang. She saw how gentle compassion could be applied with lyrical grace to overcome primitive emotions. It showed the trick of a dancer lay not in the enchantment of the audience but in her ability to shift their attention from their emotional and mental fixations to the awareness of their inner being. And the efficacy of that trick rested not in the dancer's skill but in her awareness of her own inner being.

Her thoughts raced back to the opera where the individual's performance broke through the collective repertoire. But here, for the first time, she was surprised to discover the shift from the individual to the collective. The performance of the individuals could not be understood in isolation, for they were not isolated entities but

interconnected to each other in a pattern of inseparable collective relationship.

As she understood the collective web of relationships among the various parts of the team, she realized that it was not possible for any artist to dominate it because *the whole was more than the sum of its parts*. Hence, for the team to succeed, the element of team spirit held the key. And that key stemmed from none other than the collectivity of their inner beings.”

Guruji read her mind. “A harmonious team assumes a power of its own. Not just that, it reaches out, guides, inspires and empowers its parts. We are not stuff that abides individually but patterns that converge in collective consciousness. Therefore, the unification of one's own consciousness with the movements of collective consciousness is the trick to the end game.”

Chapter 17

Olga invited Uma to the Konark Dance festival. Reena accompanied Olga to the train station to fetch Uma. The train was late, and they decided to hang out in the coffee shop. The only place available was next to a loud group. Olga was getting irritated by the group's loud burst of laughter and constant chatter.

Reena comforted, "You know something, recently I got stuck in a traffic jam and got so rankled, I yelled and swore, but that didn't get

the traffic moving. On the contrary the yelling only gave me a headache and a bad day. Later, I learnt in dance lessons the trick of being a silent witness to the momentum of the dance. And that greatly helped me in witnessing trying situations without reacting to them.”

The coffee was piping hot and Olga sipped slowly, “You are right, but I find it hard to keep my attention from reacting to people’s callous behavior in public places. How can they be so insensitive to others!”

“Perhaps you could try to shift your focus to something else.”

“Like what?”

“Guruji’s challenge. Each of us is tasked with choreographing the end game for the forthcoming Konark dance festival. What’s your game plan?”

“I haven’t thought about it. What’s the festival about?”

“The festival is dedicated to the revival, preservation and continuation of classical dance.”

“And the Konark Temple?”

“It’s dedicated to the Sun God. It is so constructed that the first rays of the Sun strike its huge portal. It is designed like a chariot of the Sun drawn by a team of seven horses.”

“Perhaps the theme should unveil the inspiring vision of the temple.”

Reena mused, “The sun is the beginning of life, and yet, as the measure of time, it relentlessly takes back what it has given. To me the sun symbolizes not only time but what lies beyond time and space.”

Olga pointed, “Time and timelessness are incompatible opposites.”

Reena held her ground, “The phases of the sun are not incompatible opposites. On the contrary, they are two complementary aspects of the one life. The sun rises at dawn and after completing its cycle sets at dusk. Whatever moves forward follows its cycle and returns to the point from where it started. However, deep within the ever-changing world lies the unchanging spirit, beyond time and space.”

Olga was not convinced. “I do not know what the end of the game will be, but I would like to play it out my way.”

Engrossed in conversation they lost track of time. The train had arrived; Uma was searching for them. She thought of snacking at the coffee shop. “Hey, there you are!”

“I am so sorry we lost track of time.”

“Coffee?”

“Thanks, would love some!”

As they drove past the myriad of ancient temples, Olga reflected, “I am spell bound by this world of beauty, paint and color. Why don’t they replicate this beautiful work anymore?”

Reena responded, “Because the artists neither have the dedication nor the patience, this beautiful work cannot be replicated.”

Uma recalled, “The expressions in iconography when rendered in dance provide a language a dancer uses to manifest gestures. The Holy Mother revealed that the co-efficiency of beauty lies in auspiciousness. Once they connect to the auspiciousness of their kundalini it will all come back.”

Suddenly the Sun Temple emerged majestically against the horizon. As shafts of sunlight splintered through coconut grooves, the temple's stone walls and sandy shores came magically alive. Olga held her breath, "Look at the larger than life images of celestial dancers playing musical instruments on the top tier of the Temple. I have never seen such instruments before!"

