

Chapter 12

Mr. Miller stayed at the Ashram for ten days and during that time he gave us all great advice. A large number of questions. We tried our best to answer them, but the American journalist understood very little. the deepest aspect of our beliefs. He attended several classes that the Guru taught in the afternoons, And as a courtesy to him, our teacher spoke in English for part of the time. Mr. Miller wrote He worked a lot on his typewriter, and he read me some of his manuscript. He used very beautiful words and was very I respect the Guru; but I doubt that if Americans read his book they will gain more than an idea very incomplete of our philosophy.

On the third day of his visit, Mr. Miller had the idea of writing a special article in the form of a report. to the blessed Guru. I was tasked with arranging this, so I went to the master seeking his help. consent. The Guru agreed and set the date for the following Friday, at sunset. I knew That a news report is a very important issue for American journalists, because once Published in a newspaper or daily, it is read by millions of people.

On Friday, Mr. Miller sharpened many pencils and set up a small table to take down each word. shorthand, in the abbreviated style often used by American journalists. Guru had gone in the morning to the house of a local farmer whose son had received a vision of the Goddess Durga. Several disciples had accompanied him, but I stayed with Mr. Miller to provide him with all the information he required about the Guru's life.

The report began at three in the afternoon. Due to the importance of the occasion, permission was granted for Most of the disciples and some chelas were present. A special invitation was extended to Pundit Bishma Ray, who was very eager to attend. A Buddhist scholar arrived from the hills and the A Brahmin priest from the temple of a nearby village brought with him his uncle, who was blind but was very well informed. The students in the local school's history class wanted to attend, but there were fears that so many children would be distracted. Mr. Miller kindly agreed to let the Pundit Ray read a transcript of the full interview at a special school-wide meeting.

Quickly, at three o'clock, the Guru settled onto his favorite cushion, and after a brief Prayer to the Great Mother announced that he was ready to be reported.

Mr. Miller began by asking about the Guru's attitude towards Anglo-Indian politics, to which The teacher politely declined to argue. Mr. Miller was discreet enough not to press on the issue and turned the conversation to Einstein's theory of relativity. The Guru explained that the term "relative" should be applied to everything knowable by the intellect; and The term "absolute" refers to Universal Reality that can only be discovered through inner realization. The discussion became very scholarly, and I noticed that the American journalist was having some difficulty in to write in his strange symbols the Guru's observations on the inclination of the plane of *continuum*. Mr. Miller then inquired about the Guru's reaction to the achievements of Western science. in general. It was then that our beloved teacher spoke thus: —The sciences of the West, my son mine, they accomplished many great and good things; but they were confined within the narrow confines of the Material world. In the East we also have great scientists; they lack laboratories and equipment. scientist; but with the discipline of our ancient religion and philosophy they transformed their bodies and minds in the most perfect of all scientific instruments. Those great Yogins explored the distances of time and space, and came to understand the causes while their Western thinkers They were only studying the effects.

Mr. Miller pressed on the subject: So, would you advise that Eastern scientists and Would Westerners join forces and share their knowledge?

The Guru shook his head:

—I would recommend, Mr. Miller, that you choose from your great universities and institutions. Five of its top physicists were scientists. Men not only intellectually brilliant, but also of great mind. liberal, who have discovered enough to understand that they will need to discover more. Send Send these men to India, the land of knowledge. Leave them here with us to obey our rules and live according to our disciplines and regulations. Let them remain for ten years, and Then return to your own country and apply what you have learned, according to the dictates of your own hearts. Through this action you would revolutionize

the entire structure of Western knowledge, advancing their civilization by at least a thousand years.

In the pause that followed the immortal words of the Jagat Guru, the blind uncle of the Brahmin priest He inhaled with a tone of intense satisfaction, and we all felt that we had been privileged to hear words of very deep wisdom.

Then Mr. Miller asked if it was possible for Western peoples to develop the strange the clairvoyant powers of the Eastern sages. The Guru replied affirmatively, adding that if the Western peoples developed a contemplative life, and freed their minds from the pressure of their Economic ambitions could cause their spiritual natures to evolve.

After another conversation about very interesting topics, Mr. Miller asked his final question: —Sri Purascharanacharya, do you have any message you would like to broadcast to the people of the North? America on behalf of the living Saints of India?

The Guru remained silent for a moment, *and* We all awaited his words. Then he said simply:

—Yes, tell the American people to be practical.

After several minutes of thoughtful silence, the Guru continued:

—A nation is not practical because it has great wealth, or strong armaments, nor because it owns unusual skill or ingenuity. As our Eastern maxim expresses it, 'A man is not a Rajah because it has many elephants.' A nation is only truly great when it uses its resources wisely. available resources. Their wise use determines not only greatness but also survival. For To survive, a nation must dedicate everything it has to serving its own needs. North America To be practical, she must use her wealth and power to ensure the complete happiness and well-being of her own people, and the improvement and protection of all other peoples less fortunate than herself.

After finishing speaking, the blessed Guru indicated that the interview had come to an end. He asked for a bowl of rice and some tea, and invited Mr. Miller to share this simple meal with him. Then, as a special surprise, rice and tea were served to everyone present, so that everyone had the privilege of sharing a meal with our teacher.

It was a splendid report, and Mr. Miller wrote it beautifully, and some time later we received a printed copy of one of the American newspapers. The newspaper included a drawing of the Guru that was not very precise, pointing out the regrettable circumstance that the photographs taken of the teacher had not It went well.

At the suggestion of the Pundit Ray, a copy of the report was sent to the Viceroy, requesting that he in turn be elevated to His Majesty the King Emperor.

Chapter 13

The Guru returned from the Kumbh Mela three weeks before I turned 25. The Pundit Bishma Hay I had greatly desired to accompany the teacher, so I taught classes at the local primary school. during the weeks of the pilgrimage. I remember the occasion well, because little Babu tried a The morning he rode his father's white cow to school, falling off at the entrance. I splinted her wrist. Babu was my first patient in the practice of medicine.

The Guru was in a very good mood when he arrived at the Ashram after the long pilgrimage. He liked Lots of walking and he always said that the spiritual experience of the Kumbh Mela and the interesting people that he found along the way increased his strength, adding years to his life.

One morning, a few days before my birthday, the village postman arrived early with a letter Long and important to the Guru, the master read it with great interest, shaking his head several times. a nod of approval, and smiled to himself. Then he looked at me over the tops of his gold-framed glasses. I was very curious, but *none* He offered no explanation, and it wasn't right of me to ask him questions. Regarding that, the teacher would speak when he pleased to do so.

Chundra Bose, who was still living with us, was called several times to consult with the Guru, and upon seeing That I was very interested in the mysterious conversations, he calmly informed me that our My teacher was planning a big birthday party in my honor. I was overwhelmed thinking about the big man to dedicate his time and energy to such a humble purpose. But Chundra Bose assured me that The plans brought great pleasure to the Guru.

My twenty-fifth birthday was an occasion I will always remember. The Guru decided, due to the good During that time, the festivities were held on a flat surface, in front of the ruined arcade, where We liked to sit down. Early in the morning, friends from the village began to arrive, bringing fruit and local preserves. The chelas had put a large quantity of saffron rice in the enormous pot. an iron stove in which our daily meals were cooked. Several important pundits were invited, and The father of little Babu, in gratitude for the cure of his son's broken wrist, contributed with the services by three excellent local musicians, including a celebrated elderly woman, totally blind, who He played the wine very well. Four o'clock in the afternoon was set as the time for the banquet, and shortly before three, Chundra Bose arrived at the small cabin where I lived, to announce that the Guru required my presence in the Ashram.

