

THE MASTER'S TRICK

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Dedicated to
The Holy Mother Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi

Author's Note

Why is the human clock amiss?
Tenser than the other species on planet earth.
But none other species is tense.
What happened to the human clock?
In a thing called future it got locked.

Why is the thing called 'future' frantic?
Because it lost the key to return to the present.
Thoughts of future create noise in the head.
In a future that does not exist.
A mental trap,
Out of rhythm, out of context,
To speed hooked.
Speed tension brooks.
Future illusions and myths cook.
Myth is not reality.
How often have you heard it told

Turn the clock to the present and reality seek.
Else eat, drink, and be weary.

What if you can find the key to the present?
What if the Holy Mother holds the key?
Then yours is the earth,
And what's more the clock ticks according to you my friend!

- Yogi Mahajan

Chapter 1

Moscow did not sleep that night. The news of the coup sent shock waves across the capital. The martial law imposed a curfew. Sergie was a worried man. He had a concert in the evening at the university, but his bass guitarist, Veronica, was stranded at the Shermitive airport. He tried everything but could not reach Veronica. Luckily, the curfew relaxed by late afternoon, and he rushed to the airport to pick her up.

Soldiers filled the streets and T82 tanks patrolled the key junctions. The entry to the airport was barricaded. Foreigners were trying to leave the city in a hurry causing a traffic jam. Guards stopped Sergie to check his blue Moskvitch. Fortunately, he had renewed his license recently, and passed.

Veronica waited outside the arrival hall with a guitar and backpack. She was busy tying back her messy dark-brown hair when Sergie spotted her.

“Dobreh din!” Sergie waved out.

“Hi! Good afternoon to you too,” Veronica smiled. “Thank God you’re alive. I expected Moscow to be up in flames.”

“No sign of smoke yet,” chuckled Sergie. “We were taken by surprise. I didn’t even get a chance to warn you.”

“No problem. I had my share of adventure!”

“This one is not exactly an adventure.

“How do you deal with it?”

Sergie sighed, “No one can look into the future. We are keeping our fingers crossed; only a miracle can save the President.”

Veronica reflected, “The sight of green shrubs springing in parched crevices of rocks leaves me wonderstruck at the miracles of nature. Last night when we touched Moscow air space the airport was shut, and the traffic control refused landing permission. Our plane was running out of fuel, and after a heated argument the permission was granted. Russian nationals were allowed to disembark, and foreigners were restricted to the transit lounge. However, foreigners accompanying Russian nationals were allowed to leave with them. I had come a long way from America to perform in Moscow and was eagerly looking forward to it, but then I resigned myself to fate. I settled myself in the transit lounge and consoled myself with a Pringles I had saved in my handbag. As I sat bemoaning my fate, an elderly Russian who was seated next to me in the plane said something in Russian. He motioned for me to follow him, and led me through the passport control as his guest. Before I could thank him, he melted in the crowd. But for this miracle, I wouldn’t be here.”

Sergie agreed, “I believe there are no accidents in life. The key thing is to look beyond the obvious.”

To beat the dead line imposed by the martial law, Sergie panicked to get Veronica safely to the concert. As he sped down Leningradsкая Street, his Moskvitch had a flat tire. He pulled out the spare from the boot and started to change it. About ten T82 battle tanks moved towards his car. His heart raced. "This is it," he whispered under his breath.

The putsch commander knelt down to inspect the tire, "Need help?"

"Spasiba Bolshoi. It's fixed."

The tanks moved on and he heaved a sigh of relief, "The military men are in a good mood."

"They don't look the kind to shoot their own people," Veronica answered.

"You never can tell."

Chapter 2

After crossing several check posts, Sergie arrived at the University Hall. They hastily unloaded their equipment in the dark. The show had already begun. The spot light focused on a sonic orchestra that used cardboard boxes, wires, tin pans, wind chimes and ventilators. Sergie's girlfriend, Ludmilla, who was the lead singer smiled and hugged Veronica, "Welcome to Moscow. I am sorry we had no time to rehearse before the show, but I'm sure you will catch on. "

Students zoned out on the floor, and smoked smack. Ludmilla's voice echoed through the dimly lit hall in deep soulful tones. Veronica struggled to keep pace. Some couples got on the floor and started dancing. As the tempo rose, they swirled around faster and faster. Veronica coughed as the smoke from dozens of cigarettes hit her throat. She glanced at the clock in the hall. It was late. To beat the dead line imposed by martial law, the band quit before schedule. The students demanded they stick to schedule. Heated arguments ensued. The students refused to budge. The authorities switched off the lights.

Then suddenly hell broke loose; bands of students used cigarette lighters to start bonfires around the stage with paper bags,

news papers, and empty cartons - anything that could burn. Veronica watched in horror as more students joined the rampage, toppling light stands, speaker towers, smashing bottles and overturning furniture.

Veronica, Ludmilla and Sergie hid backstage hoping that the cops were on their way. Soon, police sirens were heard around the building. The students all disappeared in thin air, leaving behind a shattered band. The cops escorted them to their van.

Chapter 3

Moscow was unusually hot but Sergie's flat was on Lenin Hills, and was cooled by a soft breeze. As Ludmilla fixed tea, she reflected on the previous night's event, "I've never seen anything like this before. I guess it stemmed from the fear lest their long waited freedom would be lost by the coup before it was won."

Veronica was still reeling from shock, "I witnessed something like this at Woodstock. It started as fun. Bands of young people overturned a car, and someone used a cigarette lighter to set it on fire. Inspired by the car fire, marauding hoards of shirtless men set fire to a dozen trucks. It was actually scary; the crowds joined the rampage and started looting and tearing apart cash machines in search of money."

Sergie pointed, "The unrest was built up from the techno-music. Their mental side got over stimulated and erupted in violence."

Veronica continued, "Mental stimulation may be an element but also there was also an ape-instinct to imitate. The other day some monkeys broke into our garden, and as one monkey started breaking flowers, the others followed suit, and stripped our garden

bare. If one monkey does something different, the entire tribe imitates him.”

Ludmilla chuckled, “It’s like my mind that jumps from one thing to the other.”

Sergie responded, “We may have progressed on the cerebral plane, but our mind has remained primitive like our ape ancestors. For instance no sooner than the Paris designers set a trend, the rest of Europe copies it.”

Veronica commented, “As long the collective drive is confined to clothing it is harmless. But when the trendsetters try to fashion the innocent minds of our school kids with pornography it is seismic. Young minds are porous and vulnerable to negativity. They use the internet to pollute the collective.”

Andrei, the drummer, who arrived in the middle of the conversation added, “Perhaps you are not aware of the more sinister threat coming from fundamentalists. They are indoctrinating virgin minds, and are the greatest threat to our freedom. They unleash a mass drive of violence that has changed the face of modern warfare.”

Veronica said, “I can’t understand how people can be so gullible to accept other people’s ideas.”

Ludmilla was thoughtful, “I guess we have to seek the reality that is beyond the mind.”

Andrei shrugged his shoulder, “For me there is no other reality except my mind, ego, intellect and emotions.”

Ludmilla said, “You are right, but there could be reality beyond the mind.”

Sergie offered, “Maybe, we have to wait for the next breakthrough in our evolution where it will be possible to transcend the mind.”

Ludmilla interjected, “I don’t mind waiting for the next evolutionary breakthrough, but I can’t wait to break through the Mafia.”

“We have the world's largest resources but 20 percent of our GDP is in the hands of hundred people. The mafia runs a parallel government. They extort protection money from businessmen and also siphon government funds. In my city, people have not received salaries for two years, the government sent salaries but the mafia embezzled it.”

Andrei narrated, “In Togliatti, the Fiat collaboration manufactures the Lada. After I purchased the car and drove out, two kilometers down the factory a mafia check-post demanded five hundred rubles. When I resisted they smashed my wind shield.”

“Who is the mafia?” asked Veronica.

“Well, they are basically an offshoot of the disbanded KGB. They are old hands at espionage. In the vacuum that was created by the disbanded Communist regime, the smart cookies flexed their muscles and took control. They got some of their people elected in the government. They have their people in the police too.”

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

Andrei looked grave, “It’s worse. They have no ethics. They shoot ruthlessly, they tried to steal my friend's car, when he resisted they shot him point blank. We reported it to the police, but they did nothing.”

Veronica tried to cool the hot heads with a bottle of wine, “Tell you what- let’s call a truce with the best Californian wine.”

“Neither wine nor money can shift my loyalties from Russian Vodka!” cheered Andrei.

He toasted, “To the cocktail of Californian wine and Russian Vodka.”

Veronica raised her glass and then bid the group farewell, as she could not manage time off from her regular schedule of solo gigs. Ludmilla hugged her as the group wished her a comfortable journey ahead.

Chapter 4

Ludmilla woke up with a splitting headache. The doctor confirmed throat cancer. Sergie was devastated but did not want to alarm her, “Tonight the Holy Mother from India would be at the concert, and I heard that she connects you to the healing power within us.”

But Ludmilla was drowsy from an overdose of painkillers and could not make it. He had no choice but to perform without her. Though the hall was full, he felt incredibly lonely, and wanted to escape. But no sooner had the Holy Mother arrived than he felt a huge presence of love. She spoke to him like to a long lost son, and he became an intimate part of an extended family, “You are a great musician, and I am glad you have come to help me spread world peace.”

“It is not in me to give peace to others. How can I spread peace to others when there is no peace within? The knot in my heart has numbed my vocal chords, and my voice has lost its timber.”

The Holy Mother smiled, “My child, how can you get peace by waging war with yours self, with your being, with joy itself. I cannot

bear your torture anymore. I will adorn your life with beautiful blossom and fill your moments with joyful fragrance.”

