

Sri Chinmoy Centre

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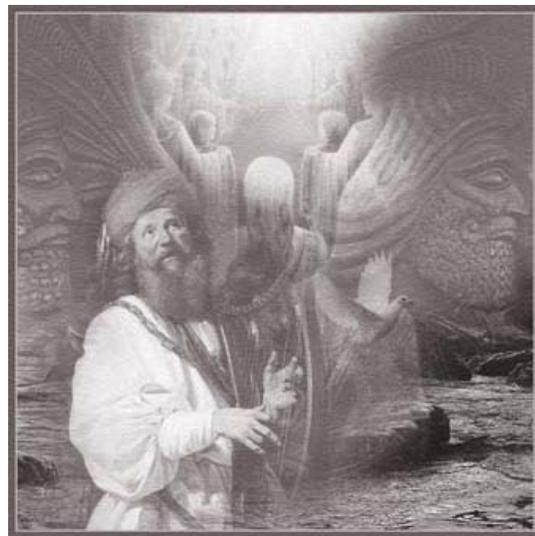
Inspiration Letters 20

Sometimes in our spiritual life we experience dry periods. I have been going through a dry period in my meditation for about two weeks now. As “dry periods” go, that’s not a very long time. Some great spiritual Masters used to suffer from dry periods for months at a time before they achieved their final illumination.

One thing which has helped me have been Sri Chinmoy’s books. The delightful series *Sri Chinmoy Answers*, in particular, has helped lift my spirits and rekindle my enthusiasm. What amazes me about Guru’s writings are their profundity, breadth of understanding and wonderful, simple grace. It seems that Guru could speak on any subject with powerful immediacy and full comprehension.

Sometimes I read his writings out loud, especially his poetry. I feel the vibration in the room changes after reciting his beautiful, sacred poems. I feel more lightness and an ineffable, indescribable joy in the room, and also even in my own body. I feel filled from head to toe with joy, and it’s a kind of joy I can’t find watching a football game or lifting heavy tonnage at the local gym or even sitting down with my roommates and kicking back a case or two of Ojas.

Some of his poems seem like dreams that Sri Chinmoy caught in mid-flight, and petrified in beautiful, tantalising language. Take this poem for example, from *Transcendence-Perfection*:



I Have Found Your Nest

O Lord,
In Your Eyes of Beauty
I have found Your Nest.
Delight is my name
When I live in Your Nest.
The heart of a singing bird
My life becomes
In song's world of silence.

—Sri Chinmoy, *Transcendence-Perfection*

I started this essay talking about dry periods, but when I read poems like this, all my problems seem to dissolve into nothingness. It’s so rare to find poems where the very sound of the words evokes higher realities. But this poem is a shining example. It is, in fact, a mantra.

I’ve always been intimidated by the blank page, so much space to fill with my pearls of wisdom. Sometimes I have to root around in that cranium for a long time before I find a pearl that’s shiny and unblemished enough to set on paper. Sometimes I have to go to Kmart to buy synthetic plastic pearls of wisdom. You do what you have to do.

We’re all dreamers after a fashion. Shakespeare said that “we are such stuff as dreams are made on...” implying that we are the base of dreams, the supporting structures or theatres in which the dramas and comedies of our lives are played out. I like that image.

Recently I’ve been keeping a dream diary, which I thought was a good idea. I still think it’s a good idea, but most of my dreams are highly incoherent, confusing or mundane. I find I get no inspiration from writing them down, so I usually make stuff up. For example:

“Last night, I dreamt I was on *The Tonight Show* with guest host, Sigmund Freud. Dr. Freud asked me to tell me a little bit about my mother, at which I replied, “Well, Mr. [*sic!*] Freud, why don’t you tell me a thing or two about YOUR mother.” At this the studio audience gasped, then let out a long, collective, “ooo...”, then gave me a thunderous standing ovation! When I turned back to look at Freud, I saw where he had been sitting was a spanking brand new pair of yellow golf shoes I had recently seen in a catalogue but didn’t have the dough to spring for.”