Reena responded, "The instruments are the Veena, mridang, flute and cymbals. They use these instruments to bring health back to the sick of mind and body."

"How do they do that?"

"By liberating the shadows of ignorance hiding in their chakras."

"Why can't they overcome the shadows by themselves?"

"Because their conscious mind has no way to overcome these shadows as it has no idea about them or what they are."

Though there was a soft sea breeze, Olga complained, "I feel my right hand buzz with hot vibrations."

Uma decoded her vibrations, "They are coming from the shadows inside your chakras."

"How to get rid of them?"

"Our shadows demand a unique solutions from each one of us, and we can get rid of them by showing them the light of the kundalini."

"How to show them the light of the kundalini?"

"By connecting to it."

"I don't know how to do it."

"Let us soak our feet in the sea and I will show you how."

Chapter 17

They soaked their feet in knee deep water. As Uma tried to kindle Olga's kundalini she became aware of a throbbing at her neck joint. She tried to remit vibrations to it, but, Olga's rigid yang channel refused to yield. She urged, "We humans make mistakes. Please forgive yourself, you are human, not God."

Olga did not believe in God, nonetheless, she enjoyed the God-like adulation from her fan club. It had triggered her self hypnosis. As she had no recognition of a higher force, her rational mind enjoyed playing God, and that made her yang rigid. Unless her rational mind was connected to reality, her yang would inevitably rebound, and that was the message of the guilt coming out of her ego. However, her rational was unable to see the polarity, because her ego was subtler than it. Thus, she was misled to believe that her guilt was coming out of Granny's demise. Moreover, Granny's burning ambition had dried her yang channel, and its rigidity stopped her from forgiving herself.

Olga tried to mobilize the rigidity of her yang channel with her rational, but her rational mind was limited and could not penetrate the obstinate yang.

Uma observed her predicament and instructed, “In order to mobilize the yang channel we raise the kundalini three times.”

Olga did likewise. Her kundalini uncoiled three and half times and rose beautifully. She discovered an entrance to a dark tunnel alongside the spine. She became aware of two vaguely familiar forces dancing in the tunnel. The one that was knowledge appeared like light and propelled her ascent, while the other that was ignorance appeared like a shadow, and tried to throw her out.

Uma prompted, ‘Our shadows demand a unique solution from each of us’.

She heeded her prompting and instead of being thrown out by the adversity she decided to face it. As she hunted the shadow, it began dancing up and down the yang channel. Every time she encountered the shadow it camouflaged itself.

She had no idea where it might lead; the hardest task was how to expose the camouflage. As her kundalini entangled the shadow, she became aware of hot vibrations escape under the soles of her feet. It reminded her of the demon under the feet of the icon. She recalled her dreams where she saw the shadows of people as archetypes of good and evil. Too often the archetypes were people she was familiar with. For instance, in one dream her jealousy imaged the archetype as a rival singer, and in another her non-forgiveness figured as her ex-husband.

The greatest challenge before her was to face the shadow. It appeared very powerful, and she found it increasingly hard to resist. However, she knew that if she ran away from it, she could not play out the end game. The ambition to succeed was central to her yang drive, even if it meant chasing the shadow to the end of the earth. Each encounter with the shadow also increased her kundalini's power over it. The power enhanced her awareness of the shadow, and as she learnt more about it she also learnt more about herself; Granny's nice clear-cut, black and white Olga, came face to face with a grey zone of guilt. And the guilt was wired to her yang hardware.

Because of the yang's obstinacy she was unable to build a dialogue with the guilt. Little by little the pristine consciousness of her kundalini expanded her consciousness. Its high resolution enabled her to open her yang hardware. As she searched the data base for the guilt file, she found the link and logged on to it. She was surprised to discover her guilt was none other than a camouflage of her ego. Though Guru Ji had described the demon at the feet of the icon as ego, she could see more clearly that ego did not necessarily project itself in the form of demons; it also projected other games - games played out by guilt, envy, rivalry and non-forgiveness. She saw how each game curretted a world apart, and it left her wondering how these drifting worlds could be brought closer.

She faintly heard Uma saying, 'If people stopped reacting and being judgmental perhaps the world could come closer.'