The Holy Mother put her hand on the left side of his neck joint and transmitted vibrations. She told him to repeat, ‘I am not guilty’.

Time stopped. Her vibrations awoke a flow dormant in him. It curled up his throat and opened his vocal chords. A joy sweeter than music and greater than laughter came to him, and he sang with a power and momentum unknown to him. Tears of joy welled in his eyes, “I do not know where my voice came from!”

She gently stroked his hair, “My child, it was dormant in you, and now the time had come to kindle it. It is described in the Bible as the cool wind of the Holy Ghost and in the Indian scriptures as Kundalini. Kundalini is the flow of unconditional love. Where kundalini pulsates, love creates.”

His senses that had been dormant for a while woke to the sound of silence, “Thank you, the silence within has connected me to the reality, and it has stayed with me.”

She patted him, “If you want to listen to sound of silence then you have to listen to the sounds of the desert. You have to come to the Rann festival of music next week.”

He kissed her hand, “It will be an honor.”

He hurried home and excitedly narrated his experience to Ludmilla, “Its flow relaxed my trauma, and enabled me to see more clearly the source of my stress.”

Ludmilla noticed a bright sparkle in his eyes, “It seems to be a major breakthrough.”

He smiled, “Yes. It was only after I transcended my mind, I internalized what she actually meant.”

They drove to his parent’s dacha in the outskirts of Moscow. His mother had not returned from Church. Ludmilla was surprised, “I thought communism had banned God from the Soviet Union.”

His father explained, “You must understand that the heart and the head are two different things. Any concept or ‘ism’ is only a mental projection; like a thought rises and falls, it does not change the heart. Similarly Lenin engendered new ideas. We introspected, and realized that his ideas were relative, even what we learnt from science was relative. We had not found the absolute truth, and that was the end of our experiment with communism. But we never sold our soul to communism. It did not change our innate love for Madonna. She is etched in our collective memory. Our love for the Holy Mother pulsates in the mosaic of our heritage, art, music and literature, and we will not rest till she is ensconced in our hearts.”

Sergie agreed, “Instead of being next somebody it is better to be first me. For me the moment of truth arrived at the concert of the Holy Mother. Initially I was devastated but when the Holy Mother awakened my energy I heard the pristine sound, and that turned my life around. She said, ‘What’s in the head does not come from the heart. It’s an implant, a mental conditioning. Ideas are superimposed upon the spirit. The real thing is your spirit. Why not connect with it. Gradually, a cool flow rose from the base of my spine and drenched my brain with joy.’”

Ludmilla was excited, “Wow! I would love to connect with my inner flow.”

“Just let go your thoughts till the mind empties. Now keep your attention atop your head, till you will feel the cool breeze on your hands.”

His father felt a cool breeze singing in his hands but his rational mind was unwilling to accept, “I need a logical explanation.”

“But the spirit is beyond mind, logic and the brain. It is an inner happening. If you are experiencing it why do you want to mentalize it?”

“My reflective mind does not buy anything till it is proved.”

“The proof of the pudding lies in the eating; if you have enjoyed the pudding so why worry about its recipe. You can't enjoy the recipe.”

He pointed to a group of CD's, “For example, the morning ragas evoke the joy of nature when it is kissed by the first rays of the sun.”

His father retorted, “I believe each one lives in his own reality, like the fish in a tank believes it to be its reality.”

“I know what you mean but often our reflective mind only sets waves of mental thoughts that do not bring joy. When our mind reflects it absorbs. Thus the reflection sets waves of thoughts. For instance, when we see our reflection in a pond, we start admiring it, and get lost in our own reflection. Similarly we identify with the people, and get lost in them. Our attention goes to their defects,

and we start judging them. But it is a mental activity that is artificial, and does not bring joy. Joy comes from reality.”

“What is the reality?”

“When the Holy Mother ignited my kundalini, I experienced the silence within. It was an opening of crystalline clarity inside my head that silently connected with everything. I stood in reality, and realized that my state of inner silence was independent of my mind reflections. This state exists in all of us but it is obscured by the whirlpool of our mind reflections.”

His words stayed with Ludmilla as they drove back to Moscow in the wee hours of the morning. He waved to the birds, and they spoke to him. She turned to him enquiringly. He chuckled, “Kiddo, it never stopped flowing!”

Chapter 5

The band enthusiastically geared for the Rann festival. Sergie coursed Google Earth, and spotted a large expanse of desert stretching across the western borders of India and Pakistan. Ludmilla checked the flight schedule; there were no flights to the desert, but a train from Mumbai. She clicked the flights to Mumbai. They were booked. She checked the flights to Delhi; just two seats were available. Sergie nodded, “It would be a good opportunity to spend a few days in Delhi and record the indigenous sounds.”

A black taxi with a yellow hood drove them past Delhi’s boulevards shaded with aging Lilac and tamarind trees. The driver halted at a traffic signal, and the sight of a foreigner attracted the street urchins. Sergie flipped a coin at an older urchin but he missed it. A younger urchin caught it, and fled for his life. Amidst the street circus, the driver pointed the majestic Presidential palace perched atop Raisina Hills. But Sergie could not hear the soul of the city.

They entered the old city through an archway of Turkeman Gate, erected by a Turk sultan to commemorate his victory. Next to it a bearded guru preached a sermon. A cluster of bicycles blocked the traffic at Chandni Chowk to make way for a naked sadhu who walked on a bed of barbed wire.

The taxi driver skillfully edged through a narrow bye lane, and safely delivered them to their hotel. It was an ancestral home, a haveli, turned into a lodge. A spiral cast iron staircase led to their room. Sergie was too tired to eat anything, and passed out. Little passed mid night he was woken by the sound of an old creaking fan. He listened in silence to the droning percussion of the rotating blades powered by an electric motor.

As the first ray of the rising sun filtered through his lattice window, the percussion of the fan was interrupted by the call of the Azan from Jama Masjid. It succeeded in fluttering the wings of the pigeons sleeping on the windowsill. Not long after, hymns from the neighboring Sikh shrine joined the chorus. He had read in the tourist book that the Sikhs seek unity with God through recitation of sacred words, and he soaked in the hymns to sooth his weary nerves. The cawing of the crows rose to crescendo, and he felt the soul of the city awake.

From the balcony, Ludmilla suddenly noticed an accident in the corner. They walked to the scene. A heated argument ensued between the colliding scooter and a hand drawn rickshaw. Each swore at the other. Finally, the tea stall owner who witnessed the accident delivered the verdict. Ludmilla fancied the throwaway earthen tea tumbler, and decided to sample it.

Strangers freely engaged in conversation, and shared homemade parathas that looked like pita bread. Over rounds of tea, the conversation turned to a scandal that shrouded a Bollywood icon who hailed from the adjacent lane of 'Billymaran'. The crowd took

sides; the residents of Billymaran owing allegiance to the Bollywood star, lauded his role as the top villain of blockbusters, while the rest accused him of a clandestine affair. The residents took umbrage that led to heated arguments. Both the sides were equally vehement, and came close to a fistfight.

From the prism of reality, the situation appeared hilarious. Sergie saw how both the sides were lost in their mind reflections. The movement of their thoughts was mere mental activity that was artificial. However, their identification with the Bollywood star, whom they had never met, lent a veneer of reality, and deceived by it they took up cudgels in his name. It was no different from the suicide bombers who shed blood in the name of a God they had never seen. It was a trick of the mind. In reality it was much ado about nothing, and *that* was how the reflective mind functioned in a confusion of misidentifications. But from the prism of the mind they could not see it; they had to step outside of it to see it, and till that happened, falsehood would reign as truth.

Sergie felt like the ringmaster in a circus, and volunteered to umpire the debate. He took a vote count. The majority was residents of Billymaran, and voted not guilty.

Ludmilla returned to rest in the hotel but the residents would not let Sergie escape their morning circus. He was a rare find, and had to entertain them; where did he come from? How many children? What did he do? What was his income? When they learnt he composed music, they escorted him to a derelict shop of Babu, a frail white bearded man with twinkling eyes.

Babu repaired musical instruments, “For five generations we made musical instruments. The strings of the instrument are knotted to a pumpkin. The quality of the sound depends on the seasoning of the pumpkin. The best pumpkins come from Mirage in central India.”

“Do you still make instruments?”

“Times have changed. People are becoming more tech-savvy, and do not have the patience for traditional instruments. Somehow I manage to make two ends meet from repairing old instruments. But if you want to buy a sitar, my friend’s aunt is selling one that her mother purchased from my grandfather.”

“No I don’t play any Indian instruments. I come to record the indigenous sounds.”

The twinkle in his eyes brightened, “You have to record the great poet Amir Khusro.”

“Who is he?”

“Just as the Mevlevis used the swirling dance to introduce the mystical state, Amir Khusro introduced musical outpouring called Qawwali to reach that state. In the tryst with love the seeker calls out to become one with the Higher Being. Today we celebrate the birth anniversary of Amir Khusro and I offer a shawl at his shrine.”

Curiosity got the better of him, and Sergie bundled behind Babu’s auto rickshaw. Devotees flocked to celebrate the Urs of the sufi saint Amir khusro at the shrine of his mentor Hazarat Nizamudin, where he himself sought to be buried. They edged their way through the crowded bazaar selling flowers, prayer rugs,

headscarves, incense, oriental perfumes and embroidered caps. Babu bought two white caps, “It is customary to cover the head in reverence to the saint.”

The crowd grew bigger and jostled. Babus’s wallet fell, and before he could retrieve it, an urchin whisked it away. Babu gave chase, but the urchin melted in the crowd.

They entered the shrine through a huge Mosque. Sergie was struck by its deafening silence. Babu explained, “My father said you don’t need to hear music to experience it.”

