



SATSANG

Launch of Sri M's Autobiography

*Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master: A Yogi's
Autobiography*

BANGALORE, January 3, 2011

The New Year ushered in glad tidings with the release of Sri 'M's' autobiography-*Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master-A Yogi's Autobiography*.

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bangalore was the venue for this occasion. The chief guests were Dr. Karan Singh- MP Rajya Sabha, Justice Sri M.N. Venkatachaliah- former Chief Justice of India, His Excellency Sri H.R. Bharadwaj, Governor of Karnataka, Sri B.N. Suresh, Director of Programmes and Projects, Bharati Vidya Bhavan and Dr. Ajai Kumar Singh-DGP and IG Karnataka. The programme began with a melodious rendering of a *shloka*

from the *Ishavasya Upanishad* by the students of the Peepal Grove School.

Dr. Karan Singh, in his opening speech, said that this entire universe is permeated by the same Divine light, whether we speak of this tiny speck of dust which we call Planet Earth or, the billions and billions of galaxies in the unending Universe around us, all of this is a manifestation of the Divine light. He said that India has always produced real sages, saints and *siddhas* who, by virtue of their *sadhana*, have kept alive the spark of spirituality, because, spiritual principles are, by themselves, not enough, unless there are people who practice them. What was very fascinating about Sri 'M's' autobiography, according to Dr. Karan Singh, were the references and descriptions given with regard to some of the great souls and Masters of this country.

Dr. Karan Singh quoted Coleridge and said that we require a "willing suspension of disbelief" when we read this book because it is so astounding that no fiction writer, that he knew of, could ever write



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Book launch of the
"Apprenticed to a
Himalayan Master"



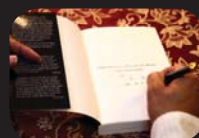
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A young man's fascinating journey from the southern coast of India to the mystical Himalayan heights where he finds his great Master, wise, powerful and loving.

"Keep things simple and direct. No mumbo jumbo. Live in the world like anybody else. Greatness is never advertised. Those who come close, discover it themselves. Be an example to your friends and associates. You can live in this world happily and in tune with consciousness."

— Babaji

"Brahman comes from the root 'brh' meaning 'to expand' and this infinite expansion is an inner reality mistaken by most humans to be an external process. This misunderstanding is the cause of all suffering. Provide the teachings and techniques of Kriya to those who you think fit and may their consciousness become multidimensional."

— Sri Guru

about such extraordinary events. This being the case, Sri M's book is a great addition in the spiritual heritage of India, said Dr. Karan Singh, more so, as we still have people among us who have had these extraordinary experiences. Dr. Karan Singh found Sri 'M's' experience of His visit to Mount Kailash most thrilling. The additional bonus with the book is the DVD which comes along with it. Dr. Karan Singh said that while viewing this DVD one could enjoy a very simple, down to earth and practical satsang which shows Sri 'M' as he is – a man with no airs and no inhibitions, but, a genuine teacher.

Justice M. N. Venkatachaliah, former Chief Justice of India, also



spoke at the occasion saying that at a time like this-when there is so much disenchantment and corruption, collapse of morality and cynicism, this book has come to show us that the essence of religion is not dogma or rituals, it is mysticism, and, this mystic world is still alive and vibrant. He said that this book was so simple and accessible.

Echoing Dr. Karan Singh's sentiments, Justice Venkatachaliah also said that society was collapsing in the grip of consumerism. In this hour of darkness, this is the finest book one could read. According to him this book has a divine purpose and divine meaning. It gives a message of hope that- all is not lost! That there are still great men, saints and savants who will save this 'sinking ship.' This book is a wonderful contribution to India's revival in its own faith; it comes as a redeemer of disbelief in the values of spirituality. Sri 'M,' according to Justice Venkatachaliah, is not in the poster war of Gurus, it is our good fortune that we are here at the same time as him.

Sri 'M' read out the foreword to the book, saying it explained why the book was written and what it contained. He said he wrote the book after a great deal of thinking and was instructed by Babaji – his Guru – to write his autobiography. He mentioned "Until now I have held most of the experiences written in this book close to my heart, never giving more than close to a hint even to my closest friends. However, I felt that I had no right to deny what I had experienced to people, so after deliberating a great deal I reluctantly began to write this book."

The book stall set up outside the auditorium was packed with



people eagerly waiting to have a copy of their own. After the chief guests left, a long queue was formed and Sri 'M' graciously signed every single copy of the book that was brought to him.

NEW DELHI, January 24, 2011

Sri M's autobiography — *Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master: A Yogi's Autobiography* — was released at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, New Delhi. Smt Sheila Dikshit, Chief Minister of Delhi was the Chief Guest and the autobiography was released by Dr. Karan Singh. Mr. Chinmaya Gharekhan, Chairman, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan presided over the occasion.

The auditorium was packed and many dignitaries graced the function. Notable among them were Sri Murli Manohar Joshi, Smt Maneka Gandhi, Rimpoche Lama Doboom Tulku, Sri Singh Deo, Justice Ramamoorthy and Sri S. Reghunathan.