She too would have to turn the page if she wanted her world to come together. She took the step forward and ordered her intellect to stop reacting. But her attention was fixed to her yang program and she was helpless before it. The reactions to her rival singer, her ex-husband and granny's death continued as before. She was frustrated to discover she had no control over her yang programming. In fact it had become her master. As if hypnotized by it, she saw through its eyes, and believed what it showed her. She was trapped in a yang dominated world, and she did not know how to unlatch her attention from it.

Just then she heard Uma say, "Prayer helps us into working out things that we cannot do for ourselves."

Prayer? Ha ha... She did not know what prayer was. In her communist programming no one prayed. But yes, hope had not died in their hearts hope -they hoped for a little more space, little more love and little more joy. In her bleak moments hope always brought a beacon of light and comforted her. Perhaps prayer was another form of hope, and it did not matter to whom the prayer was addressed, as long as it came from the heart. Granny had drummed inside her head, 'whatever you do in life do it with all your heart and might.'

She prayed as never before, with all her heart and might.

The moment she prayed, her kundalini rose in all her majesty and empowered her to forgive herself. The guilt throbbing at the neck joint dissolved, and her kundalini danced triumphantly atop her head. The dance unlocked the creative treasure house of collective consciousness. She no more felt the need to 'manufacture' stimulation

in her yang channel because she was drenched by the creativity that poured from collective consciousness. As the new consciousness refracted through the prism of her individual consciousness, it choreographed a pattern of the yin- yang opposites into a perfect rhythmic balance for the Konark Dance Festival.

The light of the kundalini in Olga's eyes said everything, "Some days it all comes together!"

Reena hugged her, "Yes, there are good days where it all flows!"

Olga dried her feet, "All the missing pieces of the puzzle came together, and resolved the conflict in my mind."

Uma reflected, "Conflict is an essential element to all art forms. However, I have realized over time, and with experience, that our kundalini is the greatest guide and master one could ever hope for. She not only empowers us to resolve all conflicts but also shows how to turn a disadvantage into an advantage."

"You are right! I tried to pick Reena's brains for a theme but got nowhere. Now I choreographed the end game my way."

Uma giggled, "May I ask what your game plan is?"

"I have to touch people, bring joy and inspiration back in their lives, and the one way that would work is to connect with the kundalini of my audience."

Reena nodded, "Kundalini is a shared inner reality we all have. Like one candle can ignite another, similarly a dancer whose kundalini is kindled can become a catalyst for kindling the kundalini of her audience. However, her attention has to be in the state of a silent

witness. Her concern for others attracts her attention to them, allowing it to reach out to them, and kindles their kundalini. If there are no blocks in their chakras their kundalini ascends unhindered, and they experience unconditional joy. Conversely, if the dancer's chakras are caught up she transmits negative vibrations, and they disturb the chakras of the audience.”

Uma responded, “Tensions are caused when the yin channel is juxtaposed with the yang in an imbalance, leaving no escape route for the tensions. Before we know it, our yin gets sucked into some past drama that haunts our sub conscious. Similarly, our yang gets sucked into some future worry that unleashes the tensions of our supra conscious.”

Every cell in Olga's body hummed with vibrations, “You know something? That's just what I plan to perform - in order to play out the end game the kundalini has to open a channel between the yin and yang channels, and ascend to collective consciousness.”

Uma interrupted, ““But how would you depict the creativity pouring from collective consciousness into individual consciousness?”

“Hmmm... can't figure it out yet.”

“Why not use the symbol of a lotus to suggest the unfolding of the creativity?” suggested Reena.

Olga chuckled in delight, “You are hell of a game changer!”

Chapter 18

It was Christmas Eve. The Operation Smile team was wiped out by the relief operation. Lena begged them to take a break, but the queue of patients was unending. Finally, the star surgeon decided to split the team and allow them to take turns. By mid-day Lena's team drove down to the Konark Dance Festival.

Olga was in the green room, adorned in silver ornaments, adjusting her tiara made of pith-flowers. Before Lena could introduce her team the call bell rang, and Olga sprinted away. She usually suffered bouts of anxiety before performances, but for the first time after a long time her kundalini gave her wings and lent stars to her eyes.