After sitting down in the corner on the white cloth a short distance from my blessed master, the Guru He slowly put on his glasses and, opening a small box, took out the long letter that the postman had brought earlier. weekdays.

—Nadu, my son, —the Guru began, opening the letter— I know you will be happy to know that I received it from your father This long and beautiful message, and this shorter note from your mother. They are happy and well, and content with the progress you've made. The youngest of their children got married and settled down, so they plan to retire in Kashmir Valley where they will dedicate their remaining years to holy works.

--Your father sold his business and with this letter sent me a bank draft for twenty-five thousand rupees.

This The money will be used to help you establish your medical practice. The Gods have been good to you, Nadu. My son; and I know that you will remember in your daily devotion the kindness of your mother and your mother. All I could reply was:

—Blessed master, ever since I became your disciple I have always prayed for the happiness of my parents. The Guru shook his head:

—You are a good son, Nadu; and now the time has come for you to assume your duties as a father, of husband and servant of your people.

The Guru placed the cards on the white cloth at my feet, along with the check: "You will need these; the You will keep the letters among your most sacred possessions, and the money will be used to acquire scientific equipment and medicines. This is truly your birthday; for your new life has arrived, a life in the world... serving the sick.

I remained silent; and the Guru waited, kindly refraining from interfering with my thoughts. Then, When I looked at him smiling, the teacher continued:

—It is the law of our people that every man who comes into the world must pay his debt, and every woman Also. Only by bringing our children into the world and giving them the same opportunities as we do. We enjoyed it, we fulfilled the spirit of the Vedas. You will be the father of two children, a son and a daughter. You will care for them, educate them, and guide them on their path in life. This is the law of the father. Having fulfilled your duty, you may then retire to the contemplation of spiritual things. Now You must live in the same world that ordinary men have accepted as their mortal lot. The Guru She extended her hand and rang the silver bell. Chundra Bose drew back the entrance curtain and entered. The Guru smiled and bowed his head. A moment later, Chundra Bose returned, introducing a A young Hindu girl wearing a pale blue sari; the girl stepped forward shyly and sat down in the opposite corner of the white fabric.

—Nadu, my son, this is the wife I have chosen for you. Her father was one of my disciples. Meet our She will be your wife and your servant in all things. She will be the lady of your house and the mother of your children. That's how I found Radha, who became my wife according to the will of my blessed Guru, and never I regretted his decision; it was wise, for he knows the hearts of all who live. The interview concluded, the guests arrived; we went out to meet them, and at the banquet she was announced publicly announced my wedding. Radha sat next to me and served me saffron rice from a bowl of wood. It truly was a great occasion, and our Guru was so pleased that, as night fell, He sang ancient songs of the mountains, songs that the god Indra sang before the world. was finished; and the blind old woman accompanied the songs with her wine.

Chapter 14

The day after my birthday, the Guru discussed my career plans with me. He I had made all the arrangements, and all that was needed was to keep me informed of his decisions. When we sat in the shade of the ruined arch, the Guru spoke to me thus:

—I contacted His Royal Highness, Maharaja Rama of Dharapur; he is a very progressive man who was brought to the throne by the peculiar favor of the gods, for he was born a shepherd boy. The RamaconsecratesHe dedicated his vast income to the education of his people. He built schools and universities, libraries, and medical colleges, and is very keen to improve the health of all his subjects. His Royal Highness expressed kindly expresses his willingness to be your protector, and offers you the support of the State in a program that provides Western medicine and healing methods to the villages of his Kingdom.

—Therefore, you will travel immediately to Dharapur, where you will present these letters to Maharaja Rama. The protection of such a delicate and noble man will give you many opportunities, not only in practice private, but also to build institutions, create new laws, and in many ways improve life of the people. Go, my son, and may my blessing be with you in all things. We will not meet again. find until I send for you.

That's how I left the Kailasvastu Ashram. The Guru embraced me and gave me some writings. necessary for the trip. Also, a sum of money sufficient for my personal needs. The rest I spent the day simply packing and saying goodbye to the many friends and disciples there were come to know and love. Radha had returned to her father's house, and we were to be married in Dharapur. The blessed Guru had already made arrangements for the ceremony in advance.

I traveled for two days by train and arrived in the beautiful city of Dharapur in the late afternoon. The streets were very wide. And there were many parks and gardens. I remember that in one of the small parks there was a delicate statue. of the Maharaja mounted on a spirited steed.

I presented my letters at the palace and was immediately admitted into the Rama's presence. He was in a A beautiful hall, whose walls were entirely made of mirrors. His Royal Highness was a man of medium height. He was young, short, and rather slight. He wore a long yellow silk coat and a tight black cap. She had a delicate and noble face, with kind eyes that reminded me of those of my blessed Guru.

After paying him my respects, the Rama asked me to sit down; and in essence, the words that The instructions I received were the following:

—Dr. Chatterji, you are a young man beginning your journey in the practice of medicine. Here in Dharapur, We need doctors, young doctors, doctors from our town and of our race. We have several Excellent British doctors, and they worked hard; but they don't understand India as we do. we knowThey bring science, they don't bring understanding.

—Your eminent teacher, the great Saint Purascharanacharya, taught you many things; mysteries of soul and mind. If you combine the spiritual truths you learned from him with knowledge The scientist who won at the universities will become a great leader of our people. I assured the Maharaja that my only desire was to serve India, and in this way remain faithful to the The great philosophy I learned from the Guru. Rama was pleased, and extended his hand to me in the style western, since he had lived a long time in Europe.

"Then tomorrow," he continued, "we will meet here at the palace; and I will go with you to the new hospital." which opened less than a year ago. There I will introduce you to the British and local doctors. It would be It was advisable for him to stay in the hospital for a year or two, to familiarize himself with the vast health program public sector that we have developed. Then I will put him in charge of a new hospital, now under construction, in The Northern Provinces. Unfortunately, some neighboring states do not have a well-organized plan. to combat local diseases, and these constantly cross our borders. They will be Necessary hygiene and sanitation measures are needed to combat these epidemics. Until tomorrow, then, Dr. Chatterji, and may God be with you.

The next day we traveled around the city of Dharapur, visiting not only the new hospital but also several clinics and schools. I was amazed at the wisdom with which Rama spent his great fortune on to improve the situation of his subjects. He was very proud of the things already accomplished, and his enthusiasm... He made me feel like it was a great privilege to work with him.

When we said goodbye, at nightfall, the Rama *with* He turned back to me, smiling: "I understand, Dr. Chatterji, who is to be married in a few weeks at his master's Ashram, here in Dharapur.

Noticing that I was slightly confused by the suddenness of the indirect question, the Rama said to me He shook my hand and wished me every kind of happiness and success.

On the wedding day, once everyone had gathered at the Ashram, a messenger arrived. He brought me a beautiful A photograph of Rama, autographed, and with a frame of rubies and emeralds; and of the Maharani a sari of solid gold thread for Radha. The Rama expressed his apologies for not being present, and explained who was due to make his usual trip to the mineral springs of Baden, in Germany.

I stayed at the Dharapur hospital for a year and a half, and then I was assigned to the new hospital in the northern hills. Here I had a staff of young doctors and nurses, and during the first For months he was also a resident physician and a surgeon in the British Navy. When he left, I took over. I managed the entire institution, which had one hundred and twenty beds, and I remained as director of the hospital for twelve years.

Chapter 15

My new hospital was located near a small village. Radha and I decided not to live there, within the hospital area; so we occupied a nearby house with a pleasant garden and several trees beautiful and old. Next to the house was a separate building, and there I established an office and a small laboratory. These arrangements allowed me to conduct a private practice. In addition to my work at the hospital, my private practice was important because it put me in close contact with... with the life of the people, which is difficult in a large institution.