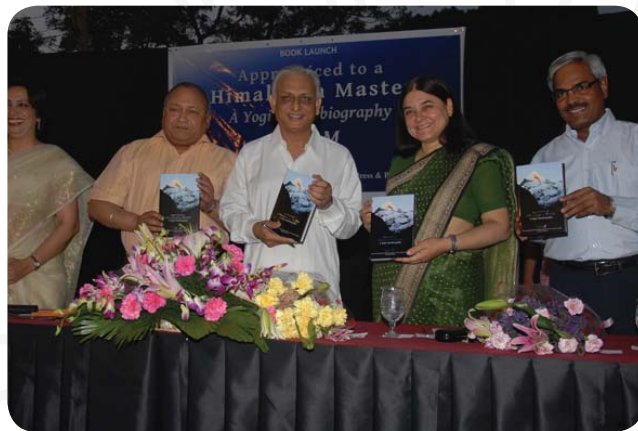
Smt. Sheila Dixit, Dr. Karan Singh, Sri Gharekhan and Sri Murali Manohar Joshi addressed the audience who listened with rapt attention. Sri M read the foreword to the book. The function concluded with a vote of thanks and a long queue of people who wanted Sri M to sign on their personal copies.

It was a momentous occasion indeed for the Delhi Chapter of The Satsang Foundation to see the overwhelming response from people of Delhi.

TIRUVANANTHAPURAM, February 4, 2011

With a beautifully lit lamp bearing witness, the programme started on time with the invocation by young student from Chinmaya Tharangam. This group was singing melodious Bhajans till the commencement of the programme. On the podium were a very distinguished group of personalities from various walks of life - a doctor, an IAS officer, a film personality, an army officer, someone from an erstwhile royal family and like the moon among stars, Sir himself.

Dr. Sambasivan, a well known neuro surgeon and renowned sanskrit scholar welcomed the guests. He said the Autography of Sri M is an absorbing book and it is going to be of tremendous importance to seekers of truth. Then came the most auspicious moment. The book was released by His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore, giving a copy to Rasool Pookkuttu, who has done



the country proud by getting the Oscar Award. The other dignitaries were also presented with a copy each.

His highness, Sri Marthanda Varma said, "Sri M is a mahatma and although all of us use 'Sri' as a prefix to our names Sri M is the real sreeman."

Mr. Pookkutti said, "India is the first nation to announce to the universe that sound is knowledge but we have also forgotten about it. No one else has decoded the spiritual experiences to this rational level, so that it makes an ordinary person feel he can be part of this inner journey."

Brigadier Narayan, who is one of the oldest associates of 'Sir' and an active member of the Satsang Foundation said, "Like Krishna did with Arjuna, Sir also gives us options and then leaves us to choose our way. He feels the beauty of the relationship with him is that whenever there is a requirement he is there for us." The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Vijay Nair.

DUBAI, February 28, 2011

On 28th Feb 2011, Book Reading was organized at Richmond Hotel Apartment at Dubai. With Divine will, despite all odds, we enjoyed a wonderful evening where *Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master* was Launched by Sri M. Mr. Jayant Bakshi started the program with welcoming Sri M. The evening was decorated with two musical programs. First was classical music program by Mr. Swaminathan & his group. Subsequently Krishan & Radha dance was performed by Kamod & Sajal Bhat (mother & daughter). After the musical programs, Sri M was invited to the center stage. He read part of the book's forward and Mr. Jayant Bakshi took over the reading select parts from the book. At the end of the reading session, avid readers had opportunity to have Sri M autograph the books. Prasaad was distributed after the event.

JALANDHAR, April 23, 2011

The ancient city of the *Natha* movement, Jalandhar was graced by the book launch event of "*Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master: A Yogi's Autobiography*" on an open pool-side garden of the Radisson Hotel, where the eminent personalities on the podium included, Smt Maneka Gandhi, MP(Lok Sabha), Sri Rajan Gupta, DGP(Law & Order, Punjab), Sri Ashok Gupta, IAS, Secretary Agriculture, Govt. of Punjab. Several distinguished guests were present for the event.

Smt Maneka Gandhi mentioned that Sri M's autobiography propels a reader to understand the compassion towards all living beings and that is the true message of his Divine life.