Guru ji bestowed his blessings on the troupe. "As you have worshipped the dance, it will look after you."

The dancers paid obeisance to the Mother Goddess, the cosmic axis of all evolutionary movement within the universe, which causes the sprouting of seeds and flowers maturing into fruit and brings everything to fruition. They offered flowers, and then perambulated three-and-half times symbolizing the uncoiling of the kundalini.

Olga's kundalini responded spontaneously to the dedication of vibrant drums and the inspiring melodious music. She felt the entire repertoire was a continuum like the flower offerings. In the first act the dance of the opposites set the pattern of the rhythm – the fiery

movement of yang alternated with the gentle yin movement, much like the sun with the moon, the high notes with the low and light with the shadow. Olga's hand movements depicting the yang emotions of angst, ego, and jealousy were perfectly offset by Reena's articulation of the yin gestures of melancholy, fear, and guilt.

Gradually the tempo of the music gathered momentum. Olga was lost in ecstasy as if she were dancing in the clouds. In the magic of the dance Lena could not help observing the smile on her face that appeared sweeter than music and greater than laughter. Though she spun faster and faster yet there was no trace of movement in her mind. Her mind was completely still, and without a ripple of reaction in it. She remained a silent witness to the motion of the dance, as if witnessing the spinning planets while rooted to earth's axis. She discovered a part of her that, no matter what happened remained forever at peace. It gave her a window not only to the events of her life, but also to her participation in the oscillation of yin and yang. Yin and yang were none other than the opposite sides of her ego. Her emotional reactions triggered yin energy, whereas, her mental reactions unleashed yang energy. As her attention had got involved in their oscillation, she had mistaken them for reality, and gotten lost in the notion of past and future, time and space.

Before long, she discovered a silent space between her thoughts that was bereft of any movement. It was a place of peace and serenity untouched by yin-yang reactions. As she witnessed the world from its prism she could deal with its problems without being agitated by them.

Moreover, there was enough room in that space to host the post modern audience. She thought, ‘perhaps that space was inside them too, and if they did not react, they could log into it too.’

She realized the folly of losing her focus to the yin yang oscillation, and thereby being trapped by the shadows projected by them. Guruji’s words buzzed inside her head, ‘ego is none other than self hypnosis’. From the window of her newfound space she saw the projections of her ego but was no longer mesmerized by the shadows cast by them.

As she became one with the dance she came face to face with the reality; the key thing was not to get ensnared by the shadows. She applied Uma’s trick, and wired to her kundalini. The light of her kundalini spontaneously dispelled the shadows.

Just then, a third dancer dressed as a golden goddess appeared on the stage. Through the play of light and shadow she featured the kundalini chasing the shadows up and down the yin yang channels. The shadows spun round and round, till they fell in a swoon. Thereafter, the kundalini triumphantly sailed across the illusion of time and space, and depicted the pristine emotion of unconditional love.

In the final act of salvation sacred verses were recited by the musicians. Olga experienced the relationship with her Kundalini was of eternal peace. As her heartfelt concern was to kindle the kundalini of every one, her relationship jumped off the stage, and struck chord in the collective kundalini of her post modern audience. The collective

kundalini of the spell bound audience responded with a joyful awakening.

For a split second, Lena felt the collective kundalini of her team dance to the rhythm of Olga's kundalini. The vibrations of their kundalini released the fatigue collected by their yang channel, and transported them to another world.

The audience rose and rendered a thundering ovation.

The dancers touched Guruji's feet in thanksgiving. Tears of joy rolled down his cheeks. "But to become a legend still requires that one elusive element that cannot be yours for the having, unless you are meant to achieve it."

Olga smiled," But for me to become a legend is not an important element, the most important element is to stay with the rhythm of my kundalini."

"You are right. But that one important element is also the most elusive element. How successful you are depends on your mastery over your yin and yang elements."

Lena responded, "When I am in sync with my kundalini I am is sync with all the elements."

The star surgeon thanked Olga, "Your end game is the beginning of a new game for us. It is the beginning of a spiritual journey towards self discovery."

Olga responded, "It is the beginning of a new journey for me too!"

Guru ji invited them to dinner but Just then news came that a tropical cyclone had hit the north coast of Odisha. The team had to

rush back. Reena and Olga decided to lend a hand, and accompanied them.