Sergie queued behind Babu and switched his recorder. Babu offered a beautiful embroidered shawl, and then knelt to pray. His ears trained to something, “Only one who seeks can hear him articulate, for he speaks to the soul.”

Sergie heard him not through his ears but in his inner axis of silence, “You don’t have to see a great poet to feel his presence, I cannot see my flow but feel its presence in the cool vibrations of the poet.”

Babu nodded, “There was not a more soulful poet than he! He saw the world through the prism of love;

Though he was the court poet to five successive sultans, his tryst with love bonded with the inner silence in every one.”

“Well, He must be a realized soul!”

“The old city has a soul of its own. Behind its outward chaos there is a perfectly designed mosaic. It is patterned by an intricate cast system.

Initially cast system evolved according to aptitude. Over a period of time it formed into a rigid structure. Those endowed with a higher intellectual quotient proclaimed themselves to be a superior cast, and segregated cast according to birth.”

“It is typical of the intellectuals to dominate others,” reflected Sergie.

“They structured a hierarchy of higher and lower casts according to birth, and prohibited inter marriage. Gradually each cast established segregated quarters. More recently Gandhi tried to eradicate the cast system. He named the low cast, ‘Harijans’, meaning the beloved of Hari or God. To end the curse of the system he wanted to appoint a Harijan girl as first the president of free India but no one agreed. Tomorrow I will take you to their quarters.

Chapter 6

An open sewage divided a graveyard of djinns from the artisan quarters. As they negotiated a culvert; their attention was drawn to a group of sweepers performing a ritual to their brooms. Babu revealed, “They are the lowest cast assigned to clean the drains of the old city. They are worshipping the divine architect Vishwakarma. The artisans worship their tools in thanksgiving to the divine architect who created them, and thereby providing them the means to earn their livelihood.”

“I understand what they are doing. It speaks to my inner being,” responded Sergie.

Babu reflected, “My father was also inspired by his inner being. He believed that our creative energy is inspired by the feminine principle that flows within us. Creative endeavor implies seeking, and delving into the self. Hence, before making an instrument, he purified himself with a fast. Unfortunately, my generation musicians have lost touch with their inner being. I remember the great masters whose consciousness was so refined that they jealously guarded their instruments against negative vibrations.”

Sergie nodded, “My inner flow too has inspired my journey from the known to the unknown. When I started recording the sacred sites, my consciousness was not so fine tuned. But when I recorded the sounds at the shrine of Amir Khusro I was surprised my recorder picked up sounds that my ears did not hear. I am inspired to seek the cosmic silence that pervades the universe.”

Babu continued, “My father said the unsaid through symbols. He etched motifs of a swan on musical instruments. The swan is associated with the Feminine Principle, and has the ability to separate milk from water. She drinks milk only, which is a metaphor to say that a musician has to discriminate the eternal from the transient.”

The sweepers finished praying, and distributed sweet offerings to the crowd. The tourist guide had warned Sergie not to accept food from strangers, but he was engulfed in cool vibrations, and gladly partook their offerings.

“Thank you, I would like to make a contribution for the sweets.”

“Oh no, this is a gift from God. How can we accept a contribution? It was so kind of you to grace the function.”

Sergie was overwhelmed, “You render a great service to society cleaning the garbage day after day.”

“This beautiful creation is God’s gift, and it is our duty to keep it clean. Of course there the stench from the drain is unbearable, but if you don’t think about it, it is not a problem. But the real problem is to keep the mind clean.”

Babu agreed, “Whenever my vanity jumped, my father pointed to the colorful peacock on the mantle piece. The peacock’s vanity at its own beautiful plumage reminded me to be detached from my ego, and not fall in the illusion of fame.”

A younger sweeper’s joined, “You can say the same for these politicians, the whiter caps they wear- the blacker hearts they have. They want us to carry on the cast tag for their vote bank. Gandhi tried to integrate us with the mainstream of the society by encouraging us with special quotas but now politicians use quotas to garner votes.”

“True, it is the ego that divides,” said Sergie. “Politicians play games everywhere; in the west the Catholic Church plays even a more sinister game. Behind a ‘holier than Thou’ façade they sexually abuse innocent children. So what is the use of beautifying their altars when their mind remains filthy? Better to sweep the mind before sweeping the Church.”

“I find the dirt collects in the mind, and eventually perverts it. And once the mind gets perverted it is difficult to straighten it,” commented Babu.

“But how do you discern the negativity in the mind,” asked the sweeper.

“When my mind down loads negativity, my flow trips, and the hot vibrations in my hands warn me,” responded Sergie.

“How do you address it?” questioned the potter.

“For me vibrations work the best. Hot vibrations enable me to see when I slip, and then I address the issue. Resumption of cool vibrations indicates that the negativity is deleted.”

Chapter 7

They tracked through a row of mud-plastered huts with thatched roofs that opened into an oval courtyard. In the centre of the courtyard a Tamarind tree offered the only shade to a group of potters. The children playfully shook the Tamarind tree, and cheered at the falling fruit. Between offering water to a Basel plant, cooking meals on open hearths, and tending siblings, the women fed clay to hungry wheels. “The moisture content is the key thing that holds the clay firmly to the wheel. The attention has to be focused; a slip of attention could bring the pot crumbling down,” explained Babu.

The potter’s attention was glued to the wheel, and did not notice the visitors recording the music of his wheel. Babu continued, “The potters are treated as low cast, but their spirits are by far more resilient than the so called high casts. They follow an enlightened potter Gora Kumar, who gave them back their self-respect.

The potter endorsed, “He helped us to understand that nothing exists in isolation. Every single person, big or small, rich or poor, sweeper or potter, carpenter or weaver is a part of the planetary drive, and contributes to the final product of creation. For instance, without the womenfolk who would knead the clay, and without the wheel how could we shape the pots.”

“From experience I know what is inside is outside. For instance, if you look at this pot the space inside appears apart from the space outside. But supposing the pot breaks, then the pot returns to clay, and the space inside the pot becomes a continuum of the outside space.”

Sergie felt a cool flow rise up from the tip of his spine, and realized the strong earth element of the potter was a continuum of the earth element within him. “We were continuum of the same energy. Our flow connects in the silence within. Our inner silence connects to the cosmic silence. No matter where we are, we are connected to it.”

“However, when a thought arises, it disrupts the silence,” remarked the potter.

Sergie enquired, “Where does the thought come from?”

“The thought strays from the mind.”

“But in the silence there is no mind.”

Babu concluded, “The silence is a state of thoughtless awareness. But when the consciousness gets attached to something it gets identified with it, like the clay thinks it is the pot.”

Sergie reflected, “Now I see how we get caught in the illusion of thinking ourselves apart from the whole. For instance, the flow of the pristine sound is beyond percussion. A musician who mistakes the notes to be apart from the pristine sound is eluded.” Babu endorsed, “Likewise, where the flow of consciousness gets attached, ego is born.”

“But surely there must be a way to overcome the attachment and resume the pristine flow of consciousness,” thought Sergie. “How else can the pristine sound flow unfettered?”

“When you are not attached to anything what is there to be detached from? Questioned Babu.

The potter returned to his wheel, “I know I can never be rich, but I also know one thing that the real joy comes not from creating things, but from putting life into things I create. I breathe life into pots, thereafter the pot takes on a soul of its own. When a customer appreciates it, his joy liberates my soul.”

It was hard for Sergie’s futuristic mind to take it in, “I believe in achieving perfection. How can you maintain uniform production lines?”

The potter picked up a pot, “I could never create a freak like this, only nature can create this art. When I fire a pot I don’t have a clue how it will turn up. That is the surprise element that brings me boundless joy. I am like the hollow flute that does nothing at all; it is nature that does everything. She is the art and the artist. When I fire the pots I leave everything to her, and never ceases to thrill me.”

Sergie mused, “The thing is not to plan the future, but to go with the flow of cool vibrations.”

Chapter 8

As they advanced further down the old wall, it crumbled to make way for a cluster of small tin sheds, and Sergie's keen ears picked up the rattle of spinning wheels.

Babu explained, "Spinning was our country's oldest cottage industry. Gandhi revived it to supplement agriculture. He introduced the spinning wheel in millions of homes, and made it the nucleus around which all other cottage industries revolved, like ginning, carding, warping, sizing, dyeing and weaving. These in their turn kept the village carpenter and the blacksmith busy."

Sergie reflected, "Mmm...it sure keeps them from idleness."

Babu responded, "But more importantly, it became the friend and solace of the widow."

Sergie recorded the sound of weavers spin with all their might and heart. When he listened to the recording, he could not believe his ears – all the spinning wheels rattled in perfect unison, "How could hundreds of spinning wheels apart from each other sync in a soulful rhythm."

Babu smiled, "The spinning-wheel befriends the weavers. The yarn they spin speaks to the warp and woof of their lives."

Sergie doubted, “I wonder if they really listen to it.”

Babu responded, “They sure do. Its music is a balm to their soul. A weaver named Kabir heard it say;

‘He knows him, who loves

If you feel not the pangs of love

It is vain to adorn your body.

Sergie mused, “Is not that our own life story?”

Babu concluded, “But the message of the spinning wheel was much wider than its circumference. It was the symbol of Gandhi’s non-violent movement, and became the instrument for winning our country’s freedom through non-violence means.

“And for us it has a life of its own,” smiled the weaver.

Chapter 9

They chanced upon a carpenter repairing spinning wheels in the adjoining shed. A spiky lad in a funky T-shirt offered tea in glass tumblers. Mindful of guests, he offered Sergie first. Thinking that a stranger should not deprive them of their much-needed refreshment, Sergie politely declined. Babu glanced disapprovingly, “They do not look upon visitors as strangers but rather as honoured guests. Your refusal would hurt their sentiments.”

