



MOTH & THE FLAME

DEDICATION

To the Nameless & Formless;
To the great Adepts of the mystic *Word*—
past, present & future;
To Kirpal—true Friend, Father & beloved Mentor,
around whose manifest, unfathomable Light
I & a myriad souls were launched in ecstatic orbit;
To all who walk the way of love, earth-stewardship & service;
To Ratana, faithful life-companion; our children, grandchildren,
extended family, friends, editors, colleagues & helpers,
To a sustainable, caring world, & to you, good reader,
this work & life are dedicated.

This account represents yet another
view of the universal quest.
Light passes through a prism,
splaying into a million fragments and hues.
What was One became many;
what became many becomes One again.
If we, through no virtue of our own,
are given something extraordinary and transforming,
our loving duty then is not only to cherish,
but to ensure that it endures by sharing.
Invisibly, but surely, regardless of creed or color
—we are all interconnected.

Moth & the Flame is the intimate diary of a very human seeker engaged in an intense quest for spiritual realities. His challenge, to balance mystical practice and its concomitant experiences with earthly responsibility lies ever before him.

At fifteen, his enchanted world of natural beauty on Vancouver Island where he was born and raised, and the security of family he had until then known and exulted in, imploded, leaving him alone, compelled to scabble for survival and identity on some of the meaner streets of Los Angeles and San Francisco. Two years later, broken in mind and spirit, he took refuge in an unusual monastery near the summit of Mt. Chatsworth, where his spiritual quest was ignited through encounters with a mysterious and exhilarating Inner Light.

Burning with unanswered questions, his search continued beyond the monastery confines, this time through America's art scene and the shadowland of addiction and poverty. In his darkest hours, suffering and heart-longings attracted the Inner Light again and again. Imbued with an Intelligence beyond reckoning, this inner beacon inspired and led him from the abyss of despair and ignorance, to hope and renewal. Through a remarkable succession of synchronous events, a life was irrevocably changed; a heart responded to the invitation to embark upon the Homeward journey, and to meet the human manifestation of his radiant inner Guide.

Thus, in 1967, at twenty-three, the husk of a former persona left behind, he joyously embraced the relative austerity of ashram life in mystic India, fortunate to have as his mentor one of the great universal teachers of the 20th century. "Write down what you see and hear, that you may not forget," Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj advised him, soon after arriving. The diary entries that followed became the genesis of this book. *I was that young seeker, undeserving of such unimaginable good fortune.*

Why go to a spiritual teacher at all, when everything, including God, is the essence of our being? I was to hear a similar refrain put to my revered mentor up in the Himalayan foothills by a visiting American professor and his wife, "...why do we need to seek the help of an intermediary?"

Master Kirpal replied, "The God in you is asleep. In whom It is awake, he is competent to awaken others. Light comes from Light and life comes from life."

Seven glorious, ardent, yet sometimes anguishing months passed in this great teacher's quickening company, for I was there to practice the

Presence, to begin the formidable task of undoing the downward tendencies and habits of mind and senses—formed not just in this life, but, as I was to learn, over countless lifetimes. I went to India not seeking miracles, but found the miraculous at every step. On several rare occasions I was helplessly swept into states of super-consciousness, mysteriously ignited through the catalytic grace of a true Adept, leaving me breathless, blissful and totally humbled. The metaphor of a fragile moth in erratic orbit of the cosmic Flame is closely apropos. Within this highly charged atmosphere, the beginnings of a foundation were rising upon which my future life, vision and ethos would be built.

Fervent, not yet half-baked, I returned to the West at the peak of the hippie revolution, and started a little business based on the principles of service and hard work, while carrying on regular spiritual practice in the midst of everyday North American life. I would be drawn back to India and the saints to recharge the old batteries time and again over the next four decades. While shuttling between cultures and continents, juggling family and duty, I was called upon to witness and record some profound events, priceless conversations and wisdom-teachings of three widely revered mystic Adepts, each of whom were living embodiments of a great lineage reaching back through the millennia. These teachers manifested dimensions of what is possible in human evolution. Fully aware of the limitations of self and the written word, nevertheless this writer has attempted to bear witness to the indescribable. Whatever intense, purifying fires a seeker must pass through, these are more than offset by the reality of progressive evolution to liberation—more importantly, by the love that flows through the presence of the Saints.

As seeker, artist, idealist and businessman, the writer has been privileged to participate in the birth and flowering of the organic foods and environmental movements in the sixties and seventies, which led to active involvement with a vibrant entrepreneurial vehicle—Nature's Path Organic Foods. This independent enterprise employs a talented team of hundreds, embracing sustainable family farms and countless others in all aspects of the supply chain, from seed to plate. The blessings of family, friends, co-workers and fellow wayfarers have added untold human dimensions and responsibility to the journey. The great poet-saint Sant Darshan Singh once advised me, "the purpose of power is to protect," a profound rejoinder for one often caught up in the rigors of business challenges and intense market competition.

