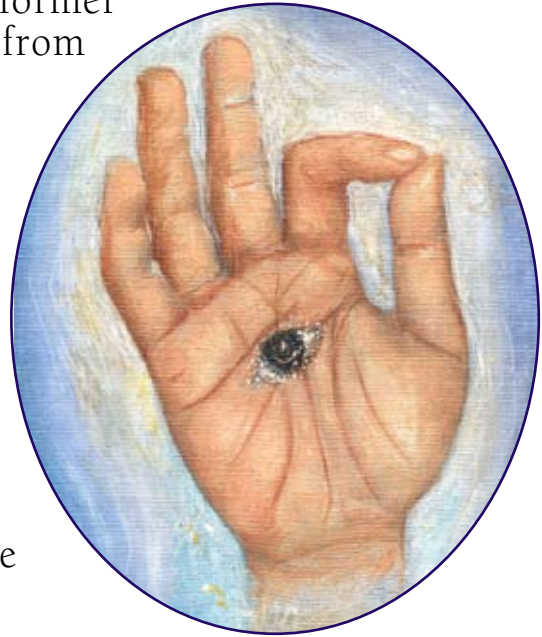




MOTH & THE FLAME
SLAPPED INTO THE BEYOND

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Moments spent in the company of my Master were infinitely more valuable than all the petty treasures of this faithless world. As time passed, a subtle love began to permeate consciousness, profoundly altering all perceptions. A former life seemed but a distant dream; freed from the influence of alcohol and drugs for three years, nothing could remotely compare with the divine intoxication I now experienced. The presence of the Master was a perfume which engulfed all who drew near. The sweetness it awakened far surpassed the pleasures of sense, intellect, accomplishment or fame. Recently, Master stated '*God is an Ocean of intoxication.*' I was merely sitting on the shore, and while endless waves rolled forward, it was impossible not to be sprayed with some benison from the Ocean's edge.



One night came a strange dream - the Master's hand with an all-seeing eye.

Since arriving at the ashram, however, lack of any particular inner progress in meditation dissolved preconceived notions of sudden samadhi in the Master's presence. One morning, I had an opportunity to ask him about it in a non-complaining way. 'It is due to your attachment to the *outer* form of the Master,' he chuckled, and added, 'The other will come in due course!' Grateful for the promise, I backed out of his chamber and went back to meditate.

'Brother, Master wants to see you right away!' exclaimed a breathless sevadar who found me saddened on the far side of the ashram a few days later. I ran over to the porch and entered the inner sanctum. 'Why are you walking about with such a long face?' Master demanded. I was tongue-tied, unable to respond. 'Long face! Long face! Why the long face?' Startled by his blunt prescience, I struggled for words. 'Maharaj Ji, I'm running out of funds, and have to leave.'

His mouth dropped open and ample eyebrows raised up

incredulously, ‘What?! Don’t think of the future and don’t think of the past. Make best use of the living present and put in maximum time for meditations. You are a dear child of the Father and are to stay here with me!’ He pulled from his pocket a big roll of rupee notes, and removed the rubber band which held them all together. ‘If you ever need anything, come directly to me!’ While thanking him, I declined his kind offer, not wanting to impose.

Master then warned, ‘They’re not all saints here, mind that!’ There was nothing I could hide, for I had imagined that many of the ashram’s colorful characters were on some higher plane, and he wanted to disabuse me of this fantasy. In a recent satsang he warned, ‘The Master is like a cow who loves to give her sweet milk to the calf that comes from a distant pasture, but the ticks living on the udder only drink her blood.’ I prayed, ‘*Let me be such a calf.*’

Shortly thereafter, a \$100 money order came unexpectedly from my mother. I timidly approached the Master and asked if I should borrow some money until I could cash the draft in downtown Delhi, as otherwise my pockets were quite empty. He peeled off some notes, asking, ‘Will this be enough?’ and insisted I accept it. I cautiously accepted some rupees and returned the rest. It took a full day of navigating the chaos of downtown, going from bank to bank before finding an institution that would convert the note into rupees. A day or so later, I proceeded to Master’s house, absorbed in the idea of settling my debt—if such were possible. *How could a slave of mind hope to repay the emperor of hearts?*

After an anxious wait, he suddenly emerged onto the porch, smiling and greeting. I stammered, ‘Master, here is the money you kindly loaned me.’ He chuckled and pushed my hand away. I insisted, but again he refused. As he turned his back, I sneaked the rupees into his coat pocket! But, while looking in the opposite direction, he omnisciently caught my hand in his right, suddenly turned, and lightly slapped my face three times, back and forth. He disappeared into the crowd, leaving me stunned, my ears ringing, and the impression of his huge, beaming countenance in my mind.

In a most vivid dream that night, Mohan-driver appeared and conveyed a message; I was being called upon to help spread the Master’s teachings in the West. Suddenly I was wide awake on the inside. The Satguru appeared in the distance dressed all in white, clearer than daylight. Without moving his limbs, his form accelerated straight towards me; now he was directly in front. His right hand moved back as if to strike, then swung with full

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force towards my face. When his hand connected, there was exploding-implosion lightning. He was all that remained, and his holy visage began to glow brighter and brighter with an incandescence eclipsing the sun, a vortex of stupendous luminous power. I was dragged into and through its center, then catapulted into the Beyond at great speed over vast distances, becoming a mote of freed awareness, momentarily part of and one with an Ocean of ecstasy and grace. Angelic music and wondrous beauty flowed through everything. This Ocean had no water, edges, bottom, nor end. The word 'ocean' is no more descriptive than 'sky' or 'infinity'. Love-consciousness abided, and my actuality was no more than a tiny bubble floating in titanic majesty.

Alas, this dip into the Cosmos was not destined to last for long. As the elements re-congeal, trickster my return somewhere darkness. Against my eternity, sent back, for unacclimatized and incompatible with the place with great speed, a high pitched keening—a soul plus mind skidded down until softly and silently recognizable body through forehead. Upon return to the I wept again. Although of Life, indescribable bliss

God comes to His lovers forms. To me He came in His slap, which conferred an advance installment strength whenever weak, trouble. Greatly fortified, I might be worthy of the creation in some

of ego-self began to mind was crying for far below in relative will, I was torn from my consciousness was contained impurities realm. Descent took and from every side came kind of musical friction as through successive layers, re-entering a lifeless, barely a vertical aperture in the prison of physical existence, separated from that Life saturated awareness for days.

in many ways, in many the guise of my Guru and a brief taste of Eternity, from which to draw dry, uninspired, or in I prayed that someday serving the Master and small way.