Sergie apologized, “I didn’t see it like that.”

They chatted over tea, and the carpenter introduced the young lad, “He is my nephew, Satish Chand. I am repairing these spinning wheels gifted to him from a friend who atoned for sending him to jail.”

“Dan looked at Satish Chand suspiciously, “Jail?”

Satish Chand responded, “It’s a long story. The neighbor’s son and I were childhood buddies. He fell into bad company and started pedaling drugs. When the police got wind of it, he hid the drugs in my house. Not finding the drugs at his place, the police combed our quarters, and that was it. I pleaded innocence. The police tortured me, and finally I disclosed his name. But he denied the charge. Not

just that, he implicated me for pedaling them. I was sentenced to three years of rigorous imprisonment.”

“The jail rehabilitation offered a program to learn various skills like painting, stitching, basket weaving, shoe making and wood carving. The products are sold, and the proceeds are credited to our accounts. Having learnt wood craft from my father I opted for wood carving.”

“The master craftsman was a kind man. He heard my story, and believed me.”

Sergie was curious, “What made him believe it?”

“I asked him the same question. He replied, ‘In every block of wood lies a beautiful statue, and a carver has the eye to see it.’”

I enquired, ‘How does his eye see it?’

He answered, ‘With the eyes of compassion. For instance when you love someone you know what he likes because you are on the same page. Similarly, a carver’s passion reveals him the beautiful statue hidden in every block of wood.’

I confessed it was not in me to have compassion for any one. Day and night I seethed with revenge. I lived for nothing else.

He smiled, ‘Love is more powerful than revenge. Revenge closes the heart, whereas love opens it. If you want to see the statue hidden in the wood you have to open your heart to it.’

‘But how to open my heart?’

He encouraged, ‘Forgive your buddy.’

I protested, ‘But he ought to be punished.’

He smiled, 'Do not waste your energy on what he did or what you should do. If you forgive him from your heart, your eyes will open to the most beautiful creation of the divine artist.'

His words left a power stamp on my consciousness. It changed the way I looked at myself. I prepared to tame the tiger of hate within by communicating with it. The struggle sharpened my wits, and bared my negativity before me.

Finally I forgave him. And then something amazing happened - he transformed! He repented, and gifted his handlooms to me. Of course I did not want to accept anything from him, but he pleaded that unless I accepted them he could not forgive himself. So I had no choice.

His uncle endorsed, "I can't believe he is the same person. When I visited him in jail, the supervisor complained that he was like a tiger who roared at everyone."

Satish Chand confessed, "Initially I seethed with vengeance, but once the master craftsman disclosed his trick, my anger mellowed."

Sergie was intrigued, "And may I ask what was that trick?"

He took me for a long drive, and stopped at a fork. He pointed to the gearbox, and said, "There are two gears; one takes the car forward, and the other backwards. Similarly, there are two gears in the mind; one acts and the other that reacts. The driver's job is simply to switch gears, and not react."

Sergie smiled, "Well, I must remember to switch the right gear."

"But the trick is to keep the attention focused, and not allow it to drift into thoughts."

“How does he do that?”

“He pointed to the traffic, and asked me to watch the cars without moving with them. He drew a parallel between the street traffic, and the traffic in my mind lanes, and then instructed me to close my eyes and watch the traffic within without moving with it. It was peak hour, and my mind lanes were very busy with thoughts. Unfortunately there were no traffic lights or cops to regulate the traffic. Not long before, my attention drifted and I met with an accident. I struggled to pull my attention out of it, but it would not budge from the trauma of the accident.

I opened my eyes, and reported my trauma to the master craftsman. He drew a parallel between my trauma and my mind block, ‘Your mind is blocked from your undue attachment to the idea of revenge. Revenge is the negativity that triggered the accident, and unless you forgive you will not be free of its trauma.

In the jail your physical freedom is curbed but if you are a prisoner of the mind then all outside freedom is only an illusion.’

“Once I understood the cause of my mind block, it became easier to make a conscious effort to surmount it. No sooner had I let go the thought of revenge, than my trauma left.

To avoid another accident, I parked my attention in a place of calm and clarity. The traffic moved on, but I remained a silent spectator. I witnessed the thoughts come, stay and leave, without getting attached to them. In the witness state it became possible to understand the movement of thoughts and feeling. And out of that feeling dawned silence. Once I understood the structure of my

thoughts, I understood the way my mind worked. And once I understand my relationship with my mind, I got the hang of the master craftsman's trick."

Sergie nodded, "Well, I had to come a long way to India to learn your master craftsman's trick!"

Babu smiled, "Sometimes you have to travel a long way to find what is so near."

Chapter 10

Sergie shared the recordings with Ludmilla, “It’s amazing how the multiple sounds of the sweepers, potters, weaver and the carpenters, distill into the single sound, AUM. I recollect having heard it before; it was the sound of my kundalini rising before the Holy Mother.”

Babu nodded, “My father believed that all sound results from percussion. But AUM is beyond percussion. It has neither a beginning nor end, neither heard nor unheard, it is the sound of the pulsation of the cosmic soul.”

Sergie affirmed, “The Holy Mother said something similar, “Where kundalini pulsates, love creates.”

Babu continued, “Its vibrations resonate everything in the universe to soothe this beautiful creation of the Feminine Principle.”

Sergie nodded, “Yes, the Holy Mother’s vibrations worked for me, and pulled me out of my depression.”

Babu suggested, “If you were healed by her vibrations then perhaps you too could heal your wife’s cancer with vibrations.”

Ludmilla was exhausted by the chemotherapy session, but Sergie's optimism was infectious, "How long will it take?"

"You can get it in the course of this afternoon. It is your own power; it depends on your pure desire to connect with your spirit."

"I get burning on my left hand," responded Ludmilla.

"The left hand is a receptor of the collective subconscious, and indicates the presence of a virus or a dead entity."

"That sounds a bit weird," remarked Ludmilla.

Babu interrupted, "It sounds weird because of our ignorance of the dead. Actually at our conscious mind is completely ignorant about the dead. Once we bury them we think they are gone. In India we believe that the soul does never dies; it takes rebirth in another body.

However, a soul may not take rebirth instantly. For instance, if a person dies in a sudden accident, his tormented soul hangs around the loved ones, and latches on to their body. It feeds on their body's nervous system like a parasite, and thereby causes mental and emotional dysfunctions."

Ludmilla unburdened her heart, "My father was a pianist, and died when I was thirteen. Within a year my mother remarried his best friend. I felt betrayed, and never forgave her. It surfaced in my resentment to my stepfather. I took refuge in my father's piano. After school I washed dishes in a restaurant to pay for piano lessons. The restaurant was very busy on weekends, and one night I missed the last bus. A young waiter offered me a lift home. I was very lonely, and sought his companionship. He introduced me to

drugs. One thing led to the other, we married, and when he learnt I was pregnant, he simply disappeared. My mother insisted on abortion. I never forgave myself for taking my child's life."

Sergie recalled the young carpenter's tool of forgiveness.

Ludmilla continued, "Last night I had a vivid dream of my father playing Handel's Messiah."

Sergie interpreted, "You buried your father's love in the closet of not forgiving yourself. He guided you in the dream to forgive yourself."

Babu added, "Till you forgive others you cannot forgive yourself."

Ludmilla could not hold back her tears.

Sergie tried to comfort her but could not stop her sobbing. He was worried that she might go in to comma. He remembered the Holy Mother transmitting vibrations to a centre on the left side of his neck joint. Likewise he transmitted vibrations to her. Initially the flow of vibrations was weak, but gradually, the transmission grew stronger, and her neck joint started throbbing.

Ludmilla felt a flow rise up her spine, and curl around her neck joint. Unsure of whether to allow her conscious mind to embrace the flow or not, she distanced herself from her mind, when suddenly she a reassuring feeling came upon her. The flow was like a friend who wanted to comfort her pain without asking anything in return. The flow felt like the Holy Mother who carried the secret of creation, and the wisdom of the ages in her womb. She

understood, organized and above all validated her. Ludmilla trusted her, and it helped Ludmilla to become herself again.

Sergie heard the pristine sound AUM resound in his headspace, and knew that her kundalini had thrown out the negativity that blocked her throat centre.

Their eyes met. For an eternal moment their flow connected to the pristine sound that resonated the universe. Bereft of the mind and the intellect, it connected to everything at once - Babu, the pigeons fluttering on the windowsill, and the mouse nibbling left over's on the floor.

In the enlarged prism of her consciousness, Ludmilla could see more clearly the ego born of non-forgiveness. Moreover, she saw that it was her ego that felt guilty, "I did not know that I carried so much baggage."

Sergie kissed her tenderly, "You know something kiddo, our potter friends said that what was inside attracted the outside. The negativity in your throat centre attracted the outside negativity. Your guilt harbored the cancer cells. But when you released the guilt, then your kundalini destroyed the cancer cells."

Babu interrupted, "Don't forget, our sweeper friend reminded us to sweep our mind daily lest the dirt collects again."

Sergie smiled, "The important thing is not to dwell in the past. The past does not exist.

Babu nodded, "Our potter friend something similar, "The future does not exist, so why worry about it!"

Chapter 11

Ludmilla woke up refreshed from a deep sleep. She had not slept so well for years. She sat up in bed as her head googled the information she had gathered from Sergie the previous night. Her fast track intellect quickly edited what was disagreeable, but saved what he said about not dwelling in the past. Her thoughts drifted out of the window, she spotted the clovers glistening in the morning dew. The purity of the morning dew drops morphed into droplets of pure desire for the absolute truth. So far, she had habitually edited the truths, and there was no way a database of half-truths could reveal the absolute truth. At the back of her mind she knew Sergie's had accessed it, and wondered what it was like. She sailed into the living room to find Sergie plugged to headphones, "What are you listening to?"