Everything came to pass exactly as my Guru had predicted. Two years after we settled in our little house, my son was born. We named him Ramachandra, in honor of the Guru. The child was born in the hospital, and Dr. Malhar Dan, a fine young man and my younger colleague, performed the obstetric work. A year later

Next, our daughter was born, and we named her Lilya, in honor of my wife's mother. In order to increase the effectiveness of the health program that Maharaja Rama was funding I generously initiated a health survey in various small towns and villages in my district. I documented I included all my discoveries, adding notes and suggestions on how the conditions could be improved. Radha actively participated in this work, visiting the homes of the various classes and suggesting hygienic and eugenic measures. I hoped to be able to compile a detailed report of these notes and observations to present to the Rama. After working on the notes for almost four years, they seemed complete enough to forward them to His Royal Highness. The hospital secretary kindly offered to make a copy complete typewritten, which I sent to Rama with a long explanatory letter.

Several weeks passed without news from Dharapur, and I began to fear that my report had not been received. One afternoon, having just arrived from my work at the hospital, I heard the engine of a car stopped in front of the house. It was an old, dilapidated vehicle belonging to Anadeo Rao, who He insisted on calling it a taxi.

I went to the door, hoping it was a patient who wasn't well enough to walk to my house. But the short, stocky gentleman in a gray businessman's suit who got out of the car was the Maharaja Rama himself. No one was expecting His Royal Highness, and Mr. Rao had no idea of the important passenger's identity that he brought from the train.

Carrying a small suitcase and a large briefcase, Rama entered our little garden, and I hurried to go out to meet her. She refused to let me carry her luggage and we went into the house together. Your Highness Real treated my wife kindly and seemed very pleased to see my children. The visit was so unexpected that we were unable to make any preparations to greet His Highness. Royal, and she insisted that we not alter in any way the routine of our daily lives. Maharaja Rama He stayed in our little house for almost a week. He was a very simple and natural person, entirely unconcerned about her high position, she slept in our simple bed, shared our food, and walked He stayed with me every day until I went to the hospital. The following night, as we were finishing dinner, Rama told me He indicated that he wished to discuss my report. Understanding that His Royal Highness wished to maintain Radha stood up and excused herself; but the Maharaja calmly said: "Mrs. Chatterji, you helped prepare this report, and we would be pleased if you would stay on." It is modern India, where men and women can contribute equally to the progress of our State. This showed that the Rama was pleased with the information we sent him. He congratulated us on The spirit of service that led us to the long and difficult task of gathering the information. It was the She was kind enough to approve my suggestions and indicated that they would receive immediate attention. His Royal Highness was also deeply interested in the private practice I established, and He asked me to let him see my medical records. I discussed several important cases with him, noting that most of them stemmed from malnutrition and clinical deficiencies. The ground was impoverished by thousands of years of cultivation, and it would be necessary to develop a harvesting program alternating and chemical fertilization, in order to correct the causes of that state of affairs.

Our discussion was interrupted by the arrival of the leading men of the village who, having learned Upon

hearing of the Rama's presence, they wished to pay their respects. The Maharaja agreed to receive them, and The reception lasted until nearly midnight. During those hours, almost everyone attended. inhabitants of the community, for His Royal Highness was held in the highest esteem by all his subjects. Sunkar Das, who had eleven children, asked permission to present them, and the children lined up as in staircase. Mrs. Das, who was barely taller than her youngest son, was extremely reluctantly, he brought his saritan so close to his face that only his eyes were visible as he bowed before him Prince Dhondi Rao, who only had one *Mind you, he was a silversmith and* He wished to offer a silver plate, which His Highness accepted kindly. Subha Bisay, the local poet, had composed a short poem in honor of the visit of Maharaja. It went like this:

Our hearts are now small gardens along the village road;

Love for you fills these gardens with shimmering flowers. Please accept, Great Prince. These spiritual flowers, for their fragrance is due to your tender care.

Rama was kind enough to ask for a copy, saying he would keep the poem in your memory as a memento of this occasion.

Rama had a kind word and a friendly smile for every visitor, and he complimented the mothers for the beauty and merits of their children. Her attitude throughout that long and tiring night was that of a A loving father, deeply interested in his children's happiness. It was a beautiful occasion, and my Respect towards His Royal Highness grew into a deep personal affection.

At the very end of the evening, Mahadeo Rao hesitantly approached to apologize for charging the Maharaja, the taxi fare. He still had the coins the Prince had given him, and he asked permission to return them. However, His Royal Highness insisted *in* that his financial situation allowed him to pay the hassle-free rate.

Before leaving, the Rama invited Radha, me, and our children to be his guests at the Palace in whenever we wished to make the trip to Dharapur. He recommended that we go next month. in February, when an important meeting would be held *scientists and* doctors from various states of country.

Mahadeo Rao insisted on taking His Royal Highness to the train, *and like him* He was the only one who had a car. In the village, he had that privilege due to irrefutable logic. Rao arranged the journey to the Rama train passed through all the main streets. All the inhabitants came out to greet His Majesty. Your Royal Highness with great enthusiasm. Then the people formed a procession behind the car, and He accompanied the Maharaja to the station. This was the most important occasion in the life of the village since the death of a famous Saint, almost 200 years earlier.

Chapter 16

My son was ten years old when I received my first letter from the Guru. The master expressed his satisfaction with the work I was doing, about which he was constantly kept informed. He expressed the wish that I would take my family to him at the first opportunity that presented itself in order to confer his blessing the children.

The Guru's wish comes first in the lives of his disciples, so I made immediate arrangements. for a brief absence from the hospital. I had instructed my children in the doctrines of my blessed The teacher, and young as they were, fully understood the significance of the occasion. The Guru was at his Ashram in Kailasvastu, and we traveled by train, completing the last part by car. of the journey. Although I hadn't seen the Ashram for twelve years, nothing had changed. The chelas had grown up and other young people took their places, the same friendly atmosphere prevailing. The Guru was sitting in his favorite spot, in the shade of the ruined arcade, and I couldn't observe him. that he had aged in any way. As we approached, the Guru smiled, greeted us, and bowed his head. as was his custom:

—Nadu, my son in God, and Radha, my daughter in God, I welcome you in the name of our Holy Order. And these little ones, aren't they my grandchildren in God? They are welcome too. Both children were aware of the great man's presence, and they stared at him intently and Curiosity. I had told them a lot about the Guru and they must have thought he was one of the Gods. The teacher extended his hand toward the children:

—Do not be afraid; come and sit here, next to me—My son was the first to dare and, taking Lilya from She extended her hand to the Guru, and the two of them sat down together, facing him.

Seeing that the teacher wished to be with the children, Radha and I moved a short distance away and We spoke with the disciples whom I had known before.

We were engrossed in that when I heard the silvery tinkling of Lilya's laughter, and looking towards the Guru I saw that our little daughter was sitting on his lap; and young Ramachandra was eating sweets from the They hid the bowl, not too carefully, in a cool place near the Guru. The teacher was in a cheerful mood and we noticed that he had captured the hearts of our children.

This time we only stayed three days at the Ashram, because it was difficult for me to be away from the hospital. Guru understood this and assured me that my first duty was to my patients.

The night after ourstayThe blessed Guru celebrated a small ceremony that will remain forever one of the most beautiful memories of our lives. He welcomed us all together at the Ashram. And we sat down along the edge of the large white cloth. First the teacher spoke to the children: "My grandchildren in..." God, for you life is just beginning. In the days to come you will also seek holy life. This is your Dharma; for before your births you were consecrated to the Gods and to the service of Our Great Mother.