On a more serious note, Sri Chinmoy once had this to say in response to the profound question, “what are dreams?”:

Dreams are realities of other worlds. If they are dreams from the lower worlds, the soul will either try to illumine and elevate them or try to destroy them. Unilluminated dreams create tremendous problems for the seeker. If they are undivine dreams, the soul’s light fights with them and does not want them to manifest.

If they are elevating dreams, dreams from the higher worlds, then the soul’s light expedites their earthward journey. When the realities of the higher worlds want to come down, the soul’s light helps them. As a matter of fact, it pulls them like a magnet and tries to manifest them. If they are not manifested, it means that the time has not yet come. Or perhaps the Divine within us may not feel it is necessary for them to be manifested, or the Divine within us may change the game and decide that they should not be manifested. But most of the time today’s dream is tomorrow’s reality.

Even in the ordinary world, if somebody wants to become a millionaire, he works for fifty years and then he becomes a millionaire. Fifty years ago it was a dream, but now it has become a reality. In the spiritual life, when you aspire you feel that you will realise and manifest God. These are all dreams. But they will be manifested realities in ten years or twenty years or in a few incarnations.

—Sri Chinmoy, *The Journey of Silver-Dreams*

May the true dreams in this issue give joy to your heart and wings to your life’s aspirations!

Sincerely,
Mahiruha

Title montage: Pavitrata Taylor, Sri Chinmoy Centre Gallery

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It’s Class Time

by Jogyata Dallas

The Devil himself devised Wellington airport. Mountains on both sides, cunningly shrouded in cloying fog, a narrow and perilous flight lane over heaving, jittery ocean; seas at both ends of a runway so short you’re catapulted forward at touchdown as the brakes bite hard—seas that will never be calm, no, wind lashed and restless for eternity, their white crests icy and brutal, mauling boats and headlands.

The Devil had fun with the wind. It shall never cease, he decreed, and it shall rage, buffet, hammer and howl with such ferocity as to cause a great wailing and moaning. Let there be headwinds from all directions, wind shear, catatonia-inducing updrafts, vortexes, cyclonic rotations, brief lulls

to induce an illusory reprieve, then a whole lot more of the same.

Debs the sanguine Kiwi air hostess on this morning's Wellington to Auckland flight is more than the Devil's equal and rides the bucking jet like a rodeo queen, oaken thighs braced in the aisle, indefatigably cheerful, wrestles alone the drinks trolley down the shuddering aisle to the galley, a titan. Needs a ten gallon hat, I'm thinking. 'Soon be there darlings,' she soothes, an angel of calm in her orange dress, but the Devil retorts with another blast and we lurch sideways, a chorus of ooooohs and aaahs while babies howl. Out the window a wilderness of torn black cloud, indigo thunderheads and flash veins of lightning.

Then as sudden as a smile, breaking free into a calm, cobalt sky streaked high up with mare's tails, etiolated yellow cirrus, vistas way below of black shadowed islands against rumpled seas, the great beauty of the ever-changing earth, beauty beyond description. Now the slow trajectory down over landscape, sunlight glinting on rivers, jumbled hills like sheets of scrunched green silk, the dark of virgin forest, heaving folds of far-off mountains pencil etched against the sky. Looking into my mind, eyes closed, nothing there but consciousness itself, a protracted dreaming. 'I think, therefore I am'?—but I am thoughtless, therefore I do not exist.

"Some dreams we get from the higher worlds" writes Guru in *Reincarnation and Evolution*. "These dreams are not dreams, they are visions. Each vision is a harbinger of reality. Reality is bound to loom large in each vision at God's choice Hour. The vision is the seed and the seed is bound to grow, to germinate and in due course become a plant. Today's vision is tomorrow's reality."

I have been dreaming for some time of opening a Centre in Wellington, and in hoping that this vision-seed will quickly grow, flying down to our capital once each week. Shuttle bus to the city, trundling the heavy suitcase through tiled streets in peak hour, light fading and a cold wind off the Tararua mountains. The twenty five seekers on opening night have dwindled down to fifteen after six weeks and this evening in the upstairs mezzanine lounge of the Central Library we talk about reincarnation, the branches of yoga, two longish meditations.

