



MOTH & THE FLAME
INDIFFERENCE & REDEMPTION

33

*F*or three interminable days and nights following my blunder, the physical Master turned his back to me. Not once did he look my way even if I walked near him or sat right at the front in satsang. Perhaps I no longer mattered or even existed, and consequently, my heart wilted like a sapling deprived of water, light, earth—everything. Behind the indifference of the Beloved there is always a higher purpose, but there is little solace in such knowing when one is caught in the wringer, when adolescent faith is pushed to the wall.

No matter how hard I reprimanded myself for such unmanly behavior, I had no control over a constant flow of tears. I stood in a corner of the porch, repenting, looking toward the One who refused to return my yearning gaze. In open satsang today, unbeknownst to me, he said in Hindi, ‘The sahib weeps for me out of love—how many of you weep for the Master?’

As a past recipient of much attention, I felt especially loved—a claim truthfully made by practically everyone who spent some time with him. He was now showing me the impersonal aspect of love, if I daresay, love’s cruelty. He was wearing away resistant ego and leveling the clods of pride. Like a master physician, he knew the malady and the cure. My ego-disease was chronic and deep-rooted, and required immediate, if not dramatic treatment, like the lancing of a painful boil.

On the night before my leaving India, Master was smiling and ebullient while scooping handfuls of parshad from a large basket into the outstretched hands of an amorphous cluster of devotees. One by one they left, full of happiness. Finally I stood alone before my Maharaj, half bowing, cupped hands timidly, uncertainly stretching towards him. He had just scooped up another big handful, then fixed me sternly with his gaze and dumped it back into the basket, commenting icily, ‘*Nothing for you.*’ Turning on his heel he walked to his inner rooms leaving me shocked and ignored. I spent the balance of the night in turmoil, alternating between calm faith and writhing in despair; one moment surrendering to the test, the next rebelling. I desperately clung to sweet memories and the living Light. The long night dragged on and on.

When morning finally arrived, I wandered helplessly to his door, remaining there unmoving from eight onwards, but nary a flicker

passed from him to me! A continuous procession of fortunate others passed through that portal and were lavished with affection. Returning the same way, I envied their ecstasy, their shining eyes, thinking, *Though I am a thorn in your side, please never cease loving me. Forgive my prideful tongue! How may I regain your favor? Keep my faith intact. Lord, let me not leave India like this!*

By eleven, all hope had drained away, and I, little more than a hollowed-out shell, was still waiting, vainly hoping. Master looked up from where he sat on the rug, not more than twenty feet away. He seemed to be looking at me; a huge, jolly smile lit up his face.

‘Hello! Hello! You are there? Come on. You will be leaving India soon? Here, you would like some parshad?’ Did he mean me? I wondered, and glanced over my shoulder, but no one was there. When I incredulously pointed to my chest, he nodded and waved me in. Before time to think, I was there, bowing, grateful this terrible ordeal was over. I held out my hands as he scooped handful after handful of puffed rice parshad into them until it overflowed onto my lap and over the floor! He was God-intoxicated and God intoxicating, unmindful of the spillings. He then dropped several large squares of burfee, my favorite sweet, on top, knocking more puffed rice to the floor. Leaning forward, he said, and so lovingly, ‘I am giving a special talk tonight and I want you to be there!’ *Cloud Nine!* After he left, I gathered up all the crumbs.

Accompanied by a tape recorder, I returned around 3 P.M. Maharaj Ji was sitting on his bed surrounded by thick bundles of correspondence files, head bowed over a particular letter, brow furrowed in concentration. After several minutes he acknowledged my presence.

‘Yes?’

‘Master, I was wondering if you would consider sending a taped message back to the West.’

He took the mike, furrowed his brow in concentration, and communicated the following verbatim on August 19, 1967:

Dear Arun¹ is coming back to the United States after a period of seven months which he spent here developing in the spiritual way. I send this message of love and best wishes to each one of you over there. You are all dear to me, whether you are working in the east or the west of the United States, Canada, Europe or South America. We are all working for the same common goal and I wish that you make progress as quickly as possible.

We should do our best and leave the rest to the Master Power working overhead, who will extend all feasible help and protection unasked for. Blessed are they who have been taken into the custody of the Master, through whom God has condescended to bring you back to your Real Home, in this earthly sojourn. I wish each one of you to introspect your lives daily and weed out all imperfections, so that your mind may become as limpid as water—which may reflect your True Self and the Overself. If you take one step Godwards, God will take millions of steps to receive you.

You have all been on my mind, and really I love you all, so it is but natural that we reciprocate the same... and feel separation... and wish to meet physically as early as possible. God willing, it may be early next year when I may be among you and glad to see you all in person. Many things cannot be conveyed through words—it is heart that speaks to heart. Simply turn your attention towards Him who is always over your head. If you don't transgress the commandments given by Him, you will be nearer to God and there will be nothing to be afraid of in the Three Worlds [physical, astral, and causal].

I wish you all to love one another so that people may know you are coming to the Master, who wishes to cement you all in the silken bonds of love so that you may not feel any duality whatsoever. We are all one in God, but that unity is unfortunately forgotten. There are two ways to come out of that oblivion: one, weed out all imperfections through self-introspection; and the other, devote time to meditation in the accurate way as prescribed—with all loving devotion. Good action will result in good fruit, but unless the little ego is eliminated from within, we cannot have oneness with God. If you eliminate the 'I' from 'w.o.r.l.d.' that leaves 'Word':

Word was in the Beginning, Word was with God, and the Word was God. Without the Word was not anything made that was made.