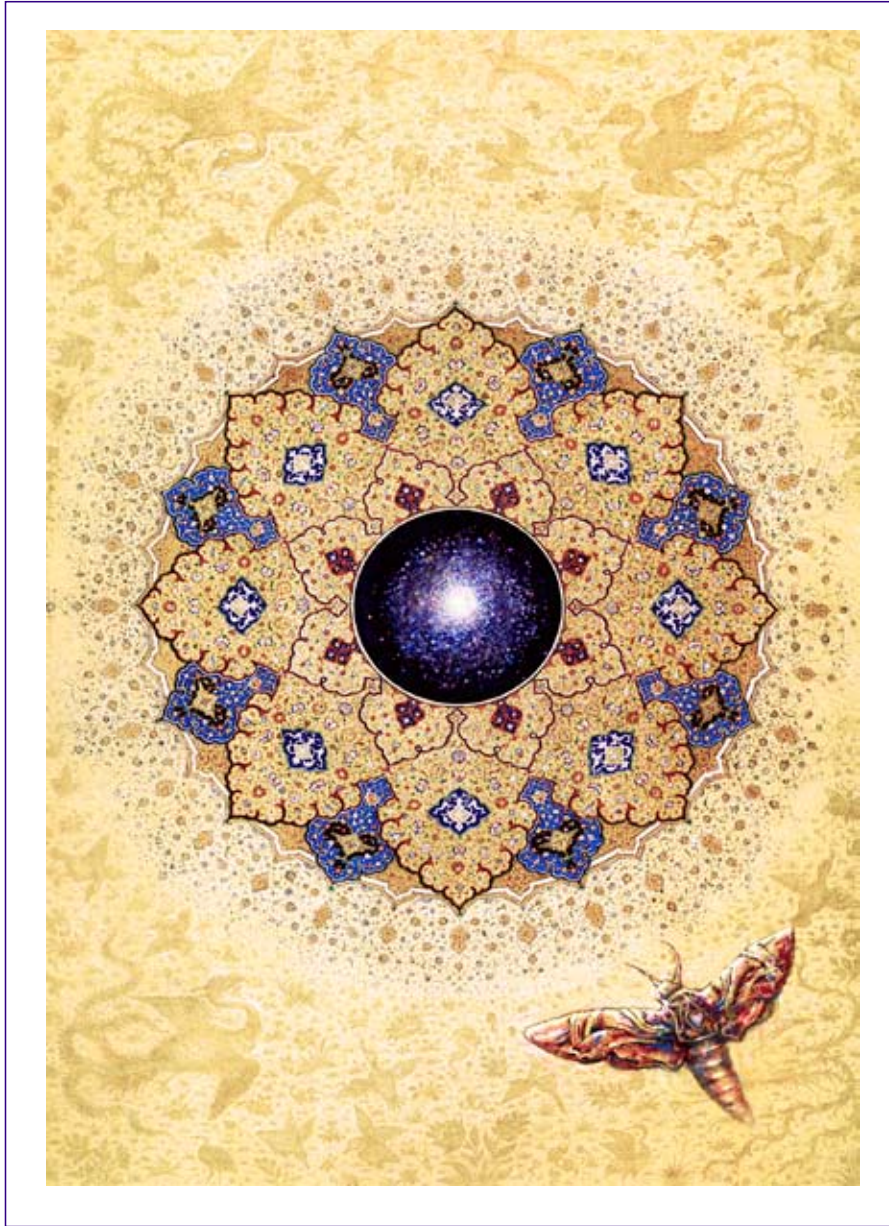
Despite the daunting swirl at the edge, the spiritual beggar seeks the solitude and silence of a hermit within the luminous heart. The mystic heart does not beat within the chest, but radiates behind the eyes in subtle dimensions. When we reach its sacred precincts, we then realize we are not this changing body, nor the egoic personality, nor the outer world we have become identified with. When the boundaries between Self and the Overself begin dissolving, we discover our eternal nature—connected, very luminous, and *born to serve*.

The well-traveled and most ancient Path which threads my account is not religion-specific yet honors the essence of all great spiritual traditions and teachers. In truth, the *Way* remains beyond description—when experienced, only then can it be known. The message, while old as humanity itself, remains immediate, verifiable, and within reach of everyone.

Countless the starting points; myriad the paths; names of the Nameless resound by the thousands; innumerable the lovers—but the Destination and Beloved are One. Ultimately, *we* are One. Each awakening on such a journey is unpredictable, unique and filled with adventures, at least from our human perspective. The *moth* of this true story represents the soul and its inevitable longing for return, whereas the *Flame* is a flaring from life's cosmic Fire, pulling us home to its Heart.

I was most fortunate to experience the continuum of the great legacy through Sant Kirpal's spiritual successors, Sant Darshan Singh (1921-1989) and the living Master, Sant Rajinder Singh (b. 1946), to whom I am deeply indebted. My travels, experiences and interviews with them fill the second-half of *Moth & the Flame*. Each of the three Masters have been so different, and yet they diffused the same universal Light and Love to one and all.

If any wayfarers discover some resonance, a little glow, some fragrance in the pages ahead, then my job is done, with gratitude. The imperfect 'pipe' takes no credit, and begs a thousand pardons wherever his rust has tinted the pure elixir.



*Along the luminous path, the image of a moth & Flame
has often flared in the inspired imagination
of mystic poetry. Borrowing Shah Jahan's carpet,
the artist has taken liberties, crafting the image
of a radiant nebula at the center & a seeker-moth
at the edge, poised in flight, a creature intoxicated
with wonder & ardor in the presence of what it lives...
& ultimately dies for. Its death is not really death,
but a transformation of consciousness
—a phoenix rising triumphant
from its own ashes.*

MOTH & THE FLAME

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