This is the week of Guru's weightlifting anniversary, June 26, and I tell them about the 7063lb lift. The talk swirls around, a volley of questions and comments. I mention the 3100 mile race, 60 plus miles a day for 50 plus consecutive days, an 880 metre circuit in the killing humidity of high New York summer—their drop-jaw incredulity is ratched up and up. Time to talk about the quantum reality, yes the universe is protracted dreaming that has no existence outside of mind and observation. A universe not originating in matter, in discrete fundamental particles, but in consciousness and waves of possibility, incapable of objective measurement since observation actually changes its behaviour. A universe of mind, a self-created dreaming universe of infinite potential in which there are as many realities as one cares to imagine.

Knowing and living this, freed from the notion of a mechanistic world and the illusion of 'impossibility', our Guru pits himself against the heavy weights to vastly expand our understanding of the attainable. And in their own world of relative knowing, the 3100 mile runners will also explore this world where mind, self-belief, imagination, inspiration and the alchemising power of love can shift the boundaries—joy floods the atomic world, inundates the neural and vascular pathways, spirit reworking flesh, mind mastering impossibility, belief loosening the causal world of probabilities, an emancipation of spirit.

Post-class and too late to catch the last flight home, so overnight in a close-by youth hostel, traversing again with my thunderous suitcase the downtown streets, their good natured, good-times crowds dawdling into night. In the kitchen of the hostel holidaying Japanese teenagers shriek and race about—freed from parental constraints they shovel baked beans into their mouths from a jagged can with their fingers, civilisation falling away, enthralled by life until numbed by it.

At the airport at dawn I briefly abandon my harmonium at a café while seeking out some breakfast, and return to find an excited Labrador and its handler examining the abandoned box. "Is this yours, sir?" the jolly policeman asks me. "We were about to blow it up". I have a lovely companion on my flight home, a little boy with huge round spectacles who examines me with great interest through the most innocent blue eyes you could ever imagine. We peer out together through the small window at the far below wrinkled sea, him imagining the white wake of trawlers and small boats as whales and dolphins and me only too eager to agree. "He's taken a real shine to you," his mother says.

Now on the shuttle bus to Auckland a chance encounter with a doctor who spies the book of Guru's aphorisms in my hand, introduces herself, remembers my late wife [Subarata](#) teaching her how to meditate in the long ago. "She's such a beautiful girl, she inspired me so much, now my whole family meditates" she tells me. When I tell her Subarata has passed away, she almost weeps. "She helped me so much when I was struggling with my life—I will always remember her".

I was reminded again, yes all these scattered seeds that quietly change our world, all the subsequent flowers that bloom unseen. And these intersecting, serendipitous moments that come to us unbidden, reminding of the immeasurable entanglement of past with present, the genesis of a new Earth founded upon such little things as smiles, the gathering force of tiny moments, memories and meditations.

"Goodbye" calls the little boy with the over-sized spectacles. He waves gaily, his mother tugging him off the bus and away, and exits out of my life and my dream forever.

"When you have a dream, you have to feel that your life-tree has borne a flower, a flower of joy, a flower of gratitude, a flower of beauty or a flower of peace, which can be placed at the Feet of the Supreme."

—Sri Chinmoy

Sweet Dreams

by Arpan DeAngelo

In the early days I remember having a certain fear of looking directly at Guru when he was in a high meditation. I had no problem meditating on the transcendental picture or other photos, but Guru's light and power in person sometimes scared me. At the time I did not understand that it was my own ignorance, darkness, impurity and insecurity that felt threatened by the very pure and illumining consciousness that Guru embodies and offers to us for our own illumination. It is offered out of a totally selfless love and oneness that Guru has for all of humanity, especially his disciples. The dream that I had that night was the beginning of my conscious awareness of this selfless offering of Light and delight that Guru offered, offers and will always offer to us.

It was early in my discipleship, the first six months. I was sleeping on a mattress on the floor of my university apartment that I shared with two other relatively new disciples. I was in that half waking mode early in the morning as I was still asleep but trying to wake up. It seemed as if I was really awake as I looked up from the floor at a very powerful figure with dark hair and deep, dark eyes similar to what I had seen in some photos of Swami Vivekananda. He seemed so big and powerful that it scared me as I tried to understand what he was doing in my room looking down on me.