You are in Him and He is in you, so I wish you all speedy progress on the Way. And that you can have only when you do your best and leave the rest to the Master Power overhead. The more you will put in time for meditation—by weeding out all imperfections by self-introspection—the sooner you will reach your Goal. I send you all again my best wishes and love, and wish each of you progress on the spiritual way. Kirpal Singh.

After a minute or so of pregnant silence, the Satguru continued,

Some prayer here, you see—I'll just recite a prayer which will give you uplift in your own way:

*O' Love, who is it who can do this, but Thou?
O' the lifter of the lowly, the Lord of all creation
Who hath made me the object of esteem by all;
He whose touch defileth others,
on him too is Thy mercy, O God.
Yea, Thou makest the low great and mighty
—and feareth not anyone.*

The tape recorder came to the end of its reel, but I was immobilized; even if able to move, by some unwritten code, movement would have been tantamount to sacrilege. Spiritual grace made visible mighty and cosmic suns continually rising up through the Master's corporeal body as the veil thinned. Though he added several more lines to the prayer, these escaped into eternity.²

Evening Satsang was given at the home of Sheila Mata, a devoted elder disciple living in the district known as Rajinder Nagar. As soon as we arrived, rain began falling and satsang shifted indoors. The crowd crammed into three smallish rooms plus verandah, pushing me from behind closer and closer to the Master. Soon, his feet were under my legs, his knees within inches of my face. The exquisite discourse seemed to be directed at me—although I'm sure others would claim the same—and all would be correct! Whether it was heaven or heaven-on-earth, I could not differentiate. Being so close to the Source, my head was spinning with intoxication. Somewhere a mystic knower has said: *A thousand barrels of wine flow through the eyes of the Beloved.* Afterwards, I could hardly stand and needed support of others to walk.

After returning to Sawan Ashram, I was summoned and the Master gave the following advice:

'Firstly, one by one weed out all imperfections through self-introspection. Only then can you be truly happy. It is easy to seek God, but very difficult to become a Man. When you become a Man in the true sense, then, I would say, God Himself will run after you like anything. He will seek you.

'Secondly, become humble and speak humbly—sweet tongue honeyed with humility is the essence of all virtues. Humility, humility, humility! We must be extremely careful not to be proud and egoistic. *Never think you are perfect.*

‘So, eliminate your own shortcomings. If you sow a bad thought, word, or deed, that will multiply a hundredfold. If you sow a loving thought, word, or deed, you will reap that reward. But still you have to be rid of egoism. Only by contacting the Light and Sound regularly can the ego be subdued. Take this message back to your country.’

I said, ‘Although anyone could say anything to you or about you, you remain unaffected, but imperfect ones like me are affected by what others say, and often react adversely.’

Admonishing this argumentative mind, he replied with urgency, ‘But you have to become perfect!’

‘I will try my best.’

Master: ‘*Try? Try? Try* is the word of an intellectual man. *Try* is only an excuse. You have got to *DO* if you are to succeed.’

His words reverberated across all levels of my being and I felt bewildered by the enormity—and impossibility of the task. His attainment was my only hope.

‘You will be leaving me physically, but He will be with you always. The Master Power will be extending all feasible help not only within, but *outside* also.’

Leaning forward, understanding my intense longing to remain forever with him, Master raised his forefinger and commanded, ‘*Put chains on the legs of time!*’ Soft, barely audible, but blindingly intoxicating mutual laughter elevated these moments to the heights. The prayer, ‘*Please never leave me,*’ escaped my lips. His visage glowed, a life-giving sun, a vortex, magnetically in-drawing while from his mouth came another assurance, ‘*I am not leaving you!*’

I bowed to capture and hold forever that perfect image behind the eyes, to inscribe his promise in the book of life. Facing him and backing out of the porch, I returned in solitude to my room to pack. Exactly seven months to the day had passed since arriving in India.

At 1:30 AM the taxi came to take me away. Like an angler’s line, my hungry glance was cast across the courtyard, wishing, wishing again to draw him out, to see him just once more. The ashram was quiet but for the car-motor, a few crickets, and a distant barking dog. I espied a flickering light behind the shutters of his darkened bungalow, moving from room to room towards the door. My wish-fulfiller emerged, torch in hand, striding quickly to where I stood outside, dumbfounded.

Patting the top of my head he said, ‘*Good-bye and God bless you.*’

*From the Ocean's bubble this sound arose,
You and I are not different;
Do not think I am separate from you,
You and I are not different...
Hide not the fairness of your face from me,
Yes, remove the veil and come, You and I are not different.
—Rumi*

1. Master always pronounced my name 'Aroon,' a fairly common Sanskrit name meaning, 'dawn-light.'

2. Eternity was not so long; thirty-five years later - in 2002, I came across this very similar verse from Sant Ravidas, which occurs on page 1106 in the Sri Adi Granth (popular legend has it that Ravidas lived from 1376-1584). The concluding lines, translated from Gurmukhi, are:

*Namdev, Kabir, Trilochan, Sadana and Sain were saved by the Guru's grace;
Listen, O seeker, Ravidas proclaims: 'Everything is accomplished by the Lord.'*

Before leaving India, the Master authorized me to begin work as his representative in Western Canada, which would include conveying the initiation instructions to all candidates approved by him in person. The Master-Power, he emphasized, would be responsible for those being initiated, including assuming the sanchit, or stored karmic account and the transmission of direct first-hand inner spiritual experience—regardless of outer distance from the physical Master. That divine seed, once planted, would grow and bear fruit; the initiate would be taken care of not only in this life, but would be released from the great cycle of birth and death, and ultimately reunited with the Lord. The representative is only an agent and never the primary.