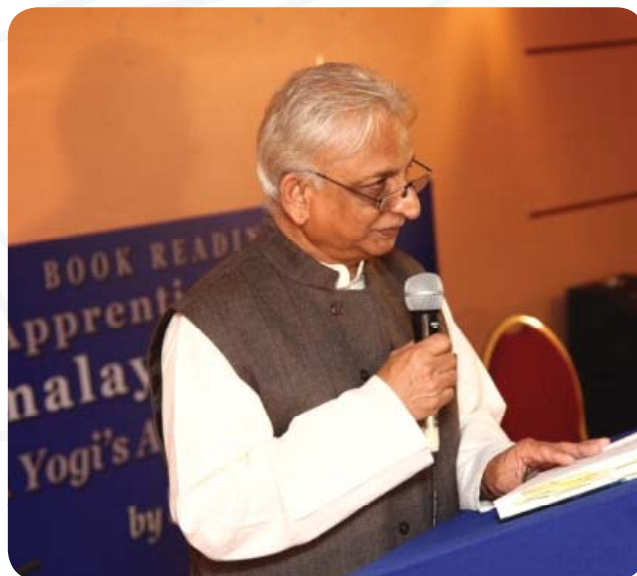
HYDERABAD, May 10, 2011

The autobiography was launched in Hyderabad on the 10th May 2011. The governor his excellency Sri E.S. L. Narasimhan released the book and the first copy was received by Smt Dr. D. Purandeshwari, honorable Union minister of State – HRD (higher education) in Sir's presence. The function was held at the AP Police Officers Mess and was attended by nearly 200 people. Media coverage was done by 7 different print media and channels combined .

Speaking during the release His excellency thanked Sir for providing all of us with at least an hour's Satsang. The honorable minister also expressed her thanks and spoke about the manner in which the experiences have been related and the easy and yet captivating read that the book was .

Sir was requested to speak a few words beyond the foreword of the book and his message was for us to have the ' welfare of all beings in our heart ' and to see the oneness amongst us thereby burying all differences.

IBH the distributors had put up a stall and did brisk sales of more than a 100 copies which Sir kindly waited and autographed. Hyderabad has now been put on the Satsang map and with our guru's grace hopes to have more satsangs in future.





The Sarva Dharma Kendra Foundation

January 3, 2011

It was the morning of Monday, January 3, 2011 – a momentous day for us all. It was the day of the laying of the foundation stone of *Sarva Dharma Kendra*, a project that is the need of the hour, an attempt to shatter the myth that religions cannot coexist in peace and harmony.

Sarva Dharma Kendra is a humble, practical effort to bring all religions together in a beautiful wooded campus on Kanakapura Road, a plan to build a structure that will house a temple, a mosque, a church, a gurudwara, a Buddhist vihara and a Jain temple on a single piece of land for anyone who wishes to worship in their own individual way.

We drove into the venue and it was indeed such a joy to see the place adorned, looking elegant and simple with the minimum of fuss in keeping with the occasion. The atmosphere was serene and calm and even the small group of attendees, members of the Satsang Foundation, were going about their responsibilities quietly, exchanging greetings and instructions between themselves in whispers almost as though in an attempt to keep the project away from the forces bent on destroying the spiritual unity of people.

The chief guests for the event were Dr. Karan Singh, Member of Parliament who would lay the foundation stone and Justice K. Venkatachaliah, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Our beloved Master, Sri M, whose dream *Sarva Dharma Kendra* actually is, was moving around chatting informally with all, as though he had really nothing to do with the event.

After the chief guests arrived, everyone settled

down in their seats in eager anticipation of the programme ahead.

The event began with Brigadier Narayan's warm welcome of all the guests, quickly followed by a *sutra* from the *Rig Veda* by Parvati and her group of singers. The next event was indeed very moving and a quiet silence descended on all present. Prayers from each of the faiths, Christian, Hindu, Islam, Buddhist Jain and Sikhism were recited by members of the Satsang Foundation and it was interesting to note that every one of the prayers echoed the very same sentiments.

All of the three speakers were extremely eloquent and inspiring and I shall give below a few pearls from their respective speeches.

Sri M was the first speaker. He began by saying "Let us not fight amongst ourselves", and went on to say that religion starts with day to day living. He said that when the human being develops compassion he moves closer to Godliness.

Justice Venkatachaliah was the next speaker. "It is unfortunate", he said, "that in this age of increasing irreverence, great persons are unable to get their message across to society and to the world". He regretted that although it is said that the human race is one, it is quite apparent, especially in the 20th century, the bloodiest in human history, that it is not so. It is a great pity," he said "that although all religions are based on the same principles, we seem to have missed this completely".

He said that he was "still recovering" from Sri M's book and was reminded of what *Arjuna* said to

Krishna when he saw his Vishwaroopa. “I have addressed you without knowing the great thing that you symbolize. Without knowing who you are, I took liberties with you as if we are friends. Please pardon me”. This is the way, he said, he sees M today.

He ended with the words “This world is nothing but an eternal journey, where wealth and power are mere wayside stops in the pursuit of the investigation into the spiritual and moral dimension of the human personality”.

And then it was Dr. Karan Singh’s turn. “The Rig Veda has a Sutra,” he said. “The Truth is one but the wise call it by many names. This is at the basis of the Interfaith movement.” The Interfaith movement, he explained is a movement designed to bring together, people of different religious persuasions in a creative dialogue. It is a mingling, he said, and an exchange of views, to understand other religions. Dr. Karan Singh has been associated with this movement for a number of years, and he regretted the fact that the movement continues to remain “peripheral to human consciousness” although they have had regular activities and annual Parliaments bringing people of different faiths together for discussion. He seemed to feel that people were willing to spend vast amounts of money building temples, mosques and churches but that nobody would take the responsibility to finance and support the Interfaith movement. There is a dire need, he said, as today, fundamentalism and fanaticism are beginning to raise their ugly heads once again. He therefore commended this effort towards the building of a centre like the Sarva Dharma Kendra and added by saying that it was an honour for him to be associated with the project from its inception.