The children were very quiet, and a deep and beautiful understanding shone through their eyes. The Guru He extended his hands and placed them on both of their heads:

—And now, my little ones, accept the blessing of an old man who served the Gods for a long time and is the Guru of your father. May the Great One, who is Lord of all the world, and who is enthroned by always upon the seven coils of the eternal serpent, may the Great One bless you through the hands of Your servant. May he keep you forever in the light of his Spirit, guiding us along the path of righteousness. Man Father Village.

The Guru removed his hands from the children's heads and took each of their right hands: —According to the Will of the Great Lord, you will become my disciples, as your father was. before you. I accept you into our Brotherhood according to the law of our fathers. Ramachandra, what do you have to say?

My son spoke, and I will never cease to marvel at the wisdom of his words, for he was only ten. years:

—Blessed Guru, on this day I fulfill the purpose of my incarnation. In past lives I was a disciple of the Holy Order. In this life I will continue in that discipleship, and in lives to come it is my prayer and my I hope that I will always be a servant of the Great Lord, and perform His works.

The voice that spoke was not that of a little boy but of an old man; and we understood that our son,

although Young in body, he was actually old in spirit.

Then the Guru turned to our daughter:

— And what do you have to say, Lilya?

Lilya replied: "My brother spoke my words, blessed master. Although in this life I count so little." For only nine years, I too was a servant of our Holy Order. I dedicate my life, as a daughter, wife, and Mother, in the service of the great Lord, who will guide me to the Light of His presence; and I will obey her Guru in all things until death.

You can well imagine the joy with which Radha and I heard the words of our children, for we knew who would continue the work of our lives once our time of service had passed. Also We could see happiness on our Guru's face, and in our souls we gave thanks for the good things. things that happened to us in the service of our people.

Then the master turned to Radha, my wife:

—My daughter in God, your father was a Guru of our order, as was his father before him. When You were born, your father brought you to me and consecrated you to the service of the great Lord. You fulfilled all your duties. entrusted to me, and now you have brought into the world a son and a daughter, whom I accepted according to the laws of our Brotherhood; you didn't fail at anything.

The Guru extended his hand and placed it on Radha's:

—And now, my daughter, I accept you into our blessed sisterhood; you are no longer just a girl, but one of my female disciples.

I can say little more about this blessed occasion. All those I loved most in the world were there. now united with me in our Holy Order and shared with me the privilege of receiving instruction from the great master. Finally, the Guru addressed me:

—Nadu, my son, there is nothing more I can do for you. Today I fulfilled your most secret wish. heart. For now, you must continue in your service as a father. Your children will stay with you. five years; then ItheYou will bring them. In the meantime, instruct them on the methods of our brotherhood. and refines their understanding of the religion and philosophy of our race. Once you have completed your task As heads of families, you too will advance in the Order. Until then, may the blessing of Lord of Lords, who is eternal, be with you.

The next day we returned to Dharapur, and from then on there was a new spirit in our house and We live together, fully dedicated to the teachings of the blessed Guru.

Chapter 17

One night, while I was working in my small laboratory, Sunkar Das brought his wife over. The good woman was very worried about the health of her third grandchild. When the child was born, the family astrologer... He warned that the child would die at six years old. The fatal time was near, and little Rabu was suffering. vague tropical ailment, being unable to retain food.

Mrs. Das had brought the child's horoscope; she unrolled it and begged me to look among the Planetary positions were the cause and the cure for that ailment. Unfortunately, I was not versed in that. These disciplines, even though I saw the Guru studying the horoscopes of his disciples. I asked Mrs. Das if I could borrow her horoscope and promised that I would include her grandson's health in my nighttime meditation. I also suggested that she take the child to the hospital the following morning, so that I could perform a complete physical examination. Since the whole family had complete faith in my ability professional, they left with some dose of hope and relief.

After Mr. and Mrs. Das left, I examined the horoscope and read several times the part relating to the little boy's health. There were many curious symbols and figures that I barely understood, indicating a serious illness that could prove fatal, but giving credence to the idea that the death announcement was not certain. I left the scroll open on the table; and then I offered a brief prayer, asking *with* would give me wisdom to save the life of Mrs. Das's third grandchild. It was very late, and after concluding this simple act of devotion, I closed the lab and went home.

As I walked in the moonlight through our small garden, I heard the sound of an iron staff. pounding on the dusty road. A religious beggar was approaching and, upon arriving, he began to chant old hymns Vedic hymns in a high, delicate tone. It was not usual for saints to be outside at night, so I stood near the front door in case the beggar asked for food.

A few moments later the saint approached our door. He was a very large and heavy man, and He walked with long, powerful strides. His hair, streaked with gray, resembled the mane of a lion, and She wore a white cloth with one end curled over her shoulder.

He went through the door and entered our garden without hesitation, walking directly towards where I was, in the shade of one of our large trees. His greeting was brief and simple:

—May the Holy Word protect you, my son.

I bowed my head and replied: —May the Great Mother bless you, Venerable sir. Then, as was the custom, I asked if he needed food or shelter. The saint shook his head. —I've traveled a lot, but my journey isn't over yet. I'm not asking for anything.

While I was under the moonlight, I noticed some luminous, twinkling Mamitas playing around From the head and shoulders of the beggar, I knew that he was a very holy person. —Why, venerable sir, have you honored yourself by placing your foot upon the soil of my garden? —I asked.

The ascetic leaned on his staff and replied:

—Last night a thought came to me from this house; and the thought told me that Nadu Chatterji, a a disciple of our Holy Order, had asked for help for the illness of Sunkar Das's third grandson, Isn't that right?

—That is indeed so, most venerable sir; and I welcome you in the name of my blessed Guru and I beg for your help for the life of this little boy.

The saint turned and walked towards my laboratory;

—Show me the child's horoscope.

He sat down on the floor of my office, and unrolling the long horoscope, studied the strange symbols. for a while. In the end, he spoke like this;

—Dr. Chatterji, my son, there are diseases of the flesh that can be cured by medicine and science; and there are other diseases that can only be cured with the help of the Gods, I perceive. that in another life this child was the father of a daughter, and because he wanted a son, he was cruel to the child, and He neglected her and wished for her death. To accomplish his purpose, he took her deep into the jungle and left her to her fate. of wild animals. But you must point out that he destroyed it only in intention, since in reality Physics did not fulfill its purpose, for a very large and holy hermit discovered the little girl and

took her to Her retreat. There she grew up and became a great Yogini. This sanctified woman performed many deeds charitable *and* good, and prayed that in this way his father's sin might be atoned for, and that he might be forgiven. Due to these circumstances, little Rabu has been afflicted with this illness; but he will be preserved.

I go through the prayers and good works of this holy sister.

After hearing this story, I asked:

—If the child is to recover, venerable sir, what treatments will be necessary? The saint stood up and indicated that it was time to leave the office:

—Medicine will be of no use; we will go together to Sunkar Das's house.

After a short walk, we arrived at the house and saw lights in the windows. The boy had worsened and the family was gathered with the young doctor from the hospital staff who lived next door. The saint immediately went to the side of the bed and looked at the little boy, emaciated and tormented by the fever. The creature was conscious but had fallen into fits of delirium. The saint spoke directly to him: —Rabbi, my son, you know the reason for your illness; *is* You owe it to your karma for a bad deed of yours. past life?

To everyone's astonishment, the little boy murmured:

—Yes, Father, I know I have sinned.

The saint continued:

— Do you regret the wrong you did?