I trembled as he reached down towards me. But then he lifted me up gently and brought me to his chest in a loving embrace as he placed me on his heart. I felt as if I just melted into his heart full of love, sweetness and concern. All my fear disappeared as I felt totally safe and secure inside his heart of love and oneness. From that moment on I knew that it was Guru showing me through this sweet yet powerful dream that with him I had nothing to fear. His power and greatness is that of divine love and concern which he offers to us only for our own illumination and protection.

Sometimes Guru could not tell us in words what he was trying to do for us in sweet and loving ways. Our minds and vitals can not understand most of what Sri Chinmoy is offering from his very high and illumined consciousness. Either through our own receptive meditations or, in this case, from a very real and powerful dream we come to slowly understand and realise the love and oneness of our divinely powerful yet ever sweet Guru.

The Authentic American Dream: I had to leave the country to find myself in America

by Sharani Robbins



I have a pair of traveling shoes in my closet and the soles are well-worn. In the USA—the land of my birth and ongoing residence—my traveling shoes have touched at least 25 of the 50 states that form America. Wildly diverse in its own right, I have traveled by ferry across Lake Michigan to camp in Wisconsin and soared in my heart with the migrating geese from Canada over Lake Erie. Sunrises over the Atlantic Ocean and sunsets over the Pacific are paired with hikes through the Colorado Rocky Mountains and Arizona desert. Rafting down the Snake River in Idaho or watching July 4th fireworks while the Boston Pops perform all comprise this land of mine.

Venturing past my home country's borders, these traveling shoes have hopped, skipped and sauntered along in myriad places (well over 20 countries in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Australia)—many far flung from my native land.

I followed sunsets over the horizon on both sides of the Equator and marvelled at constellations in the night sky quite unlike the ones I find in my own backyard. I dangled my feet in the waves of many different waters and offered a quiet prayer of thanksgiving in places of worship as diverse as Notre Dame de Paris, the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Iona Abbey off the coast of Scotland, the Daibutsu in Kamakura, Japan and Buddhist, Shinto and Hindu Temples across Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

While I revel in learning about cultures different than my own, the standard and universal currency of the English language, American television and the American dollar carry a cushion of familiarity that one can fall back upon as a traveling American when in a pinch or a hard place. Yet it can't stop the lizards from trying to get in to your hotel room or the cultural mores of trying to communicate in a country where the word "no" is taboo and so yes becomes a murky mooring with no anchor attached.

One trip in particular stands out for its tug against the familiar and the paradoxical effect it had on my psyche. Let's turn over those shoes and I will trace for you this groove in the sole...

Although the signs and writing in the city were those of a Romance language with letters I could recognise better than the face of Chinese or Japanese characters, I did not speak the language and found myself immersed in an atmosphere where very few had the English language as part of their universe. The seeming lack of interest in all things American or in learning English intrigued me with its novelty and unfamiliarity compared to other countries I had visited around the world.

Sharing membership in the [Sri Chinmoy Centre](#), an international spiritual and humanitarian group, I soon relied more and more on the unspoken language of the heart and found myself quickly feeling close to the fellow students of Sri Chinmoy that I met despite our limited outer conversation.

One crystallising moment stands out in particular during this trip. We entered a function room of a hotel, leaving our shoes by the door. Women clad in white saris and men in white slacks and shirts shared prayer, meditation and singing for what we call a “Centre Meeting”. Conducted in Bengali, Spanish and a little English, the words mostly lilted beyond my mental comprehension and I wondered if this is what a Latin Mass in the Catholic Church might feel like for those who know little if any Latin.

The disengaging of my mind from the spoken words I could not understand facilitated my meditative process in our spiritual gathering. I forged deeper into my core and higher up to Heaven all in the same breath. Under the wings of a strong inner connection with God unfolding, I felt as if my soul essence rose to the surface of my outer being and my spirit sang a wordless inner tune of sacredness and satisfaction.

Suddenly like the ringing of an inner bell, I found myself in contemplation of what it means to be an American in the midst of a culture quite distinct and detached from American mores. For the first time in my life, my mostly mute patriotism exploded like July 4th fireworks in a burst of humility and awe.