He concluded with the words, “Certainly India is the confluence rather than the clash of religions” and felt that India alone is in a position to overcome that threat and present to the world an alternative model.

It was indeed such a treat for us to be in the presence of such eloquence and the whole event was conducted with great grace and dignity.

The students of the Peepal Grove School then sang “Allah Tero Naam” and Naina Kashyap thanked our chief guests warmly after which we filed out for the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone, followed by a sumptuous breakfast.

We are all looking forward to the completion of this noble project and are proud to be associated with it.

Interview with Sri M

by T. N. Sushama

Originally published in the Malayalam daily ‘Mathrubhumi’ dtd. March 3, 2011.

A boy born in a traditional Muslim family breaks the barriers of religion, language and space. He realises the essence of religions by means of reading and spiritual practices. He meets his Guru, Maheshwar Nath (Babaji) whom he had seen as a boy at the age of nine, just as in a dream, and realises his identity as one belonging to the Nath yogic tradition. His name in that tradition is Madhukar Nath or Madhu, as his Guru would call him, and presently he is known as Sri M, the spiritual guide of many earnest seekers.

In “Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master: A Yogi’s Autobiography”, Sri M describes his fascinating and unbelievable experiences in the course of that journey. Those experiences transcend the limitations of the human body and, to an ordinary person, would appear to be hallucinatory. In his autobiography, Sri M tries to find the rational background for them.

All my preconceived notions were dispelled when I came face to face with the author of this absorbing book, which reads like science fiction. Ordinary dress. The physique of a Yogi. Gentle features. Deep and peaceful eyes. He looked more like an old, intimate friend or poet than the spiritual head of the Satsang Foundation. Extracts from the interview:

Q: In your boyhood, you met Mahatmas like Kalladi Mastan and Maayi Maa, who apparently looked like mad persons. After you received the blessings of Swami Abhedananda, same night you experience a strange dream (in which you feel you have become a girl companion of Sri Krishna). As a man of realisation, how do you feel about the masculine and feminine aspects of personality?

A: Was it a dream or an actual experience? – it is not clear even to me. After a stage, gender becomes irrelevant in a physical sense. May be, in some previous birth, I was a Gopi in Vrindavan! (laughs) Any sensitive visitor to Vrindavan may have such an experience. Is it not a fact that Sri Ramakrishna lived



for some time as a hand-maid of the Divine Mother, dressed and behaving like a woman in every respect? The mind moving at that level is not the ordinary mind. At the higher level, the mind does not find any pleasure in worldly affairs. Physical sexuality has no place in the functioning of the subtle mind. In that state, one does not feel oneself to be a male at all. It was also an occasion to experience and understand the feminine mind, which has a greater creativity. One can find some element of femininity in men with greater creativity and imagination.

Q: What is the 'Nath Tradition' of which you are said to be a member?

A: It is a very ancient spiritual order, which existed even before *Adi Sankara*. It is believed that our first Guru – *Adi Nath* – was *Siva Himself*. This is yogic tradition, while *Sankara's* is the *vedantic* tradition, not yogic. Except *Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali*, all other major yoga texts have originated from the Nath tradition. The *Nath* order, with its headquarters at Gorakhpur, is a live yogic tradition.

Q: Is it mainly based on yogic practices?

A: Only some branches. The *Nath* tradition is highly elastic. Its followers need not be monks; they can be house-holders. There are no specific rituals to be followed. The "*dhuni*" is the only common symbolic feature of all the branches. I have been exempted from that too.

Q: You have studied all religious texts in depth. Are they helpful for the spiritual growth of a seeker of Truth? "Throw away all your knowledge and embrace the Void", said *Babaji* to the old monk at *Ut-tarkashi*. If knowledge is an obstacle, why we should acquire it?

A: Not so. Knowledge is a means of arriving at the Truth. Knowledge should become experiences. By worshipping Knowledge alone, one does not gain experience.

Q: Many seekers of Truth end up in disappointment. Ignorance and evil practices are mounting in this field. You were abused and thrown out of a temple in *Karnaprayag* for accepting the hospitality of a cobbler. You also meet a monk who has thrown away his "*danda*" (indicative of *brahminhood*), pained by evil customs. Have such experiences persuaded you

to turn away from the path of seeking Truth?

A: No, such incidents did indeed cause pain, but the yearning to move forward was very strong.

Q: What is our goal in the spiritual quest? Is it happiness?

A: Yes. Happiness obtained from the external world is limited. One is never satisfied with it. Happiness experienced within oneself is boundless. Once you attain it, it never vanishes. This principle, which is called Truth, Essence, etc., is unknown to us until we experience it. It will remain as an ideal.