He handed her the headphones, "If you want to enjoy the beauty of the old city, listen to its indigenous sounds."

She smiled, "Their consonance is music to my ears. But tell me what did you see from the window of your kundalini?"

"Before my kundalini kindled, I felt apart from my music. My music expressed my emotional trauma, and nurtured similar

emotions of my audience. But after the Holy Mother ignited my kundalini my spirit started singing in the valley of my heart. I do not know if I am alive because I have music in me or I live for it. Earlier my spirit was not free to express its joy, but now it is lost in my beloved.”

She retorted, “Come on, every musician has the freedom to create his own style!”

“Of course there should be complete freedom to create, but if a musician is not connected to his inner self, how can he connect to the self in others? Without the connection, how can his music bring them joy? Joy comes from love. The instrument has to be connected to the source of love to bring joy. So what’s the use of creating something that does not bring joy?”

“But his creativity brings happiness.”

“Happiness comes with the duality of unhappiness, but joy is something that originates without material cause. It manifest when we are thoughtless. Thoughts arise from the mind, and hence an artist who creates from the mind projects his mind.”

She said, “I wonder why musicians have become so joyless.”

“Because their ego and conditioning block their flow.”

“Conditioning?”

“Supposing, you were given a choice between tomato and lemon juice what would you chose?”

“Tomato juice.”

“Why?”

“As a kid I loved plucking sun ripe tomatoes from Mom’s backyard.”

“So your choice was made by the fond memory of your childhood conditioning. Now you can better understand how your choice was determined by your conditioning. Our conditioning wields incredible gravitational pull that holds us back. Our conditioned mind constitutes our ego that endorses judgments, evaluations, biases, prejudices, but does not know how to love. By its nature the ego is aggressive, and tries to dominate our spirit. Because as we are not free to control our memory, our conditionings etched in it overtake us, and thereby blocks our flow of unconditional love.”

“But I am free.”

You think you are free, but actually you voice other people's ideas, transmitted from books, friends, family T.V., newspapers and internet or react to them.”

“You are truly free when your stream of unconditional love flows unfettered like the music of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Straus, Handel and Vivaldi.”

“Both the emotional and mental quotients of a musician create. However, if his creativity is not connected to the flow of unconditional love it only reflects his conditioning, and that can only give momentary happiness but not joy. Conversely, if he is connected, his flow spontaneously kindles the flow of joy in his audience.”

“At what point do you kindle their flow?”

“During my performance when I become completely immersed in the love for others; at that point their flow kindles spontaneously. I forget who I am, my woes, and I do not seek any reward or recognition. At that selfless moment my flow enjoins a collective flow, and kindles the kundalini of my audience collectively.”

“So you don’t command their kundalines to kindle.”

“Oh no way! She does not respond to the commands of the ego, intellect or the mind. On the contrary, she has to delink our attention from the mind and the intellect, to cross the threshold of conditioning and ego. Thereafter, she wires us to a super computer that stores all the data. Thus the attention of a realized musician penetrates like a laser beam, and accesses the source of love. He drinks the nectar of its pristine melody, and the pristine sound flows in his music and kindles the kundalini of the audience. Like the Holy Mother said, ‘where kundalini pulsates love creates.’ His kundalini inspires his creativity, and his creativity in turn inspires his audience.

Love is the source of joy. It pervades the universe in the silence of vibrations.”

“When I first performed for the Holy Mother, the pristine sound kindled the kundalines of the audience. The whole panorama suddenly changed, and they started dancing spontaneously. I was drenched in their joy.”

She interrupted, “Conversely, a musician’s negativity could bounce back on the audience.”

Chapter 12

Sergie and Ludmilla checked into Mumbai's iconic Taj Hotel to catch the train to the Rann Festival in Kutch. As they admired the Hotel's awesome interiors, they overheard someone mentioned that the architect who designed the hotel committed suicide because by mistake they changed the front façade to the rear. They were hungry and decided to snatch a quick bite at the restaurant. The menu was elaborate, and after some debate they settled for Taj's special Kebabs. Sergie piled steaming kebabs in Ludmilla's plate. But soon her attention was distracted, "I hear gun shots."

Sergie brushed aside her anxiety, "They are firecrackers from a wedding."

He dug into the succulent kebabs, but before he could take a bite, a bunch of highly charged teenagers materialized from nowhere. They were clean-shaven with nice haircuts, dressed in cargo trousers, designer T-shirts, branded sneakers, shoulder bags, and dangling AK 47's. For a moment he mistook them for Mumbai's gang war. But when their AK 47's opened fire, he saw the blood spilling, and glass splintering, he was transfixed and not long after, it dawned on him that they were Jihadi terrorists.

His immediate thought was Ludmilla's safety. Before he could press the panic button, his Kundalini rose, and connected him to the cosmic silence. He realized that his kundalini had come to his rescue. She was in complete command of his mind, and prevented it from reacting to the situation. Her cool vibrations drew his attention to the kitchen door. He grabbed Ludmilla's hand, and ducked under the table. He waited for the terrorists to turn their back, and then they crawled bare feet through a pool of blood towards the safety of the kitchen.

The chef heaved a sigh of relief, "They are thirsty for foreign blood. Quick, get into the uniform wardrobe. Switch off your mobile and don't make any noise. I will lock the wardrobe from the outside, so no one will suspect you are inside. When it is safe I will knock three times before unlocking the cupboard."

Sergie was wiped out, "Let's try to remain calm."

Ludmilla whispered, "My heart is pounding all over the place. I am too afraid to relax."

Sergie encouraged, "Come on kiddo, better to face the fear rather than freeze in it."

"How to face fear?"

"By confronting what scares you."

Ludmilla's heart pounded louder as she heard the eerie sound of machine guns rattle in the background. She clung to Sergie, "I am frightened to die."

Sergie stroked her hair gently, "It is what terrorists hope we will become – like them, denying life and embracing death. They want

to scare us to death, and disrupt the motion in our lives. That is how they want to change our lives, the life of our cities, and our western way of life. Hence, we should not play into their hands. The important thing is that we are alive this moment, and we both will live together till death. The greatest mistake is to give up hope.”

“Easier said than done! I don’t think I have the strength to overcome fear and to remain hopeful in the face of bullets threatening us.”

Sergie realized that her childhood trauma had beamed back. He put his hand on her heart to transmit vibrations. Ludmilla felt a flow empower her heart. The gnawing insecurity was calmed by the presence of a warm glow. Secure in her spirit, she easily fell asleep. She dreamt of the Holy Mother holding her in her lap and softly caressing her.

They were woken up by three rude knocks. Sergie looked at his watch, it was 5.15 am. They had overslept.

The chef’s exclaimed, “Thank God it’s over! Just after you hid in the wardrobe, Black Cat commandoes were dropped down by Indian army helicopters. As soon as the terrorists realized they were outnumbered by the commandoes, the terrorists started throwing grenades. However, under cover of smoke the commandoes rushed to the second floor to save the guests. But when they reached there, they were shocked to find only bodies strewn all over the floor. Before they could help the injured, the terrorists fired on them. The commandoes were handicapped because they did not have the floor plan of the hotel whereas the terrorists were well versed with all the

exits and entries. Despite that they were undeterred and hounded them out from every floor.

The dome caught fire and spread to the floors below. Guests trapped in their rooms tried to jump out of the windows. Firemen flashed lights and pointed to the rescue team. They rescued most of the guests through the night. Half an hour ago the firing stopped, three of the terrorists were killed but one is still missing. The hotel is not safe yet, better to escape from the rear entrance.”

With tears of gratitude Sergie gratefully touched the chef's feet. The Chef was embarrassed, “I only did my duty.”

He signaled, “All the guests' kindly queue at the rear entrance to escape one at a time. Foreigners first.”

Sergie grabbed Ludmilla's hand and pulled her out. Hardly had they crossed a couple of meters when the firing resumed. It was like a war zone with bullets flying past their bodies. Unsure of whether to go forward or return to the kitchen, Ludmilla panicked. But Sergie felt the flow of his kundalini come up with a force he had not experienced before. He knew it was the Holy Mother beckoning him on, and hence despite the intellect telling him to turn back; he clutched Ludmilla's hand, and leapt forward. They heard a sharp cry pierce from behind. They turned around. A bullet had hit the banker behind them.

Chapter 13

The nearest building stood a hundred meters away, and Ludmilla did not have the strength to make it. She tried to drag her body as far as she could, and then gave up hope. Just then the flow of her kundalini soared from her innermost recess, and prodded her on.

An ambulance waiting at the other end quickly whisked them to the nearest hospital. The doctor examined them closely but found no injuries. He decided to observe them for a day and assigned them to the general ward. After the harrowing events of the day, they were grateful for a little rest.

As news of the terrorists trickled in, the ward was abuzz. An elderly patient reported, “The terrorists had come in a ship, and used a boat to come to the shore. They killed three fishermen who were on the boat, and used the fourth to navigate the boat. A short distance from the shore they slit his throat and dumped him. After landing at the fish market they formed four groups, and hired taxis to attack the hotel and the train station. They planned to kill 5000 people, and return with hostages to protect themselves.”

A patient with a plastered arm stepped in, “I just heard that 200 people died, and the top cop got killed in a car explosion.”

Sergie enquired, “What became of the terrorists?”

He replied, “Most of the terrorist have been killed. Only an 18-year-old boy survived.”

“What became of him?”

“He says he is innocent and harbors no animosity to anyone. He claims that he had no choice in the matter as he was selected by the terrorist outfit to accompany them by the toss of a coin. He pleads for mercy.”

The elderly patient retorted, “It is rather strange that the terrorist who shows no mercy or compassion while killing innocent civilians with lethal weapons should seek mercy.”