I was overcome with emotion while I tapped into an inner tableau of the good qualities wrapped up in American culture and history. More than anything else, I was struck with the feeling that America was a place where diverse peoples could rub shoulders in the quest for freedom and the American Dream. Just think how many nationalities and ethnic heritages are represented within the city limits of New York City alone!

Even in the handful of members of my Rhode Island meditation group, our cultural backgrounds and heritages straddle many lands:

- one born in Cape Verde with parents living in the U.S. but barely speaking English
- me with pioneer ancestors traveling out West in a covered wagon, including Czech and German heritage and great-grandparents who lived here but never learned English
- one with French Canadian heritage who grew up speaking French and English in a mill town in Massachusetts
- one who was born in Liberia, Africa and came to America as a youth
- one who grew up in New York City and another in Philadelphia.

Representing more people of colour than Caucasians, we are a microcosm of melting pot America

As I meditated, the potential for a living reality of the world as one family and oneness across cultures shone forth as America’s lodestar. Certainly there are other countries around the world with many cultures represented in their longitudes and latitudes. Far more common however is the homogenous grouping of like with like.

During my meditation, this concept of America as a land opening its heart to peoples of many lands was soon joined by another well-known American offering to the world at large—namely the ideals of freedom and liberty. The Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights and our democratic form of government have inspired freedom seekers since their inception. America’s founding fathers steered the entire world for generations to come by the example of their writings and actions in the late 1700s. My inner being overflowed with admiration for these positive contributions of America to the world.

When the meditation meeting ended, we broke bread together and shared conversation with the aid of bilingual speakers present acting as interpreters. A day or two later I came home from that trip shaking my head in wonder and amazement. How was it possible that I had to leave the country to find myself in America, to find myself as an American and to embrace the inner beauty of the land my soul chose for incarnation in this fleeting lifetime?

Was it the unique opportunity to more completely step outside the boundaries of my culture by being in a city distinctly separate from the U.S.? Did this provide the breathing room to explore what being American means to me even as I appreciated and admired the culture I was tasting on this trip?

The melting pot and the land of liberty are commonly attributed to America and are wrapped up in the notion of the “American Dream”—pulling people to our shores from around the world in search of change and a better tomorrow. After the spontaneous contemplation of these concepts during a deep meditation far from America’s shore, I am now convinced more than ever that they authentically embody America’s essence.

I harbour a special place in my heart for all the countries I have visited and all the people I have met and befriended from these different lands as well. Yet I have to qualify all that affection and appreciation for other countries with a caveat. The example of America as a place for all peoples to join together as one in a shared goal of freedom and happiness brings tears to my eyes and love overflowing for the U.S. I am ever grateful for America’s good qualities and hope that I can learn from her how to be a good citizen of the entire world.

I close with a poem penned by my meditation teacher Sri Chinmoy bearing the authority of one who has plumbed the depths and heights of all inner realities. It expresses this sacred truth more completely than any words of mine:

What is the real American dream?
The real American dream is
A universal oneness-ecstasy—
Nothing more and nothing less.

Excerpt from *Twenty-Seven Thousand Aspiration-Plants, Part 214* by Sri Chinmoy

Childhood Dreams

by Abhinabha Tangerman

When you're about ten years old people tend to ask you often what you want to become when you grow up. It happened to me a lot when I was ten. So after being asked for the umpteenth time I started telling everybody I wanted to become a journalist. I don't think I knew what a journalist really was or what such a person exactly did. And to this day it still baffles me where I came up with that answer. Did I just make it up to provide my gently prodding relatives with a satisfactory answer, or did it indeed boil up from some secret depth of my soul? What I do remember is that my grandparents were mightily happy to hear it. They went to the length of buying me a book with the ominous title 'How to get into the newspaper'. Even though the chances of a ten-year-old making the columns of a newspaper were pretty slim, I was thrilled. That's one of the reasons I think my soul did have something to do with it. The other reason being the fact that today I am indeed a journalist.