Again the child whispered:

—Yes, Father; I regret it because I know that I abandoned my daughter and left her to die in the forest. The saint spoke softly:

—Through the blessing of the Great Lord, the little girl was saved and performed many virtuous deeds, becoming a great Saint; and in her prayers she remembered you and asked that you be forgiven. The sick child smiled weakly and replied in a low voice:

—Blessed Father, you bring me great happiness to know that my sin did not destroy my daughter. The saint then said:

—I am here to fulfill the request of the great Yogini, your daughter. Look, I bring her request in my hands and I give it to you. I give it into your heart; that you may be strong and dedicate your life to good works. The ascetic cupped his hands and then placed them over the sick child's heart. Then he turned away. towards the parents:

—Give the child food; it will live; and when it becomes a man it will be the father of a daughter, and it will love her very much, And through it, she will accomplish what she failed to achieve in a previous life.

Then the saint turned to me: "I have traveled a long way to get here, and I still have much to do." To travel. Goodbye, in the name of our Holy Order.

He quietly left the room, and I heard the sound of his staff and the high, delicate note of his song. as it faded into the night.

Rabu recovered and grew into a strong and handsome boy.

Chapter 18

Around the time my son turned fifteen, the Guru visited Dharapur as a guest of the Maharaja Rama, In the palace grounds there was a beautiful little building, made of white marble, inlaid with Drawings of mercury-glazed glass. This building was set aside for the use of the Guru and his disciples.*and* here The teacher received important visitors.

The Maharani was a woman of strong character.*and* progressive mind, and his sympathies were entirely dedicated to Her Royal Highness's social program. In recent years the Maharani had taken an interest in mysticism and the esoteric doctrines of our ancient religion. I wished to discuss these matters with the Guru, and this was the main reason for his visit to Dharapur.

Knowing that the time had come to take our children to the teacher, I made the arrangements. necessary for this great change in our lives, and with my small family I traveled to the capital. Your Highness Real received us kindly and insisted on assigning us apartments in the palace. The Maharaja had greatly admired the Palace of Versailles, with its gardens. He had brought architects and He hired European artisans to build him a palace modeled after the French kings. And then She furnished the large rooms with priceless antiques of appropriate design and style; and she was Here, amidst the doubled splendor of a French court, where he lived with his only wife. On this occasion, I had the privilege of meeting His Royal Highness the Crown Prince. He was a handsome, tall young man. He was thin and very affable. He adored his father and was already resolved to carry out, in every respect, the public service program that Prince Rama instituted. The Crown Prince was a student of Oxford and had returned to Dharapur for his summer vacation.

During their stayWith the Maharaja, the Guru never entered the palace, but on occasion he would arrive to sit on the wide white steps that led up to the throne room and the state chambers. Here I observed the coming and going of important people, and when the day was exceptionally Well, he indulged himself with sunbathing. Sometimes Rama would come out and sit with him, and together they would discuss the problems of classical literature in which the Maharaja was deeply versed.

One afternoon, when the Guru was sitting quietly on the wide steps, I approached him and asked permission to interrupt his quiet. He gestured for me to sit down, saying: —Nadu, my son, you brought me the children, so I will tell you what I have decided about their future. I have decided that your son Continue the task you have performed, so that it may take your place when the time comes for you to retire. holy life. The Maharaja gives his approval and assures me that your son will enjoy his patronage. As for Your daughter, I have unusual plans for her. It is my wish that she become a leader in the new political life and social status of Hindu women. Therefore, she will receive a formal education in political science. Once she completes the training I deem appropriate, I will send her to Europe and probably to America. Once again I rejoiced in the great wisdom of the blessed Guru and the profound knowledge he possessed about the characters of our children. Many times my son Ramachandra had told me that he wished to be like her father, a doctor. And Lilya, my daughter, had read every book she could find on the subject. to the social reforms that were changing the state of the Hindu people.

That night, Radha and I took the children to the Guru who was in the beautiful guesthouse, Built of marble. Although the building was fully equipped with electric lights, the master She preferred her oil lamp; and its tiny flame was reflected in the thousands of fragments of mirrors. embedded; it looked as if the Guru was sitting amidst countless tiny stars.

Our teacher greeted the children with great affection, and spoke to them thus:

—Ramachandra, my son in God, and Lilya, my daughter in God, you have been brought to me tonight according to the old methods of our fathers. The world is changing, and men live accordingly. New rules. But amidst an ever-changing way of life and thought, the old path It remains unchanged. The world has many princes and many rulers, and there are many Nations, with many ideals and purposes. But the Lord of Lords reigns forever from the sacred island in the ocean of sand. High above the mountains is seated upon his lotus throne, bearing the trident and the conch shell. Before him all the princes of the earth must bow down, for he is the Lord of all. His methods never change, His purposes are forever the same; and all who Those who serve their people must obey their laws and follow the path that leads to them. —My

children, you are now consecrated to him. I am a humble Guru, a master of his laws, and my Your duty is to instruct you in his methods and in support of his cause. If you love him, you will obey me, and You will carry out without question any action she asks of you. By acting in this way, you will discipline yourselves—; and the Self-discipline is the middle path that leads to the Holy City. By obeying me you serve me, but that you are perfecting yourselves in obedience. Know, my children, that obedience is the perfect virtue. We to elevate ourselves to the level where we obey. I will not speak further on these matters, for I consider I assume you understand them. From now on, I am your new father, guardian, and teacher. Then the teacher hugged the children separately and rang the silver bell that was always there. Beside him, an elderly woman in a long brown sari approached silently. The Guru said to her: —Holy sister, these are the children God has given me. Take them to the room that has been prepared, and provide for them their needs.

In this way we separated from our children and did not see them again for eight years. The next day Radha and I returned to the hospital, and a few days later the Guru left for a A long pilgrimage through the Northern Country. He reached Nepal, and our children accompanied him. By means I learned indirectly that our son stayed with the Guru for about a year and was then enrolled at a good school in Delhi. Our daughter lived in a sisterhood house near Calcutta, and had the privilege of receiving much instruction from the Guru himself. He took a great interest in his education and At eighteen, he sent her to England, where she lived in the Ashram of our Order. We made no effort to contact our children, knowing that when the time came Upon seeing them, the Guru would communicate with us. For a while our house seemed very empty, but in Our hearts were completely content, and we gave thanks daily to the Great Mother of that our children had found the old road that leads beyond the mountains of the Great Lord who governs the Holy City.

Chapter19

Four years after taking our children to the Guru, a serious situation arose in one of the provinces northern provinces, bordering our state. Some of these provinces were governed by lesser men wise and selfless than our revered Rama. These feudal princes squandered their fortunes on personal pleasures, and they neglected the needs of their subjects. In some cases the Government The British interfered by forcing the feudal states to institute modern reforms. However, if the local prince was not sympathetic to it; the procedure was extremely difficult and slow in terms of results.

By late autumn, it became clear that famine was inevitable in this neighboring state. Our The Maharaja generously distributed large quantities of food, but Dharapur is not a large country and the Supplies were insufficient.

The winter was very harsh, and during the spring there were devastating floods. We all knew it. that the disease was inevitable, and we were not surprised that summer brought cholera. Many families abandoned their homes to flee the dreaded disease, seeking refuge in Dharapur. The Rama, fully aware that this migration would introduce cholera into his state, He built a number of temporary communities, away from the cities, to house these refugees. One of the largest of these communities was a few kilometers from my hospital, and at the Rama's request, I went there with a team of doctors and nurses to determine the sanitary conditions and establish a adequate prophylaxis system.

As we feared, cholera broke out in several temporary communities and within a few months we faced A major epidemic. The Maharaja and Maharani recklessly exposed themselves to the disease, working day and night, along with his doctors and officials. Although Rama was of frail health, the Gods They protected their house and none of Their Highnesses contracted the plague.

In my district, the average number of deaths reached fifty per day, especially affecting the children and the elderly. Supplies, especially medicines, were scarce, and the Shipments arrived on special trains. A number of doctors and nurses collaborated with me. They became so exhausted from overwork that they fell victim to cholera and died with their families. patients. Radha and I did everything we could, but it was clear that the epidemic was out of control. control.