Q: Is spiritual experience subjective?

A: I am of the view that the experience of the world is relative.

Q: A mesmerising experience related to *Agni* (Fire) is described in the book. *Kundalini* is the fire sleeping in the human body, like the latent fire in the fire-wood. The flame of the *Dhuni* fire touches the navel of the disciple and awakens the internal fire. It burns away all obstacles and clears the path for the *Kundalini*. Will you give this experience to an aspirant who accepts you as a Guru?

A: (Yes,) if there is a suitable person ripe for such experience. Some persons have experienced it. It need not be demonstrated as a show.

Q: Is temple worship necessary?

A: No, but there is no need to prevent those who find satisfaction in it.

Q: *Babaji* asked you to live in the world as an ideal house-holder yogi. Why this great importance given to *Brahmacharya* (celibacy)? Why do some so-called spiritual gurus try to hide their sexual activity?

A: A married life is no obstacle to spirituality. Of course, sexual restraint is necessary. *Brahmacharya* does not mean total elimination of sexual relationship. Whatever is to be done to know the Eternal Reality is *Brahmacharya*. Very rarely can one go to *sannyas* from the first stage of that of a celibate student. When persons do not have that competence put on the garb of a monk for the sake of wealth or



fame, they have to hide their sexual desire.

Q: Babaji speaks in Malayalam to the *Ravalji* of *Badrinath*.

A: This is possible. One should concentrate on the language-centre in the brain. Though it is difficult to speak, one can understand.

Q: There are some unbelievable incidents described in the book, such as, travelling in space. Could you please explain?

A: One gets this experience in meditation. One may feel that the body is rising up; but if you open your eyes, you will see that it is not so. It is the subtle body rising up leaving the physical body. Only once I had the experience of the physical movement of the body in the company of *Babaji*. What we call rational is related to the limited capacities of the five senses. Actually these capacities are not limited; but one has to think standing apart from the physical body. We should know that we have other abilities. At least, we should give the benefit of doubt.. We should have the open unprejudiced mind of a scientist.

Q: How do you explain miracles? You know magic. God-men are said to employ magic in the so-called miracles.

A: Magic is the imitation of miracle. 'Real Magic' exists somewhere. Miracles happen when we transcend our limitations. Only laws of Nature operate there.

Q: It is said that a man of Self-realisation can appear in different places at the same time.

A: If one has that capacity, he could sit here and enter the adjacent room, where it would appear real. But the operating centre is here. No one does it except in an emergency.

Q: What is the proof for re-birth? What is death? And what happens after death?

A: Death is only like crossing a door. This is the theme of the *Katha Upanishad*. I do not need any proof of re-birth; my own experience is enough. I am sitting here with signs and characteristics of a previous birth. Leaving this beloved world is the greatest sor-

row in death. That does not happen if one has Self-knowledge. The I-consciousness continues even after death. Even though it is not the same person who comes in the next birth, some characteristics of the previous birth will be present.

Q: You worked for some time in "*Manthan*" magazine and were connected with many social organisations. How will you avoid the "religious politics" which you observed there?

A: It can be avoided to a great extent by means of a multi-dimensional approach. Emphasis on one religion is the problem. Spirituality transcending religions is essential.

Q: Are religions necessary? Is their influence good?

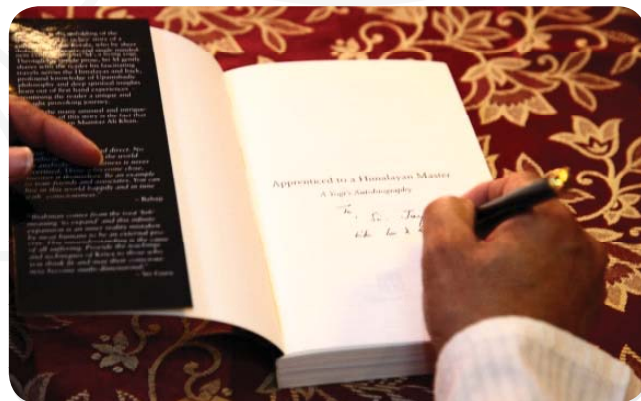
A: The influence has been bad. There has been a great deal of bloodshed in the name of religion. Religious extremism arises when one says that "my religion is better than yours".

Q: Throughout your travels, you do not come across women. In a book of more than 300 pages, women are practically absent. Is it the (physical) body which prevents women from entering the spiritual field?

A: The world may not be aware of spiritually advanced souls. They may be in our own homes. When they come out, they may even excel over men. Gender is not at all relevant in Self-realisation.

Q: Could your successor be a woman?

A: It should be a competent person; whether it is a man or woman is not relevant.





Question and Answer with Sri M

During the book reading of *Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master* in Bangalore

BALANCE BETWEEN EFFORT & DESTINY

Q: In everything – the way it happened in your life – destiny was working. The Guru came and he touched you. He said something and you started feeling something. And, as you also said just now, you met a lot of people who were helpful to you in your past. Was it that it all so happened Sir? That only destiny was at work? What is the role of effort? How do they go together? For others, for many others, may it not happen so? What are the roles of effort and destiny?