"Return to your childhood's forgotten dreams. You will be able to expedite the fulfilment your life's realities", my Guru Sri Chinmoy wrote as one of his aphorisms. It's always been one of my favourites, especially because it has rung so true in my life. It took me quite a while to rediscover that forgotten childhood dream. I was 29 years old at the time and unhappy with the work I was doing. Something was missing, although I could not put my finger on it. But it was unmistakably gnawing at me from inside. This can't be it, there must be more. And in my lowest moment, when I felt stuck inside, a hot, dry and merciless desert parched with thirst, it hit me like a golden oasis. It started a subtle whisper. Once I tuned in it became an almost deafening roar. I want to write! When I allowed that thought to shape itself into a possibility that could actually become reality I was gripped by a feeling of overwhelming joy. The dream had knocked on my door at last.

It is said that you can see the Hand of God in your life only when you look back. That certainly is true for me. From dream to reality can be a huge step, and a frightening one at that. It means letting go of old certainties, facing new uncertainties, making sacrifices, taking risks. Yet I experienced that step from dream to reality as a long, smooth ride on the wings of grace. I remember Paulo Coelho's words from his beautiful book *The Alchemist* that if you want to pursue your dream the universe does everything it can to make it happen. How true. Once I had decided to really go for it, I could hardly believe how easy everything else followed. Then again, what did I really have to lose? But what I gained was the world—joy, creativity, imagination, enthusiasm. Things that were badly lacking before.

I believe we all have a special dream. Sri Chinmoy says our soul has come here on earth to do something very special for both God and man. Our soul's dream is amazing. For me, becoming a journalist is just a small part of that dream—certainly not the whole thing, far from it. But it's good to start small. And I've discovered that fulfilling dreams is addictive. One leads to another.

I think the soul relishes dreams. Isn't that one of the reasons why we love the Olympic Games so much? It's a place where dreams come true—and are crushed. But when dreams are fulfilled, magic happens. You can see it in the eyes of an Olympic champion on the victory dais. Something of man's true greatness is revealed, transcending the littleness of his everyday existence. Great sporting events sometimes have that magic touch. Yet I'm sure it happens every day in the most unexpected places. A poem that suddenly wells up from the heart and pours itself out on paper. A reunion between dear ones. A sudden glimpse of majestic beauty in nature. The joy of friends playing together. A song that melts the heart.

It's dreams that make life truly worth living.

For beyond the barriers and limitations of our human frailties lies the golden realm of our divine destiny. That's where our soul lives and breathes. Dreams are nothing but bridges to take us into that golden realm. We should never stop dreaming.

Dream, always dream. Do not forget that God used His Dream to create the world and He still continues.'

—Sri Chinmoy

Dream Fragments From the Antipodes

by Dhiraja McBryde

Nobody dreams as much as an unborn child. Floating there in that strange aqueous world, uninterrupted by outside distractions, what do we dream of? Crazy, mixed-up images of the day before? Archetypal forms as if in a shuffling of the tarot deck before our half-formed eyes? Do

we dream of an all-encompassing mother? Do we dream—in some Escheresque, infinitely fractalised regression—of the somnolent god Vishnu lying on a great, starry serpent, himself dreaming the cosmos—and ourselves within it—into existence as a sinuous lotus flower rising from his navel?

Do we dream of the past: or do we dream of—the future?

*

23.4.10

I fly. I fly like the arabesques of a sinuous, russet seaweed swept in a turquoise tide. The house below is old and dark and Victorian, the garden around it likewise but at its centre is a tree, a large fruit tree thick with white blossom and beside it she sits waiting to travel the high paths of Central Asia.

*

Sir Thomas Browne, the doctor of Norwich knighted by King Charles II in 1671, wrote ‘...and the slumber of the body seems to be but the waking of the soul ... we carry within us all the wonders that we seek without us—there is all Africa and her prodigies in us.’

*

I discovered only recently a written account of a guided meditation led by Sri Chinmoy. In it Sri Chinmoy had talked a group of his disciples through a series of images. He began:

Put both hands right behind your head. Say, “My God-disappointment-past.” Now put the fingers of your right hand on your forehead, in between your eyebrows. Say, “My today’s silver dreams.”

The exercise carried on from there to tomorrow’s golden realities.