One night, while I was reviewing a list of new victims I was to visit the next day, For some reason my mind returned to the times when I used to take long walks with the Guru and the old man A disciple who studied botany and herbs. I remembered that my teacher had once pointed to a small plant. which grew abundantly along the side of the road. On this occasion he said:

—When the blessed Gods created the world through their meditation, they filled its earthly parts with seeds. From these seeds grew all kinds of plants, and all these plants have powers within them. healing. In each land there are herbs peculiar to that land, suitable for curing a disease. typical of that land. This humble herb has a great virtue. If its leaves are boiled with the stem and The roots are a remedy against cholera.

I tried hard to remember what that plant looked like; but it had happened so many years ago that I couldn't. I couldn't be sure. I picked up some books and tried to find a figure that would remind me of him; but nothing. I needed to support what I had half-forgotten in my memory.

I resolved to ask my blessed teacher for help and sent him my thoughts with my breath, as I would teach.

I said silently in my heart:

—Blessed Father in God, your children are in great affliction, your people are dying. In your infinite mercy Send me the souvenir of the plant that will cure your illness.

Then I remained silent, waiting; for I knew that the Guru would hear my call wherever he might be; And if he judged it good, my request would be answered.

Suddenly my attention was drawn to the flowers in a small vase on my desk. Radha loved flowers and every day she brought them to me from the garden. As I looked at them, they changed; the shape of the leaves altered; and I realized that my little bouquet was now just a bundle of ordinary weeds. garden.

Then I realized what had happened. The plant in the little vase was the one I was looking for. The Guru had He heard my prayer and answered me in this way.

Quickly taking the plant, I studied its structure; it could be obtained in large quantities in the Low hills

west of the hospital. The next day we took Mahadeo Rao's taxi and in a few hours We filled the back seat with bunches of that short, thick plant. We didn't have time to dry The herb itself, so we use the sterilizing equipment to evaporate the moisture. The tea The results obtained from the plant were first tested on hospital patients, and we discovered that its effect It was almost magical. As soon as we were sure the remedy was effective, I telegraphed Rama; and he They made arrangements to collect enormous quantities of the herb and prepare the remedy in the great Dharapur laboratory. Thus it was that, through the ever-present love of the blessed Guru, the cholera was controlled; and they lived many thousands who, otherwise, would have certainly died.

Chapter 20

Later, the herb was chemically analyzed by several British scientists, and their report was It was truly astonishing. As far as they could discover, the plant did not contain any chemical elements that... endowed with special medical virtues and yet, in some strange way, it was a panacea for the virulent morbid curiosity. I always wished I could ask the blessed Guru for an explanation. I think he would have told me that in nature there are secrets that defy science and bear witness to the peculiar workings of divine power. A few weeks after the cholera outbreak ended, I received a congratulatory message from Maharaja Rama. He told me that he was pleased to make special mention of my work, and of my medical discovery, in his report to Viceroy, and he announced to me that this report would be forwarded to His Majesty the King Emperor and that, with all In probability, I would receive direct communication from the British Government.

Rama added, in a rather playful tone, that there seemed to be a considerable division of opinion among the scientific circles on the importance of my discovery, and even a perceptible tendency to to discredit my findings. He advised me to ignore the controversy and continue my investigations into the Healing properties of the herb.

Therefore, I was somewhat prepared when I received an official communication from the Viceroy inviting me to New

Delhi, and expressing his warm personal gratitude for my service to the Crown.

Radha and I went to Dharapur where we met the Maharaja; and we traveled to New Delhi together with him on his private train. I had the opportunity to explain that the discovery did not belong to me but which my Guru, to whom all the credit was due, had transmitted to me in my extreme need. The Rama He smiled.

—Dr. Chatterji, I understand these things; but the Viceroy will not. I fear he will have to "put up with" the discovery.

After arriving in Delhi I learned that Rama intended to personally introduce me to the Viceroy. The Maharaja had a small palace in New Delhi, and we stayed there while the final arrangements. I clearly remember that the time set for my presentation was four o'clock. It was a Wednesday afternoon. At a quarter past three, Radha and I met the Maharaja in his spacious reception room. Her Royal Highness wore a long, yellow, brocade coat and sported many decorations and the insignia of his rank. His beautiful pearl necklaces are the finest in India, counted among his family's treasures for centuries. He carried a magnificently jeweled sword encrusted with diamonds, rubies and emeralds.

When we arrived in New Delhi, a special honor guard was waiting to receive the Rama. Government buildings are very imposing. The architecture reveals considerable Hindu influence and The buildings are made of reddish sandstone.

In due course, we were led to a small reception room where the Viceroy received us. politely and in a very informal manner. He was a tall, thin English gentleman with an aquiline face and Rather prominent cheeks. Her voice was cultivated, soft, unmistakably British. The Rama me He introduced himself as a dear and trusted friend. I felt very humbled to hear his words. complimentary. Her Royal Highness then presented Radha, and the Viceroy seemed especially interested when e]

Rama told her about all she had done to help the people of our province. Few dignitaries were present, and these were introduced in turn. Then we sat down, and the Viceroy asked me to tell him something about my experience in the hospital, and about the work carried out by the local doctors during the cholera epidemic. We stayed for about half an hour and I told my story simply pointing out that our success was largely due to the wisdom and benevolence of His Royal Highness Maharaja Rama.

Then the Viceroy said that he was aware that I was a disciple of that most venerable man called Sri Purascharanacharya; and that my life was consecrated to the Holy Brotherhood of mystics; by Therefore, he had deemed it appropriate that the reception be simple, in accordance with the precepts of life ascetic. I expressed deep gratitude for His Lordship's consideration and understanding. Then The Viceroy stood up, invited Rama to walk beside him, and led the march through several wide doors, entering a large room with no other furniture than two large chairs on a low platform. Several aides-de-camp and other officials

were waiting there. The Viceroy and Rama sat down, and His Lordship He received an important document. Standing up, he thanked the Rama for his presence, and then turned to me. before the small group of people:

—Dr. Nadu Chatterji, Director of the Northern Hills Hospital of the Sovereign State of Dharapur; In the course of your professional duties you have made a valuable contribution to health and the welfare of the people under your care, and of all the people of India. Due to the exceptional The nature of this service, the circumstances, attracted the attention of Her Majesty's Government. After With due consideration, Her Majesty's Government is pleased to acknowledge your services as a in a manner befitting their merit. Therefore, I am authorized to confer upon you, Nadu Chatterji, the Order of the Cavalry, a very distinguished and unusual distinction.

The Viceroy stepped down from the platform, and one of the officers handed him a sword. I barely knew what do, furtherHis Lordship politely indicated that I should kneel. Then the Viceroy played my shoulders with the sword, saying:

—In the name of His Most Powerful Majesty George; by the Grace of God the Fifth; King of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales; Emperor of India, Protector of His Majesty's Overseas Possessions, and Defender of the Faith, I dub you a knight, conferring upon you the Order of Chivalry. Rise, Sir Nadu Chatterji.

When I stood up, the Viceroy handed me the sword:

—Sir, this is your sword; may its blade always shine, and may it only be used to defend God, the Emperor and Justice.

Everyone was waiting, and it was clear they were all waiting for me to say something. I looked at Rama and smiled. cheerfully, trying to express my gratitude.