A: It is like this. In a particular incident, like that of my Guru coming to see me and touching my head, (I am just discussing that particular incident), It may appear – if you look at my life only from birth to now; which is 62 years – to be destiny.

But if one goes back into one's past – which of course is not believed in by many people – In a way it is good that they don't believe in it because belief is different from actuality, you see.

So, if you look into my past, if somebody could look into my past – as I can – then I find that there is not much distinction between this effort and destiny. It was years of effort that I put in. All for a particular spiritual awakening.

There was an interest in me of course. I think that every human being has somewhere, a seed of spiritual aspiration. Somewhere. It may translate itself – even as a red revolution. Or it could translate itself as something else. But this idea that you are not satisfied by the status quo and want to move out. I think it is the seed of spiritual aspiration.

And in some, it grows in this direction. That was already there for many, many lives. I think everybody has that for many lives.

Situations were such that I could put in a lot of effort in that direction. Therefore, this sudden meeting with the teacher, even though it appears as destiny, it has behind it a great deal of effort and constructive aspiration. That is there.

It is difficult to actually draw a line, therefore, between destiny and effort. For instance, we work. When we want to achieve something, we work. But sometimes it succeeds, sometimes it does not. If it does not, then the destiny is – it should not. If it succeeds, we say, 'My destiny was good!'. But effort

is very important. Personally, I know that I did put in a great deal of hard work, very hard work – I must say.

ON GOOD VS. PLEASANT

Q: Sometimes the temptations are much more than our wanting to go inwards. The outside world drags us so much into it. And decisions, like Arjuna's decision, in sorrow, of not knowing exactly what to do. Sometimes out of fear also, one does not act. Out of fear of what will happen to my name? So you know that this is an eternal tussle that takes place in a human being between what is good and what is pleasant – *Shreyas* and *Preyas*, as the *Kathopanishad* puts it. What is your view on this?

A: This is where it is such an important thing to have a teacher. Because in the normal course of time, it is very difficult for us to weigh this and figure out, and also sometimes, all by ourselves it may not be possible to resist the pleasant and do the good. So that is where a teaching and a teacher are very important. A teacher need not say that you should only do this or that you should do only that. No. But he can provide the reasons why.

Your evolution in the larger context is much more when you try to do good than when you just stick to the pleasant.

And it is a fact that sometimes what is good may be many times more pleasant than what you think is pleasant. When you say the yogi gives up everything, he is actually not giving up anything. He is giving up a few trinkets, but he is looking for a bigger treasure. So you can't say, he is not selfish, but that selfishness is spiritual selfishness. It is different.

ON SELFISHNESS

Q: Selfishness appears to be the root cause of many things. What is the root cause of selfishness?

A: Aha! This is a beautiful question. The root cause of selfishness is the feeling that when I am selfish, I think I am a distinct individual. Therefore I want everything.

There is another thing called spiritual



selfishness, which is actually very important. That is to think that I am not this self, but a bigger self, which involves and embraces everybody else. That selfishness is great.

This (first) selfishness is where the whole problem comes. And it starts from our inner core of experience. When I wake up, the first thing before I say this exists or that exists, is that I exist. I am. When I say, 'I am', then automatically I am. The other is outside me. I am one. The other is different. So therefore, I try to gather only for myself. I try to exclude it from others. As long as I am safe, it is ok. But if there is only one piece of bread, I will like to take it before the other guy takes it. If there are two, ok he can have one. This is normal. It starts with this I-ness in us, which in its unrefined state is the cause of selfishness. If it is refined, then that selfishness simply means going into your self and discovering that the other person is also your own self. He is not different. There you can not hurt anybody because you are hurting yourself. You can call it selfishness but it is a different kind of selfishness.

PERSONAL EXAMPLE AND MESSAGE

Q: Sir, In your book, we briefly meet Madhu, a young *brahmachari* at a very high stage of spiritual achievement. And then we know Sri Mumtaz Ali, M, with family, running schools etc. Is there a paradigm shift? What is it, that by your personal example, you are trying to teach?

A: Madhu is the very sweet name Babaji used to use to call me by. Since he belonged to the *Nath Panth*, his original name was *Maheshwarnath*. Normally when people say M, I think of him, not me. To me he was a teacher, father, mother, friend and guide, everything put together. I was completely his and he was completely mine, in some ways.

When I was initiated into the *Nath panth*, he gave me the name of *Madhukar nath*. So, the short form was Madhu. This is the name he gave me and this name apparently was the name by which I was addressed even earlier, in my past, by my teacher. I didn't know this at that time.

The link is the soul or the inner self that is behind both. And today, I am born as so and so. My parents have named me Mumtaz Ali. The inner reality, the inner self, is neither Madhu nor Mumtaz. And that is the continuum, which is a nameless

entity. It cannot have a caste, creed, religion or parentage. Nothing.