It is true—dreams lead us forwards. They are not behind: they are in front. They are not of the past: they are of the future, and they lead us into that ever-progressing future. They are the spies of God heading out into the mysterious beyond where the work-a-day mind would fear to venture without an up-armoured humvee and close air support. Both the dreams of the day and the dreams of the night.

Today I sit at my desk and dream of running the dusty roads of Africa: tomorrow I am discussing flights into and out of Lusaka with the travel agent. For years I dream of carving stone: today I wipe the limestone dust off my hands and stand back to consider my handiwork.

Those dreams that fill our sleeping hours, they also lead us onwards. They lead us to greater knowledge of ourselves than our quotidian round reveals.

*

8.12.08

The fire won’t burn properly. It is grey. Even throwing the powder on doesn’t work. I run into the backyard. It is dark. My arms spread out, ‘Mummy, Mummy, Mummy,’ I call. She is coming up from the hen house. She has been looking after them.

I am awake enough to know that in fact she is dead; they are dead.

*

To reach beyond the rational mind the ancient Taoist casts his yarrow sticks, the diviner consults the swing of his pendulum, the gypsy shuffles her cards. We can just lie down and go to sleep.

*

5.2.10

I walk up. I am rolling a piece of plasticine into a ball. Round and round it goes in my hand—a perfect globe. Jesus Christ is dying. He is alone, vulnerable, unsure, crushed, weak.

“What will they remember of me?” He asks.

I pause to consider His anguished query. Will they remember His teaching, will they remember what He said, what He did? I fear they will not. I



search for what I can truthfully say. I take His hand. I say, "They will remember that You loved us."

*

Beneath a vaulted sky in the great emptiness of green and rocky hills at the foot of [Puketaapapa tanga a Hape](#) there stands a vast, black pine tree and from its highest branches there hangs a rope, and tied to the end of that rope is a volcanic rock. It swings there slowly, its path determined by laws of physics which I do not understand. Its movement tells us, the scientists explain, of the rotation of the planet, but it seems the stuff of dreams.

*

13.2.09

It is dry and dirty—looks like a rubbish dump. There seem to be structures—pyramids, stupas—partially collapsed, partially buried. I suggest to Nirvana and Muslim that this looks like a sacred site. We descend. Underground there are several temple rooms. In one—wooden statues of pale blue hibiscus wood: bodhisattvas of great beauty.

Then a great sound as of a heart beat fills the place. The walls pulsate in time with that beat and every surface seethes and swirls as with a billion particles in energy-filled motion.

'It's alive,' I call out and realise that this is not some phenomenon to fear—it is God: everywhere and alive.

*

For the last 24 years I have had a recurring nightmare. Always the hens are dying or dead and always it is because I have neglected them.

*

19.6.10

I run into the backyard.

"Chookies, Chookies!" I exclaim.

It is true. There they are—hens: big and healthy and full of life and vitality. Eight or ten. Some are speckled brown—Rhode Island Red, Ross Tint?—the others are white—the dear old White Leghorn.

But the white ones are actually green—a pale green like a pastel hue of the little piwakawaka bird that flies each year so wisely to the Solomon Islands.

I wake up happy.

Beginner's Luck

by [Mahiruha Klein](#)

I read, a while ago, a talk Guru gave on the concept of "beginner's luck" in the spiritual life. To crudely paraphrase, Guru mentioned that sometimes God will give a new seeker a special experience, a higher experience, so that that seeker will feel he at least has the possibility of achieving that kind of light and peace as a permanent reality in his life.

Here's a very interesting question and answer from Guru's immortal book *The Outer Running and the Inner Running* that I think is topical:

Question: Many great athletes tell of having experiences of higher consciousness in the form of visions of their performances or oneness with the elements. Where do these experiences come from?