—Your Lordship, and Your Royal Highness: I have never given a speech, and the reason for this escapes me. that you have chosen me from among so many others more worthy than I to receive the honor. As His Lordship said Before, I am dedicated to a holy life, and I am one of the humblest disciples of Jagat Guru Sri Purascharanacharya. Her inspiration, her wisdom, and her love set my life on the path of good. works. Everything I know I learned from him; and above all, he taught me to live selflessly, Serving those in need, according to the law of our religion. He is the one who should receive all the Honors and all distinctions. He is the teacher of my life. I am deeply grateful for this beautiful gesture. and generous on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, and I will endeavor to be worthy of the confidence that I have been given. I will demonstrate. I love our people and will continue to serve them to the best of my ability, but my life It does not belong to me; for in all things I obey my Guru, to whom I owe all loyalty after God.

When I finished, a voice from the corner of the room said:

—My son in God, your words are good, and in accordance with the modality of our Blessed Order. I turned around and sitting quietly on the floor, against the wall behind me, was my blessed teacher, with his arm resting on his forked staff. I fear my actions were not in accordance with the strict dress code of the occasion. For the moment I forgot the presence of the Viceroy and the Maharaja; I ran I turned to my master and, kneeling before him, placed my sword at his feet:

—Beloved master, your disciple awaits your words of wisdom at this moment. The Guru took the sword and placed it on his knees:

—My son, you earned this recognition and it's right that you receive it; for this will inspire others of our generation people to perform meritorious actions. The honors of this world are in themselves of little value. consequently,furtherThe spirit it gives them is of great importance. It is good that men are Honor one another for your virtues. You have a new burden to bear, but you will bear it with wisdom. until you complete your work in the world of men.

No one had seen the Guru enter, and it was clear that the Viceroy was astonished, but he knew enough about India, as if to say nothing. The others who were gathered there waited in silence and with I respect. Then the Guru said to me:

—Sir Nadu Chatterji, you can introduce me to the Viceroy.

It was a tense situation, but His Lordship handled it with admirable composure. Rising, he descended From the platform, and approaching the Guru, I bowed formally. I said by way of introduction: —Sri

Ramachandra Arjunananda Purascharanicharm, I have the honor of presenting to His Lordship the Viceroy from India.

The Guru bowed his head towards the Viceroy:

—May the blessings of the Gods be with you, my son; I thank you, as a father thanks, the honor that you bestowed upon my disciple, who is my son in God.

The Viceroy replied calmly:

—Sri Purascharanacharya, I am informed that the discovery of the remedy for cholera is due to Unfortunately, we do not have the means to evaluate the mysterious resources of your religion; therefore We honor the doctor who gave this discovery to the world. I am sure that if His Government If Your Majesty could do so, I would bestow great honors upon you for the many wise and wonderful things that you have done.

The Guru smiled and shook his head:

—It is a tenet of our philosophy, Your Lordship, that the works of the Gods be given to the world through disciples of our Holy Order. So it is in your world as well; God is the source of all good, but Men, not God, are rewarded for their works. Men must fulfill these works throughout their lives. selfless actions, and although it derives from God, these men deserve the honors bestowed upon them They conferred. You have honored me through my disciple, and you have honored our Gods in the same way. Measured. That's fine.

Then the Guru turned to me and said with a strange smile:

—And now, my son, I have traveled a great deal and still have a long way to go. Goodbye, until the day I He has to come.

The Guru indicated that he wished to rise, so I hastened to help him. As he rose, the staff of iron was in his hand; and without uttering another word to anyone, he slowly left the room; and me He seemed to hear the distant tinkling of a silver bell.

That's how I became a Knight of the Empire, and while this was a great honor, I judge it more still important because the blessed Guru revealed himself on that occasion to the Viceroy and blessed the work that I had fulfilled.

She took my sword with her; and years later I found it in her Ashram before the small altar that held the paintings by Krishna.

Chapter 21

I dedicated my last three years of work as Director of Health for the State of Dharapur primarily to the preparation of a textbook on tropical diseases. The Maharaja me He kindly allowed me to dedicate the work to him, and assured me that he would finance its publication and distribution. Radha and I left our little house in the hills and lived in the capital city, where We could be in closer contact with the numerous state health projects. His Highness, the Crown Prince spent a lot of time with me, as the Rama's health no longer allowed him to participate. as active in her program as in the early years.

The Guru had told me that my period of discipleship as a paterfamilias would be twenty-five years. Once that period was over, I asked the Maharaja for permission to submit my resignation and return to the life of a religious ascetic. His Royal Highness was benevolent enough to understand my devotion to the work spiritual leader of our Order, and accepted my resignation, relieving me of my various duties.

After settling all my worldly affairs, Radha and I left Dharapur to meet with the teacher in Kailasvastu. When we arrived there we rejoiced to find our children, whom the Guru had summoned Ramachandra, my son, a tall, elegant young man, for this important occasion. to graduate from university the following year. Lilya, my daughter, had been studying at the University of Columbia, in the United States of North America, developing a very Western point of view. We spent many nights with our grown children, and discovered that, in every sense, they had satisfied fulfilled our highest expectations and hopes. In one of these conversations, Lilya told me: —Most venerable father, I know that the time is approaching for you to make your pilgrimage to the Great Ones who ignore Beyond the mountains. How far you will go, and whether you will return or not, depends on the Will of the Gods. This afternoon I spoke with the blessed Guru about the future of our beloved mother. It was my hope. that I should return with him to North America, until I completed my education there. The teacher, in his With kind understanding, he agreed.

Lilya approached me and, kneeling beside my chair, placed her hands in mine:

Radha, your beloved wife, and Lilya, your obedient daughter, will be waiting for you when you have completed your duties. of your religious life. If you don't return, we will be with you in thought.

The next day the blessed Guru called me.

When I sat down opposite him in the corner by the white cloth, I found it difficult to comprehend the many years that had happened since I was his girlfriend for the first time. The Maestro's long hair was still streaked. with the same gray line I saw when I first found him. My own hair was also gray-haired now, and very thin; but in my heart I was still the thirteen-year-old boy who went out running from my father's garden almost forty years ago.

After a few moments the blessed Guru spoke:

—Nadu, my spiritual son, you have returned to the path of the Gods. Your work as a father has It's over. You did your part to help the people of India. For twenty-five years you served the needs of our Great Mother. Nadu, you were a good disciple; you obeyed me in all things and You never failed me. Today our partnership as master and disciple is complete. I release you from All the obligations you had towards me, You are no longer my disciple; you are no longer my son.

I turned to the teacher and my eyes were wet with tears:

—Beloved Father, I do not wish to be freed; I only wish to be your disciple for as long as I live. I only wish I will obey you; I have no other life.

The Guru nodded his head in understanding:

—It is in accordance with our law, Nadu, that you always hold your teacher in the deepest respect, Because He is the father of your spiritual life. But just as a son must leave his father's house and fulfill his Your own destiny, likewise you must leave my house following the path that leads to the Gods. I served you, and for that service you will always be grateful, for it is your nature to be grateful. But, Nadu, The road is long, and my Ashram is just a small rest house by the side of the road. I taught you everything that I can teach you. Now you must go in search of others who can teach you more, and because those The more they learned, the more they must give; you will become a teacher, for by teaching you will learn. The Guru bent down and hugged me:

—Nadu Chatterji, you are no longer my disciple, you are my friend; you are no longer my son, you are my

brother. Nadu, my brother in God, accept the blessing of your friend.

Then the Jagat Guru told me that we would soon travel together to Shigatse, in the North of the country, on the border with Tibet. We would go on a holy pilgrimage, walking the entire way, accompanied by some few older disciples.