In fact, there is a beautiful story in the *Bhagawat. Jadbharata* dies and goes to heaven. And his parents are crying in great pain and sorrow. Agastya, the great *Muni*, comes. He is a great *Rishi* so they bow down to him and say, "We are in great pain. Please, please bring our son back to us."

Agastya says, "This is impossible. We don't normally bring back people who have gone."

"Temporarily, at least for a short while, can you bring him back?" ask the parents.

Agastya says, "OK! That we can do, but he has to go back finally." So he brings back the boy and tells him to do *pranams* to his father and mother.

The boy asks Agastya, "Which serial number father and mother?"

So that is what I am trying to explain. There are many serial numbers in this matter. But the inner reality is the continuum, the nameless inner reality, which is a spark of that Supreme nameless Being.

Do Not Kill a Snake

Maneka Gandhi

Sri M is a enlightened soul, a Guru whom I met years ago. Born in Kerala, he became disciple to a very great Guru at a young age, moved to the Himalayas. Later he worked with J. Krishnamurty, another enlightened soul, in Rishi Valley. When my son was twenty he was very keen to learn meditation and went to Madanapalle, a village in Andhra Pradesh to live with Sri M.

Magenta Press has published his book *Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master: A Yogi's Autobiography*. I have just finished reading it and I would recommend it to everyone who seeks his own soul. I include an excerpt here which I believe to be true? Many Gurus I have met and read have said the same thing. Since I was a child, I have believed that the energy of the world lies in snakes. 20 years ago I wrote that, when I read the *Mahabharata*, I knew *Kalyug* started the day the snakes were burnt, even though that great book treats the burning of the snakes as simply a place to start the narration.

Sri M is a young man with his Guru, *Baba Maheshwarnathji* in the *Arundhati* cave in the Himalayas. Here is the excerpt: 'I was woken up by what I at first thought was the rumbling of thunder. I opened my eyes and saw *Babaji* in his usual sitting



posture, back towards me, silhouetted by the light of the *Dhuni* (fire). I looked beyond, and from between two parting clouds, emerged something that was roughly the size of a full moon but could not be the moon. This object was a glowing ball of fire and as it moved closer the rumbling became louder. Then it came towards the cave and landed right on the *Dhuni*, with the sound of a thunderclap.

I was so scared that I could not even sit up but *Babaji* sat upright like a statue, unaffected and unmoved. A strange spectacle unfolded before my astounded eyes. The fireball which was about two feet in diameter split vertically and out of it emerged a large snake with a hood like a cobra, glowing electric blue as if made of a transparent glass-like material with electric filaments inside. The creature's eyes glowed and it hissed softly.

My fear vanished the moment I saw the creature bend down and touch *Babaji's* feet with its hood. *Babaji* blessed it by touching its head with his hand and then did something which made me wonder if what I was seeing was a silly dream. He hissed in reply.

The blue cobra straightened up and sat facing *Babaji*. A hissing conversation went on. Then *Babaji* said 'Madhu come forward and see the deputy chief of the *Sarpa loka*. Bow down to *Nagaraj*. 'I bowed low. The snake hissed and touched my head with his forked tongue. Then abruptly it slithered back into the globe, the two halves clicked shut and it took off and vanished into the clouds.

I said 'Babaji, if I said this to anybody they would think I am crazy. Please explain to me'.

Babaji said 'In the Milky Way there exists a stellar system with seven planets and 18 moons. One of these is *Sarpa Loka* and is entirely inhabited by highly evolved hooded snakes called the *Naga Devatas*. The person you saw is the deputy chief of their realm, *Nagaraja*. The supreme head of the Nagas is the five hooded golden serpent known in ancient Hindu texts as *Anantha*.

Thousands of years ago when humanity was still at an infant stage of evolution, there was regular contact with *Sarpa Loka*. The wise and evolved *Nagas* spent long periods here teaching human beings. The snake worship you come across in all ancient civilizations is a tribute to these Nagas and their deep wisdom. They also taught the secret of *kundalini* energy symbolized by a snake. Patanjali who gave the world the *Ashtanga Yoga Sutras* was himself a *Naga*. The snake on the Pharaoh's head and coiled round *Shiva* are all symbolic of the wisdom imparted to certain humans by *Naga*

teachers.

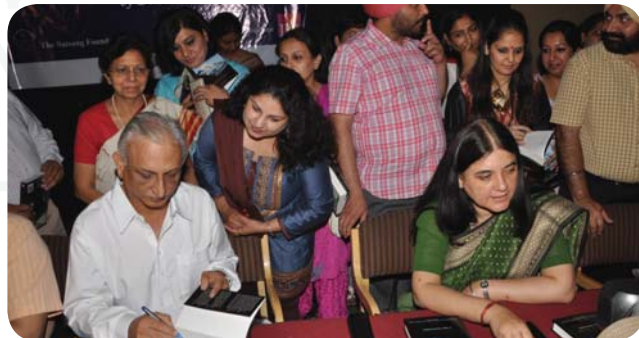
But as humans became more powerful they became self centred and cunning. Some felt threatened by the spiritually and intellectually superior *Nagas* and began to use their power against their own teachers. At one point there were massacres of the *Nagas*. The Supreme *Naga* Chief decided to recall the *Nagas* from earth and cut all connections except with some humans who were highly evolved spiritually. Overnight they were transported back to *Sarpa Loka*. A small number who were too sick, too old or rebels who defied the supreme chief thinking they could still do something with humans, got left behind.