“You’re right,” agreed the patient on crutches. “They have become insensitive and dehumanized. Before killing the victims, they do not think even for a second about their parents, wives, and children. The families of those killed suffer agony for their entire life, apart from financial and other losses.”

The doctor remarked, “Terror outfits manipulate the psyche of the younger generation. They understand that adolescence is the best time to mesmerize them, and they also know that youngsters from deprived background are most vulnerable. Since their well-being is taken care of by the terror outfit, their vulnerable minds easily embrace their belief. The belief often comes from a perverse interpretation of religion.”

“They cast an auto hypnotic spell on their young minds. Thus their innocent minds are brainwashed into believing what they are doing is for the ultimate good, and thereby would earn them the password to paradise. This is how mesmeric mysticism works in the collective psyche of the young generation.”

Sergie reflected, “What you say vindicates the innocence of the 18-year-old boy.”

The doctor looked confused.

Sergie said, “You made a point that terror outfits succeed in mesmerizing innocent minds because they are vulnerable. It implies that the conscious mind of the 18-year-old was superimposed by the will of the terror outfit. At the end of the day it is clear that he did not act from his free will.”

“You mean the way Hitler superimposed his will on the German people,” interrupted the patient with crutches.

The patient with the plastered arm interrupted, “Wait a minute, are you suggesting that an Osama outfit superimposed its will on this innocent lad, and hence he should not be held guilty?”

Sergie nodded, “Don’t take it the wrong way, but it seems to me that the poor 18-year-old was not even seven when an Osama outfit bleached him in its brain-washing machine. Daily chanting of religious texts in madrasas aided the autohypnosis, and in that space his fantasy of martyrdom was reinforced.”

Ludmilla pointed, “Come on, if their washing machine bleached him blue, my washing machine at home could rinse him back to white.”

Sergie smiled, “I believe the quality of innocence is never lost. If his heart is innocent, then the superimposed color can easily be rinsed out. Once the myth is removed, the true color will surface.”

“And the truth will set his spirit free,” agreed Ludmilla.

The patient with the plastered arm seethed for revenge, “Tell that to the families who’ve already lost their loved ones!”

Chapter 14

Sergie and Ludmilla took a taxi to the railway station to board the Bhuj train. The mood at the train station was somber as commuters came to grips with reality. The heritage structure of the train station was riddled with bullets and grenade craters. Sergie took pictures of the bullet holes with his phone.

They shared the carriage with a middle-aged lady and daughter. The lady warmly smiled, “Where are you from?”

“Russia.”

“I am Sheila, and this is my daughter Reva. We gifted her a Russian doll for her seventh birthday, and she still clings to it.”

“How old is she?”

“She turned 20 yesterday. We had booked tickets to celebrate her birthday at home in Bhuj, but her aunt suddenly arranged to show her a marriageable boy, and we had to make cancellations at the last moment.”

“The marriageable boy sure brought you luck,” smiled Sergie. “Or you may have been trapped like us.”

Reva stammered, “I recently graduated from Mumbai’s Art school and would have liked to work as an interior designer, but my mother insists it can wait till after the marriage.”

Sheila chirped, “It was a miracle. The marriage proposal came at the nick of time, or else we would have been sitting ducks for the terrorists like those unsuspecting passengers sitting in the waiting hall.”

“Why did they not move to safety?” enquired Ludmilla.

“It was so sudden; two terrorists ran amok. They fired indiscriminately and threw grenades right into the middle of the waiting hall killing 47 people, and critically injuring more than 56.”

“Where were the cops?”

“There were 100 railway cops, but they were no match for them. The terrorists wielded AK-47’s whereas our cops faced them with self-loading rifles. The railway cops fired 40 rounds in retaliation. It’s not as if they did not try their best; they shot one terrorist in the leg.”

Ludmilla was not comfortable with the idea of an arranged marriage, “How do you know he is the right person to marry.”

Sheila was on the defence, “After 25 years of marriage, I can tell you there is no such thing as the right person. I met a lot of youngsters who in the first blossom of love described their partners as soul mates, and a year later they divorced. I believe the success of a marriage lies not so much in marrying Mister Right as in adopting the right attitude towards your spouse.”

Ludmilla lamented, “I have been hurt in marriage and know what it is to be trapped. I can tell you there is nothing lonelier than living with the wrong person.”

Sheila continued, “Come what may, if you love your spouse then you would be surprised; scratch the surface and you will find your partner just as eager for the marriage to work.”

A button pressed in Ludmilla’s mind, “Sergie and I love each other dearly and often talked about marriage, but we are afraid to lose our space and self-expression. I have still baggage left from a devastating marriage.”

Sergie held her hand, “If you love someone, then you have to trust him. Then the magic of love heals all hurts. The important thing to remember is it is never too late.”

Ludmilla felt her flow rise, “You are right. It is never too late.”

Reva said, “He was very pleasant, but it was too sudden for me to make up my mind. I prayed for a sign, and our miraculous escape seems to be the sign.”

Sergie felt cool vibrations, and knew she had made the right decision.

The train coursed the western seacoast along the Arabian Sea, and halted at the coastal town of Valsad. A bald gentleman sporting a white cap boarded their carriage. His smile expanded from ear to ear, “Hello everyone. I am Feroz Carpenter.”

“You a carpenter?”

“No, it is my surname. Our ancestors got surnamed after their professions when they migrated from Iran.”

Ludmilla was curious, “Why did they migrate?”

“It is a long story. We are Parsis, followers of Prophet Zoroaster. In the 8th century, Islamic fundamentalists took over Iran and persecuted Zoroastrians. An exodus of Zoroastrians escaped to India. They landed on the Nargol coast and sought refuge from the local king. The king sent them a tumbler filled with water to the brim implying that the place was full and there was no room for more. The Parsi elder dissolved sugar in the tumbler of water and returned it, thereby implying that they would not be burdensome but melt with the local population.”

Sergie felt his flow rise, “He must have been a realized soul.”

“He believed in one God, and love for all humanity.”

The train attendant brought freshly cooked meals in metal trays. Sheila enquired, “How is the food?”

“Mmm... a bit spicy.”

Sheila opened her tiffin, “You have to try my homemade parathas stuffed with potatoes. I cooked them especially for the journey.”

“Thank you. They are delicious.”

Feroz opened his wicker basket and offered dwarf bananas to everyone, “They are the specialty of the coast, and sweeter than the ones you get in the city.”

The train attendant made their beds and switched off the lights, “Good night.”

Sergie taped the pristine sound in the soothing rhythm of the train, and instantly fell asleep.

Ludmilla was restless. She tossed and turned but could not fall asleep. The face of the banker smeared with blood haunted her. The flow of her kundalini atop her head beckoned her to its comforting zone, but the banker's blood-smeared image had left a powerful stamp on her conscious mind, and it would not allow her attention rest in peace. Tremors of fear shook her. As the flow bathed her conscious mind with cool vibrations, her attention shifted to her comfort zone, and her mental computer opened the file of the Master Craftsman's trick of overcoming thoughts by witnessing them.

She imagined herself seated on the railway platform, and watched the trains go by. Her conscious mind appeared like a transit lounge, where thoughts came and went, but there was no silence. She found herself moving with the train of thoughts, but then she made a supreme effort to distance herself from them. Several trains passed by before she could get into a witness state. Finally she transferred the banker's blood-smeared image to an approaching train. As the train rolled away, she bid adieu to his image, and closed the file.

She curled under her soft blanket but there other unfinished files, which nagged her and would not let her sleep. As the first file flashed on the screen, she saw herself pre-occupied with the lead singer of the rival band. At first she brushed it aside as mere envy but as she examined it more closely, she spotted a jaded mind that was consumed by a burning ambition for stardom. Behind it was the yearning to be validated.

The next file revealed her pent up anger against her divorced husband, and also her mother. It also unfolded a collective pent up anger against the earlier regime that murdered millions to further the cause of communism.

A shorter file triggered fear in her mind. She was afraid of change, as it spelt anxiety of the future. Having been hurt once, her mind had built a citadel to safeguard against being hurt again. It stood like a sentinel and would not let even Sergie in, even though she loved him.

Her flow grew more powerful, and it dawned upon her that just as she got rid of the banker's gruesome image by distancing herself from it and transferring it to a passing train, similarly she could close the past by making use of the present, and thereby close the unfinished files.

She tapped the mouse to log onto the present. But instead, the past and the future flashed on the computer screen. The past was over, and the future did not exist, and hence, neither was the reality. The reality was the present but somehow every time she tried to log on to it, it contrived to escape her. She saw the humor behind it and chuckled, "I didn't know my mind was such a prankster! I better deal with it now else falsehood would reign as truth, and make me believe I am guilty."

Each thought snowballed into a chain of thoughts. They reached a dead end, and then recoiled back. For instance, her mind liked one thing today, but no sooner had the polarity recoiled, than she became indifferent or disliked it. Beneath it she tracked an

unconscious play of reverse osmosis. Like the sun gives light but also creates shadows, similarly happiness casts the shadow of unhappiness. The play of light and shadow energized the hands of her mind-clock to swing like a pendulum.

As she watched the pendulum swing, it got momentarily trapped in her mental concept, but concepts were not reality, and soon the pendulum escaped her grasp. It gave her a window to the Jihadi clock, and saw their pendulum swing the zebra way. Like the communist regime, they too were not content to peacefully enjoy their mental concepts, but wanted to enforce it on others, - and *that* was the problem. Not anchored in reality, they lost their moorings; their pendulum splintered, and they happily consumed innocent lives.

It sank in, that the 18-year-old terrorist had missed an important point – Allah, ‘the all merciful God’, is a *living force* that thrives in the reality of unconditional love, and not in the vacuum of mental concepts.