When the time for the pilgrimage arrived, I took off my European clothes for the last time and put on those of a religious mendicant. From that day on I ceased to be the Doctor and became a Hindu saint, one of the four million of our people, consecrated to the service of the Gods of our fathers. I wore A yellow cloth wrapped around the body, and necklaces of wooden beads around the neck. One of the My disciples carved me a staff and fitted it with an iron ferrule, and Radha, my wife, gave me a bowl of A tin can, tied with a piece of yellow cloth. There I could keep the few worldly possessions I had

They would accompany me on my journey. In this bowl I placed the last letters from my parents, portraits of my wife, and children, and a ring that Maharaja Rama gave me when we parted. I also carefully wrapped and I deposited in the *lota* a small image of Krishna, carved in ivory, given to me by the blessed Guru. After a warm farewell from my wife and children, who asked for my blessing, I bestowed it upon them. With all my heart, I met the Guru; and together we walked the dusty road that He drove from the Ashram to the great northern mountains. We were accompanied by five disciples, who They followed us at a short distance. We traveled for many days, passing through villages and making several useful tasks.

In a village, two men were arguing over the ownership of a cow. When we arrived, the main The people of the village gathered around us and begged us to resolve the dispute. The Guru and I We sat down under a tree, and both men went ahead, one of them leading the cow. I remained silent while the Guru assessed the discussion. Finally, he bent down and picked up a pebble; Then he addressed the two men:

—My children, this little stone is part of the body of our Great Mother, the Earth. I will hold it in my hand; let each one know what is true in their own heart. Then, let each one try to remove this stone from me. The hand. He who is honest will be able to take the stone, but he who is not will lack the strength to take it from me. Both men remained silent, looked at each other, and observed the locals gathered there. After several seconds, one of the men stepped forward and removed the stone from the Guru's hand. The old master smiled:

—My son, the cow belongs to you.

This is how we traveled to Shigatse, where we arrived after almost seven weeks.

Chapter 22

In Shigatse we stopped at a small rest house built years ago by a wealthy merchant for the use of The religious mendicants. Despite his age, the Guru did not seem tired from the long walk and received Several visitors were in the small courtyard surrounding the guesthouse. Nearby lived two other saints, who They arrived to question the master about the interpretation of certain verses from the Rig-Veda. The Guru... He explained it at length and with profound wisdom.

The next morning, at dawn, we walked together to the edge of the village. The mountains... They surrounded on all sides, and to the North the rising sun was reflected in the pink and purple shadows of the great glaciers of Himavat. Beyond the village was a broad plateau that stretched for several kilometers until reaching the high hills. A dirt road crossed this plateau, in spiral, with the ruts of the wooden wheels of the ox teams. The Guru stopped at the edge of that plain and pointed the way:

—There, Nadu, my brother, is the path of the Gods. You must walk that path alone. You must not Don't ask where you're going, or why you're going, or who you'll meet along the way. Keep in your heart the Invaluable treasure of our blessed law, you must continue until you find the Gods in accordance with their Will and pleasure. Perhaps you must follow this path for many years; perhaps they will find you truly weak and old man before reaching the end of this road. Perhaps you will fall and die somewhere, in the North, next to This wandering path. But always remember that somewhere in the North lies what you seek; somewhere In that place, beyond the mountains, the Gods are waiting.

I knelt at the Guru's feet to receive his blessings. He placed his hand on my head, saying: —Nadu, my brother, receive now the blessing of an elder who served the Gods. My strength goes with you, but now only your own strength can truly serve you.

Then he signaled for me to get up and hugged me, and I could see that there were tears in his eyes. Then he raised his hands above my head and seemed to be speaking to someone far beyond from the mountains: —Great Lord of the World, be gracious to Nadu, my brother. Bow down from your lotus throne and take his Hand, guide him along the old path in the footsteps of our fathers, and draw him to your Blessed Self, according the promise of our faith. Om Tat Sat.

Walking stick in hand and carrying my small brass bowl wrapped in the yellow cloth, I walked away from my Guru, and I began to walk the rough and steep path with my eyes fixed on the North. I crossed slowly the small plain, and upon reaching the end of the plateau I looked back. There, on the long lances of the first At dawn, the Jagat Guru stood leaning over his iron staff, gazing at me. I greeted him with I held out my hand, and he raised his own, blessing me.

Beyond the plateau, the road wound through deep valleys and skirted high cliffs. There were streams, some of which I had to swim across, and wild places where the path seemed disappear. The path plunged deeper and deeper into the mountains. At night there were a few rest huts where other pilgrims had stopped, but along the entire path I didn't find nobody.

My food consisted mainly of berries and herbs that I had learned to recognize, and I drank water that flowed from the melting glaciers of the highlands.

On the night of the twelfth day, the last vestige of the world built by the Man. There weren't even any rest houses left, and I slept in the woods. The region was very beautiful. Shortly before nightfall, the path reached a strange formation of dark rocks. These looked like Stacked shapes of temples and shrines. The path led through these rocks. When the Sun, the sky was so brilliantly starry that it was easy to follow the path. Then, a thin moon Silver added its light, and the night was strangely calm and silent; and I knew in my heart that I was approaching a holy place.

Shortly after, I noticed a soft light shining from the rocks in front of me. The light was... The color was rose-gold, and it seemed to twinkle and glow in a strange way. Then, as I followed a bend in the path, I saw the luminous fountain before me. On a rocky outcrop beside the path sat an old man on a yellow silk cushion. Her snowy hair fell around her shoulders to her waist, and in her His forehead bore the yellow caste mark, with Shiva's trident. I recognized him instantly. He was the Lord of The Lords, the Sublime Rishi, Azurelarna, the master of my beloved Guru. Pink light flickered around of her body, and her large, soft eyes looked directly into me.

The Sublime Lord spoke:

—Nadu, my son, do you remember me? I was sitting under a canvas umbrella at the Second Ghat in Allahabad, at the Kumbh Mela, when you were thirteen years old. It was on that occasion that I told you you would be a old man before seeing the shadow of my hand again.

I prostrated myself at the foot of the rock throne on which the great Rishi was seated.

—Sublime Being,— I exclaimed— from the first day I carried your face in my heart; I knew that your words were They would fulfill their promise, and that one day I would see the shadow of your hand.

—The Lord of Lords spoke again:

—Nadu, my son, you have come in search of the path of the Gods,*and* I am the guardian of the next house of rest where you should linger for a while. Nadu Chatterji, you are my disciple, as your Guru He was blessed before you.

It was there, among the rocks, on that starry night, that I sat at the feet of the Lord of Lords and I received your instructions:

—Nadu, my son, in the name of the Nameless One who dwells in timeless space, I consecrate you as Guru, master of our timeless doctrine. You will have your own disciples, who will love you as you love them. You loved your teacher. You will instruct them according to the law of our faith. When the time comes for my beloved Son in God, the sanctified Sri Purascharanacharya, be removed from your present work and returned to me, You will take his place. You will continue his tradition and be his successor in all things. In this work You will remain until you are one hundred and ten years old, and then I will bring you back; and together we will go with your blessed Guru. to the City of the Gods. If you need me or wish to know my will, remain silent and concentrate your mind in your heart; there you will find me sitting as I am tonight, and I will answer your question and you I will reveal my will.

The Lord of Lords rose from his seat on the rocks and, descending to the path, me He led through a small valley; and beyond I could see the faint outline of a great temple. The Lord of The Lords spoke:

—Nadu, my son, this is my house. Here you will remain until the appointed day. Here you will practice our ways. mystical devotions and you will prepare yourself to be a master of our Holy Order. All that happened many years ago. Now I am sitting next to a ruined archway, in the Ashram of Kailasvastu, in the place where my blessed Guru used to sit. I am seventy years old as I write this. These lines, and my chelas and disciples are gathered around me. I live only to serve them, and I dream of the day I will see the shadow of my teacher's hand again.

My beloved Radha has left this world, and my children's children are among my disciples. For alltheI give eternal thanks to the blessed Guru for all the graces and blessings in my life. I await that May the day come when we will go together to the Holy City of our Lord.

OM