The snakes that exist today are the descendants of those who were left behind. Through years of in-breeding they no longer possess the great qualities of their ancestors. However the channels of contact were kept open with evolved humans. When the great *Sai Nath* of Shirdi left his body for three days and returned on the fourth, to the great astonishment of the general public who thought he had died, he told his close circle that he had gone to settle a dispute in another world. That was *Sarpa Loka*. The dispute, which I cannot reveal to you, has not been settled and *Nagaraj* came to me to discuss the matter.'

Babaji laughed 'Truth is stranger than fiction. There is hope that humans might realize that there are greater realms of consciousness which cannot be comprehended by logic and current levels of intelligence.'

Vishnu rests on *Anantha*. *Krishna's* brother *Balarama* was a *Naga*. The Ocean of Milk was churned by a snake. At every point in our ancient teachings, there are snakes. Every time you want to kill a snake, remember this narration.

Sri M is very accessible. He has started a school called the Peepal Grove School at Sadum Mandal, Chittoor Dist - 517123, AP and I hope to go there to meet him again. I wish he would take me as a disciple but I will have to wait for another birth when I am more evolved.



The Beginning

Extract from “*Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master – a Yogi’s Autobiography*”

Forty years ago, a young man of nineteen from Kerala, the southern-most state of India, was found in deep meditation in the cave of Vyasa up in the Himalaya near *Badrinath*, close to the Indo- Tibetan border regions. Even in those days, a teenager going away to the Himalayas to meditate was not a common occurrence. What made this case almost unbelievable was that the young man in question was not even born a Hindu.

How this young man became a *yogi*; and the mysterious and fascinating world of unimaginable power and grandeur that opened up for him, is the story of my life. I was this young man.

If you allow me, I shall start at the very beginning. Let us, as quickly as possible, walk together to the abode of the eternal snows. There, among the ice clad Himalayan peaks, dwelt my friend, philosopher and guide – my dearest teacher and master by whose kindness and grace, I learnt to fly high into the greater dimensions of consciousness.

Words fail to do justice to the glory of those spheres, but then, words are the only tools at our disposal. Let us, therefore, begin our journey, good friends, walking in the deep woods, talking about the wonderful sights, the bright flowers swaying gently, the sweet-singing birds, the great river gushing along, the tall trees standing silent and so on until we turn the corner and all of a sudden come across the towering great whiteness of the snow-covered Himalayas and are rendered speechless with wonder. Didn’t the ancient *Rishis* sing : *Yad vaacha na abhyuthitam.*: the power and the glory that even words cannot comprehend.

I am as eager as you are to bring you face to face with *Parvati*, the demure daughter of *Himavan*, Lord of the mountains. But, a few essential pieces of luggage have to be gathered and packed up before we begin the ascent. I shall do that without wasting any time and stick to the bare essentials.

I was born in Tiruvananthapuram, ‘the city of Lord *Vishnu* who sleeps on the serpent *Anantha*’. *Anantha* also means in Sanskrit ‘without end, infinite.’ Trivandrum, as it was renamed by the British, who ruled for a hundred years, is a coastal city, the capital of Kerala, at the southern end of India. In 1948, Kerala was more like an over-grown village with its hills and rivers and abundant greenery.

I was born on the 6th of November 1948 in an

emigrant Pathan family whose ancestors had come to Kerala as mercenaries and joined the forces of the then Maharaja of Travancore, the powerful Marthanda Varma.

This is, to use a familiar expression, a ‘rags to riches’ story, in a different context – an ordinary boy reaching the Himalayan heights of expanded consciousness by dint of sincerity, one-pointed attention, willingness to take risks, and unwillingness to accept failure.

Of course, there was one more factor which I consider the most important. The guidance and blessings of a great teacher whose unfathomable love and affection helped me undertake this journey through largely unexplored territory; a teacher who never curtailed my freedom to question, never held my hand too long lest I turn lazy and dependent, and forgave all my shortcomings and conditioned responses. Can I ever forget that great being – father, mother, teacher and dear friend, all rolled in one?

Was it compassion that led him to walk in my life when I was barely nine years old, or was there a link beyond the mundane reckoning of life spans? This, I leave to you to decide for yourselves after the story is finished.

Babaji (father), as I called my teacher, often said, “Keep things simple and direct. No mumbo jumbo. Live in the world like anybody else. Greatness is never advertised. Those who come close, discover it themselves. Be an example to your friends and associates of how you can live in this world happily and, at the same time, tune in to the abundant energy and glory of infinite consciousness.”

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