Not just that, the Living Force was also the Supreme Source of Love, and hence, what was not rooted in it was devoid of conscience. And that was how, without any qualms of conscience, the 18-year-old freaked out on a shooting spree.

Consequently, at the collective level if the pendulum was not in sync with the Supreme Source of Love, which was none other than the *Feminine Principle*, Allah’s children could not tap the Feminine Principle of compassion. And without it, there could be no stop to hate files.

At a personal level, the plot thickened. She discovered her intellect was trapped in a plot. And if she did not crack its code, she could not become master of herself and her destiny. She employed the Master Craftsman's code of detachment. The code opened a window; her intellect appeared like a paradox, unpredictable with its own way of functioning; it was rational and irrational, it could be used to identify truth as untruth and untruth as truth, it argued both logical and illogically, and thus quickened the pendulum to and fro - the past and the future. She made repeated attempts to log on to the present, but time and again, it cheated her. She was not amused, the way her intellect cheated itself. By the same token, she decided to trick it by transcending it. She took refuge in the compassion of her kundalini.

No sooner had she shifted the burden of the plot onto the kundalini, than it wired to the collective database. It gave her a window on her computer, and she saw how it had been programmed, and it enabled her to transcend the program itself. She saw the humor behind it, and laughed, "I went bonkers trying to search for a black cat in a dark room which did not exist - the darn file on being in the present did not exist! My computer does not even have the software for it."

She surfed Google for its software – "Damn those stupid geeks. They forgot to invent one!"

Little by little, her silence deepened. It opened the space inside her head, and instead of mental ripples, it reflected the eternal bliss of silence. The silence expanded to all the folders, and closed the

nagging, unfinished files. Free of mental burden, she dozed off like an innocent babe in the lap of the holy Mother.

Chapter 15

Ludmilla woke up to the exotic aroma of freshly ground spices – roasted cumin seeds, turmeric, cinnamon and red chilies; “Morning everyone!”

Sergie’s eyes watered from the chilly pickle he swallowed mistaking it for tomato sauce. Ludmilla smiled, “Appearances are deceptive. Had you remembered the Master Craftsman’s trick, you would not have fallen into the chilly trap.”

“Even the Master Craftsman could not have told the difference as they were exactly the same color.”

“But not the same aroma,” laughed Sheila. She kissed Ludmilla, “Hope you had a sound sleep.”

“Yes and no, there was a lot of baggage to off-load.”

“Well I hope no one off loaded your purse.”

Ludmilla searched under her pillow, and discovered her purse missing, “I can’t seem to find it.”

Reva complained, “Even my purse is missing. I am not so worried about the money but it had the photo of my fiancé in it. What will I show to my father?”

Ludmilla consoled herself, “There was not much money except traveler cheques. I guess it would be fine if I inform the bank about the theft.”

Sergie was surprised to find her so detached from the loss. He poured her a cup of tea, as she sat by the window preoccupied in her thoughts. He caught the distant look in her eyes, “What’s on your mind Kiddo?”

“Gazing at the changing landscape reminds me of my mindscape. Last night I was like a river trying to circumvent the formidable landscape of boulders.”

Sergie smiled, “You know something; the softness of the river can cut across the hardest rock.”

Ludmilla was distracted by some women drawing water from a well, “I wonder how they balance the pitchers of water atop their heads?”

Sheila responded, “The balance is within. They are walking, chatting, laughing but their attention rests within. It is a balancing trick.”

“I don’t get it.”

“It’s so simple. When Reva was born I had no help. I was cooking, cleaning, washing or be anywhere in the house, but I responded to her smallest need. Like your mind is travelling through various landscapes, yet your attention remains on the destination.”

“Feroz chirped, “Precisely! I am reminded of a lovely Parsi story. The master pointed a fluttering flag to his pupils and enquired

'is it was the flag is moving or the wind?' Pat came the reply; 'the wind.'

'No, it is the mind moving,' corrected the master."

Ludmilla pondered, "It reminds me of the master craftsman's trick."

Sergie interjected, "Anybody can learn the master craftsman's trick, but the key thing is to tap into your kundalini."

The landscape transited from lush greenery to parched land dotted by cluster of mud houses. Reva was excited at the sight of Bhuj, "Well presently we have tapped our destination."

"Is Bhuj an ancient town?"

Reva was passionate, "The history of the town goes back to the Indus Valley civilization, and the invasion of Alexander the Great. It was a bristling trade centre during the silk route, and supplied caravans of camels to cross the vast expanse of the Rann desert. Its prosperity attracted marauding invaders and robbers from across the desert. It was therefore not surprising that it became home to robust tribes with a unique culture of their own, distinctively apart from the Indian sub continent."

"The train came to a screeching halt at the Bhuj station." Feroz drew a bunch of dwarf bananas from his wicker basket, "They will keep your throat from getting parched in the desert."

Sheila warmly embraced Ludmilla, "I have adopted you as my daughter, and you have to stay with us."

"Thank you, but we will be late for the Rann Festival."

"But you cannot leave without meeting my husband"

They bundled into the taxi to Sheila's home.

Chapter 16

Sergie took to Bhuj's unassuming vernacular architecture like a fish to water, and sought the sounds of its soul in the ancient sites steeped in history. Reva pointed to the burial ground of the Bhuj Kings, "The funeral rite of Raja Lakhpat was the grandest of all. His 15 queens committed sati after his death, and the main hall has their idols along with his."

A shudder ran through Ludmilla, and she decided to divert her attention to the vibrant colors of the bazaar. It was festival time, and the bazaar was alive with the sound of laughter. The antique paisley shawls mesmerized her. Most of the shawls were threadbare, and Reva rummaged to find a more preserved one, "These are Jamawars, and were used to cover the graves of the Rajas."

Sergie suspected the price was hiked for foreigners and bargained.

Sheila dissuaded, "They carry the curses of the dead with them."

Sergie appeared a puzzled, "Curse?"

"Antiques carry the negative vibrations of the deceased owners. One of our Rajas treacherously usurped his elder brother's throne. Before committing sati, his widowed queen cursed the assailant that

all his children would meet a similar fate. The assailant had three sons, and over the years each one died under mysterious circumstances. Not just that, when the neighboring ruler saw that there was no heir to the throne he attacked. To raise money for war the assailant Raja sold his ornaments. The curse visited those who bought the ornaments, and their children died under mysterious circumstances.”

Sergie nodded thoughtfully, “Now I understand how the negativity of a person acts through his belongings.”

Sheila continued, “My husband’s family owns a silver shop. One day a distressed merchant sold his family silver. The next morning Reva woke up feeling very sick. Day by day her health deteriorated, and the doctor’s could not diagnose the cause. I tried everything but nothing seemed to work. I was very exhausted and fell asleep outside Reva’s room. I dreamt of our silver shop. When I woke up, I enquired of my husband if he had bought any silver the day Reva fell sick. He affirmed having bought silver from the reputed merchant. I asked him to get rid of it. As he could not find a ready customer, he decided to melt it. No sooner had he melted it, than Reva recovered.”

“Later on he discovered that the merchant who owned the silver had committed incest, and thereafter his family fortunes took a down turn.”

“Shakespeare was not far from truth when he said, ‘The evil that men do lives after them, and the good is derived with the bones,’” quoted Ludmilla.

“Here in Bhuj it is believed that curse of the widowed queen visited seven generations of the assailant,” affirmed Sheila.

Sergie said, “I remember an auction where a lady bid for the Czarina’s jewels. “She declared herself to be the deceased Czarina. She ended up committing suicide.”

Ludmilla recalled, “Something similar happened to a millionaire who bought Princess Diana’s evening gown at an auction. The millionaire wore the gown to a party, and assumed the airs of a princess. She dismissed all her middle class friends. Not just that, she divorced her commoner husband!”

Sheila’s family home was a two-story bungalow perched amidst a mango grove. Sheila touched the feet of her mother-in-law before embracing her husband.

The mother-in-law enquired, “Did you have a good trip?”

The train was very comfortable except my wife’s purse got stolen.”

“I am sorry to hear that. The crime rate is growing every year due to the illegal emigrants from Pakistan.”

Sergie enquired, “Why not stop them?”

“The border of the Rann runs over 2500 kilometer and hence difficult to patrol.”

The mother-in-law spread a feast of Gujrati delicacies, “A lot of smuggling goes on across the border. I heard that last night some terrorists infiltrated, and the police are searching for them.”

She piled Ludmilla’s plate, “You have to try my special Bhujia from my grandmother’s recipe.”

Ludmilla, protested, “Thank you, but we just had a big breakfast on the train.”

“Then I will pack them for lunch. You can have a picnic on the way.”

“It’s too much.”

“Here in Bhuj we have a tradition- a guest must not be allowed to leave empty handed!”

Ludmilla kissed goodbye. Sheila embraced her warmly, “You must promise to come for Reva’s wedding.”

“We would love to.”

Chapter 17

The road to the Rann winded through a parched landscape, dotted with scanty clusters of grass. They crossed occasional caravans led by camels migrating for the winter. The infinite expanse of the desert quieted Ludmilla's mindscape, and she rested blissfully in the comfort zone of her flow.

The scorching heat of the desert parched their throats, and they stopped by a roadside chai stall. The chai boy heaped several chunks of jaggery in large tumblers of tea, "Jaggery good for the desert, absorbs the dust from the throat."

"Thank you, I already feel better," smiled Ludmilla.

Sergie could not keep off the burgeoning sounds of buffalo horns that echoed from a distance, "Where is it coming from?"

"From the grave of the songbirds."

"Songbirds?"

"Yes, Veena and Seema."

Sergie felt his flow ebbing him on, "Can you take us to their graves?"