Sri Chinmoy: It is not because these athletes are very spiritually developed that they are having higher experiences. Many people practice spirituality and do not get them. So how can they get these kinds of experiences? Sometimes it happens that God tries to inspire people in a very special way, at a very special hour. These athletes have killed themselves practising sports for so many years, and now God wants to show them that there are higher realities in life. He wants to tell them, "Do not halt, do not stop here! Now you are doing something for name and fame. If you come in first, you will get joy, and if you come in last, you will feel miserable. But there is another world. In that world, even while you are doing something, you get tremendous joy. Here you are thinking that there are so many things you have to do, so many things in front of you, and you feel that you cannot do them all. But in that other world, you will not only be able to do many more things at one time, but you will also get joy while you are doing those things. You will not have to wait for the results to get joy.

The spiritual life is like that. People who pray and meditate most soulfully get tremendous joy while they are praying and meditating. They do not expect to get some result at the end of two or three hours which will make them happy. Praying and meditating itself gives them joy.

There is also another reason why God gives them these experiences. Sometimes the father shows the child a hundred-dollar bill and says, "All right,

take it." The child is so happy, so excited to have a hundred-dollar bill because for him even to get one dollar is such a difficult task. Then the father says, "Like this I have a bundle of hundred-dollar bills. If you study and go to school now, and when your studies are over, if you start working, you will be able to get this wealth. But first you have to earn it. Right now I am only showing you that such a large amount of money does exist." For a child, a hundred-dollar bill is something very great. He cannot imagine that he will have that much money, let alone a whole bundle of hundred-dollar bills. Similarly, an ordinary person, even if he is a great athlete, will be so pleased and excited if God gives him an inner experience. God is telling him inwardly that he has to practise spirituality, that he has to pray and meditate and work hard in order to earn this inner awakening, this inner wealth.

So, these are the two main reasons why God gives athletes so-called higher experiences even while they are not consciously praying for the inner life.

Excerpt from *Outer Running and Inner Running*

I well remember one of my first spiritual experiences that I had with Sri Chinmoy, shortly before becoming his disciple. I was a junior in college, and was studying Victorian literature, a subject I found very, very interesting (think Gerard Manley Hopkins and John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold). It was five o'clock in the evening and I was reading some Browning in bed, and I was tired. I let the book fall from my hands and fell off into a doze.

In my dream I saw that I was entering a concert hall somewhere in downtown Manhattan. Sri Chinmoy was about to offer a Peace Concert. I asked the ushers and ticket givers at the entrance if there was still room for me. They said there was and I was so happy. I started running down the hallway, towards the concert hall. Tears of joy began forming in my eyes. I couldn't believe there was actually room for me and there was still time!

I shot into the auditorium, breathless. It was a vast, blue auditorium, with hundreds of people sitting and watching Sri Chinmoy perform. I was surprised to see him playing the opening theme of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* on the harpsichord. He played the theme two or three times, very slowly and hauntingly. Then he stood up, and his eyes went up, up and up until they were totally white. Then his face, nay his entire being, turned into a beautiful dove and flew in an instant into the infinite vastness of the sky!

I woke up at that moment, not really feeling I even had a body, floating on a cloud of the most tranquil, pure elation I had ever felt in my life. I knew that at long last I had finally found my Master. "Beginner's luck" indeed!

My Dear Dreamer-Companion

Suchana Cao

You may be surprised to receive this letter right now when I am so busy with my daily duties on earth and you are so busy with your universal activities.

You know, my weeks and months without you are passing by fast, very fast, and I do not even realize how long it is to remain here without your physical presence, for your heart of light is simply in charge whenever I am in need and whenever you need me. That 's great, dear Dreamer-Companion! It is a true consoling miracle coming from you! Thank you!

I was told that you still remember the little smiling girl who loved talking on the phone for hours on end. And also the shy teenager who offered God her faithful promise to His dreaming Project of universal harmony and peace. The power of your heart-memory is truly amazing!

In my case, I am not able to compete with you. On the contrary, how I wish I could always keep fresh my highest experiences just to thank you wholeheartedly for having searched in your inner worlds and found me further in your outer world!

Happily enough I am not the only one on the road now, many more dreamers are joining your aspiration train; we are getting shelter and satisfaction, self-transcendence and joy and a lot of fun!

Before leaving you with these words and knowing the delights of the heaven you are living in now, please, remind me to keep always your dream alive so that you can be proud of me and I can become like you.

Page created by Jaitra Gillespie, last updated on Wednesday, July 28, 2010

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