Chapter 19

It was the worst cyclone to hit Odisha, and left behind a trail of heavy damage in the path of its destruction - over ten thousand people dead, another twenty thousand missing, over a million homes destroyed and fifteen thousand livestock killed.

The American surgeon was appalled by the scale of devastation and called the head office for emergency aid. “The cyclone destroyed so much that could have been saved by timely precautions.”

He made plans to provide emergency aid to the devastated coastal communities. But the team manager reported, “There is a complete breakdown of the public infrastructure - roads, transport, power supply hospitals, telecom, drinking water and shelters.”

The team’s efforts were further hampered by heavy rains that followed the storm. Though the roads were wiped out, the team honed all its resources and walked cross country. Government agencies were slow to galvanize food buffer stocks, and could not yet manage to reach the coastal communities. Bereft of drinking water and food, disease began to spread.

The team braved through the hostile mangrove swamps and reached the coastal village. To their horror there was nothing left of the village except mounds of debris. They inspected all the mounds hoping for survivors. After several hours the American surgeon flung out his arms despondently, “It is hopeless! I doubt anyone could have survived three days buried under the debris. I guess we better return to the base camp before it gets dark.”

Just as they were about to leave Uma felt her kundalini shoot up. “You know something; I feel cool vibrations coming from the mound of debris over here.”

The American surgeon looked at her suspiciously.

She tried to convince him, “Remember the cool vibrations you felt atop your head at the Konark Dance Festival? Well, they were the vibrations of your kundalini. The kundalini is the living force within

us, and a font of vibrations. Hence, the vibrations emitting from the mound indicate that there is someone living under it.”

The American’s eyes lit us, “Then what are we waiting for! Let’s go for it.”

They removed the debris of roof tiles and bamboos, and carefully began removing the wet lumps of collapsed mud walls. Uma suggested, “Perhaps we should not use shovels, just in case...”

Just then the American yelled out, “Quick, everyone come here, I feel something like an arm stuck under the debris. I need all the hands to pull out the body.”

The team scraped the mud around the body and discovered a new born babe wrapped in the arms of a woman. It was heart-rending obvious – a poor, hapless mother desperate to protect her little one. Lena rushed the emergency kit and to revive them both. However, the woman’s pulse was long gone. but she detected a faint pulse in the baby.

The team held their breath not knowing what to do. Uma responded to the situation coolly, “Everyone please give the baby vibrations while I raise his kundalini.”

No sooner she ignited his kundalini than his pulse became stronger and he opened his eyes. The American jumped with joy, “He is alive!!!”

The team was electrified, and danced in mad exultation.

Lena pulled out the last sachet of powder milk and fed the baby.

After a grueling day, the team lit a bon fire to cook dinner. Olga managed to find some local greens and fixed a Russian goulash. “You have been walking and working day and night, aren’t you tired?”

The American surgeon opened the last tin of Tuna. “Yes we are tired but our spirits are high.”

“I have often wondered what inspires missionary zeal.”

“You could say it was a decision that stemmed from a sense of duty we owe to our less fortunate brethren. But something changed since the Konark Festival. We came to the Festival to get away from ourselves but the kindling of our kundalini transported us to another world. A new feeling surged within where there was no preconditioning of a doer, charity or pity, there was just a flow of compassion. It was very different from the sense of duty that had earlier inspired me to follow the dictates of my conscience.”

Olga looked at him enquiringly.

Uma joined, “I guess duty entails the presence of a doer. When you think something is a duty the doer in you becomes dead serious about it. Too often seriousness locks your attention in the yang channel and makes you dry, and that hampers the flow of compassion.”

Lena responded, “You are right. I had a similar experience when I did charity out of pity. When you pity somebody it also manifests the presence of a doer, and places the doer at a higher pedestal.”

Uma stated, “I find the flow of compassion within me is celebratory, and as I approach everything in life from its prism, I celebrate everything I do.”

Lena asserted, “The flow of my compassion gives me endless energy.”

The American surgeon nodded, “Me too!”

Uma prompted, “Not just that, it works miracles.”

As Olga held the baby close to her chest, she experienced the stirrings of motherhood deep within. “I love miracles!”