They mounted the chai boy's camel, and followed a bridle path that led to an opening in the woods. A Banyan tree stood in the

middle of the courtyard, and a lean sheep greedily grazed scanty blades of grass amidst two small graves.

An old man with a flowing white beard and a multicolored turban blew the Buffalo horn in homage to the songbirds buried therein, “Veena and Seema belonged to a Sufi saint who lived here. He kept them in two separate cages. In the 16th century our region suffered a severe drought. The desert nomads went to the sufi saint seeking water. He said he would set the songbirds free, and they would guide them to water.”

“The songbirds flew to a stone boulder in the desert. When the nomads looked under it they discovered it caved in to reveal a hollow, full of water. But the songbirds did not return home. Later they were found dead, wrapped in each other’s wings.”

With a tear in his eyes, the old man sadly lamented, “They preferred dying together than living in separate cages.”

Sergie mused, “I do not pity the dead songbirds but the living, and all those who live without love.”

“Like the 18-year-old terrorist, and others like him,” interjected Ludmilla. “I feel like the songbirds and would rather die for love than to live without it.”

The old man’s eyes riveted into the distance as if waiting for the songbirds to return, “There is light at the end of the tunnel, but it can only be seen from the window of the heart.”

Ludmila continued, “People think that they are alive because they have a soul but I feel alive because I have love within me. Love

is the power of our soul, and is inbuilt in all of us since our creation. We may choose to ignore it but it never dies.

I had cancer and was hopelessly blue. Sergie ignited my kundalini, and the joy that slept within leapt forth. It sparked back my desire to live, the desire to find reality, the desire to know myself, the desire to love and be loved. Since then I have never allowed negative reflections to ebb the power of my joy.

Moreover, I discovered if I gave an inch to negative thoughts, they grew a mile, and having found the greatest treasure in the world, there is no way I would risk losing it.”

Sergie nodded, “You are right. Joy is the gift of our kundalini. It connects us to the all-pervading source of joy, and guides us with her vibrations. If we don’t learn to celebrate life, then we fall back in the mind trap. Whereas, if we listen to our vibrations, they lead us to the source of joy. Like I felt cool vibrations coming from the sound of the buffalo horn and could not leave without taking the most important lesson from the songbirds. Now I understand why the Holy Mother invited me to the Rann Festival. I have come to the journey’s end, but today my journey starts anew like a seed sprouting into a tree.”

The old man stroked his beard, “Life is a paradox; even after reaching the destination we remain far from it.”

Sergie enjoyed his humor and also his play, “For me the Rann festival started from the moment I set foot in India. The vibrations of the kundalini softened the rough edges of my path less travelled and mysteriously arranged events to teach me something. And the

something is that sowing has to come before reaping. Likewise, one cannot get love without first giving love. And then we will receive love, not as much as we want or as much as we have given, but a thousand times more.”

The old man reverently collected a fistful of sand, “I feel deeply the immense love Mother Earth has for us, but we too must give back some love to her.”

Ludmilla’s eyes lit up, “I am stumped by her ocean of love – it comes up in such amazing ways - the wildflowers hidden in grass, the singing brooks, the intoxicating fragrance of wet earth, and ah... the vibrant colors of fall!

“No matter how much we ask she goes on yielding. She is my greatest guru. The lessons of love, joy, generosity, compassion, and celebration learnt once, I share with fellow travelers. Their smiles rivets my joy a thousand fold, and my joy rebounds the joy of every living being- be it a songbird, a four leaf clover, or a sweeper.”

The old man concluded, “In the village every morning when we rise, we beg forgiveness from Mother Earth for stepping on her.”

Sergie smiled, “Now I know the secret of the songbirds. Because they were in consonance with Mother Earth, she unraveled her treasures to them, and that is how they found water in a parched desert.”

Chapter 18

Sergie was spellbound at the sight of a city of tents emerging from the banks of a lake, “This is awesome.”

The lady at the reception warmly welcomed them with garlands, “Welcome to the Rann Festival. We received word from the Holy Mother you were coming. Allow me to escort you to your tent.”

The tent was painted with the motifs from the Indus Valley civilization. Prominent among the motifs was the Primordial Mother standing on a pink Lotus in the midst the lake. Sergie enquired, “How come there is a lake amidst a desert?”

The receptionist explained, “This was not always a desert. The River Indus fed the Indus civilization. It was a very advanced civilization. Ruins of the Indus valley revealed an advanced drainage system. Around 5000 B.C. the river disappeared, and the area turned into a desert.”

“Well, you have created a beautiful oasis in the desert.”

An attendant brought refreshments, “You have to try our special khus sherbet; it will beat the desert heat.”

More specialties followed. Ludmilla politely declined, “Thank you. We are already full, as we had a picnic lunch on the way. If you excuse us, we would like to rest before the evening program.”

The sky was alive with stars as they entered the festival arena. A large stage was set near the lake, and thousands of tourists eagerly awaited the musicians. The spotlight focused on an orchestra of folk singers in nomadic costumes. The festival commenced with wind instruments. The flute player celebrated the joy of life. The music emerged from the depth of his soul, and touched Sergie's kundalini. He thought he had heard the sound before, but could not tell where - it was the pristine sound AUM.

An array of folk dancers softly stepped to the lilting beat of the drums. Their nimble footwork mesmerized Sergie, and he could not tell if their feet touched the ground or they floated in the clouds. The full moon cast its magical spell, and as the moonlight shimmered on the white desert sand, he saw vibrations rising atop their heads. The vibrations appeared like luminous comas, and formed a myriad of patterns. He watched the vibrations perform the dance of creation. A fluorescent light glowed atop their heads. He excitedly nudged Ludmilla, "Look at their kundalines dancing atop their heads."

Ludmilla was surprised, "I do not see anything."

It was way past mid night, and everyone left. Sergie's inner silence tapped the cosmic silence. He sat motionless drinking the silent music that moved the larger cosmos. He felt completely part and parcel of the cosmic orchestra. Every cell in his body danced with joy.

Ludmilla tried to draw his attention, "The flute player is beckoning us."

Consumed by his flow, Sergie didn't respond because he didn't want the cosmic orchestra to ever stop. Yet he could respond if he chose to.

He heard the flute player say, "I was expecting you. I enjoyed your performance in Moscow. The joy of your flow bounced back on me."

Sergie responded, but it made not the slightest difference in the flow of his joy atop his head, "The meeting with the Holy Mother was a sheer coincidence."

The flute player put his hand on his shoulder, "Nothing is a coincidence; it is vibrations of your kundalini. She knows, thinks, understands and organizes everything, and above all loves you much more than you love yourself.

Between listening to the notes of the cosmic orchestra, Sergie carried on the conversation, "You're right. The Holy Mother had mentioned that after connecting with our Kundalini, we can connect to every one's vibrations, but I never felt them as powerful as tonight."

The flute player smiled, "Vibrations have a magic of their own! Before my kundalini connected, I felt the different notes of my flute were apart from each other, but after the Holy Mother kindled my kundalini, I heard the pristine sound. I realized that all the notes were produced by percussions. Similarly, when our kundalini rises through our spine, percussions occur at seven centers and produce seven notes. The centers or chakras look after our mental, physical

and emotional well-being. If we are not mindful of their well being, then they get blocked and cause health problems.”

Sergie asked, “I had a hard time trying to open my blocks.”

The flute player answered, “Your kundalini has the power to unblock the chakras. After unblocking the chakra, she rises atop your head and breaks through the state of collective consciousness.”

Sergie’s eyes lit up, “Yes, I have experienced the breakthrough of collective consciousness. It was a humbling experience. It shattered my oblique vision, and exposed the half-truths my intellect mistook for reality. When I saw the absolute truth, the panorama suddenly changed; the world appeared so beautiful, and I was thankful to be born in it. If there be such a thing as rebirth, I would love to be born in it again and again.”

The flute player nodded, “Indeed, we have to be thankful to the Holy Mother for triggering the collective breakthrough of the grand evolutionary process. Earlier only a few individuals could breakthrough collective consciousness, but they were by far and few, and could not transform others to that state. The Holy Mother envisaged a method of en-masse kundalini awakening, which expanded human conscious into the realm of collective consciousness. However, to enable global transformation, a caucus of 7000 realized souls was necessary. When the Holy Mother ignited your kundalini, it got to the magic number. The Rann Festival celebrates the collective breakthrough of our grand evolutionary process.”

Ludmilla's beamed, "It's incredible how I tapped the state of collective consciousness just by putting my attention on the Holy Mother."

The flute player said, "The doors of collective consciousness are open to anyone who recognizes the Holy Mother. She is the supreme source of unconditional love. Unconditional Love is truth, and the one who becomes one with the source of unconditional love, becomes one with the absolute truth."

The vibrations of their collective kundalines excited the elements. The temperature suddenly dropped, and Ludmilla had nothing warm, "Its freezing! Let's go in."

Sergie waved at the flute-player, "See you in the morning."

"Our caravan leaves before sun rise, and I may not see you again. Please accept this flute as a small token of my love."

Sergie had a tear in his eyes, "Please keep it; you will need it to spread vibrations."

The flute player said, "But the flute is hollow. It does nothing."

Sergie understood what he meant, and thanked him.

The flute player mounted his camel and waved, "Remember the trick – if you want the cool wind of the Holy Spirit to flow, the flute has to be hollow."

As the caravan of camels disappeared in the desert dust, Sergie was unsure whether he meant it as a trick or a treat. He saw women fill pitchers from a nearby well and balance them atop their heads. They chatted and laughed as they walked but their attention rested

on the pitchers. He caught the trick of being with the flow while engaged in life.

Ludmilla's looked at him from the corner of her eyes. He answered her questioning eye, "It never stopped flowing!"

He *became* the flow...