



# Sri Chinmoy Centre

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# Inspiration-Letters

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## Inspiration-Letters X

### Miracles Edition

Dear Reader,

When I graduated from high school I felt pretty lost. I hadn't gotten into the college of my choice, I didn't have that many friends and I really didn't know what to do with my life.

College would provide all the answers, I was told. But high school hadn't given me any answers to life's big questions. It just gave me facts and knowledge, which are great, but they don't always help in finding happiness. College just seemed like another fact-finding, information collection project for Morris, the human computer.

I had bad dreams, which outwardly weren't that scary but they troubled me. I often dreamt of walking through an endless underground sewer. Sometimes, in my dreams, I saw myself wandering through my high school, only to find all the rooms empty and deserted. And sometimes I imagined I was trying to get inside this beautiful building, perhaps representing success or adulthood, but all the doors were locked.



Then somebody gave me a copy of '*Beyond Within*' by [Sri Chinmoy](#). When I looked on the back cover of the book, I was shocked by the serenity, purity and childlike joy that radiated from Sri Chinmoy's face. Here, finally, was somebody who really, really **knew**. It's not that he had studied or been to university or could quote the dictionary from memory. I understood just from looking at his photograph that this man knew the meaning of life, the secret of life.

There's a poem I like from one of Sri Chinmoy's other books, [Death and Reincarnation](#):

"Life is not the reasoning mind. Life is not the intellectual mind. Life is not a game of frustration. No. Life is the message of divinity on earth. Life is God's conscious channel to fulfil divinity in humanity on earth."

Before going to sleep at night, I would read from '*Beyond Within*', and I stopped having nightmares. I slept with the book beside me, on my nightstand, like a talisman. Just knowing it was there was a tremendous comfort for me.

In Sri Chinmoy's play on Jesus, entitled [\*The Son\*](#), Mary tells her divine Son, "My son, you transformed water into wine. What a miracle! Jesus, it was your first miracle. I am sure you will do many more. But this much I tell you, my son, if you are going to perform fifty miracles in the outer world, then rest assured you will perform fifty thousand miracles in the inner world. All your inner world activities, your divine Father in Heaven and my simple soul on earth, will know."

I guess the most dramatic miracle I've ever experienced occurred when I was sitting in Russian class, in college, some eleven years ago. My Professor was a very nice man who had a bit of a stutter and so the Russian "How are you" became "Ka-ka-ka-k dee-dee-la". But he was a very good teacher and I enjoyed his classes immensely.

For years I had been suffering from a terrible respiratory ailment that made breathing extremely painful. I had been to many doctors who were unable to account for it or to recommend any suitable treatment. They chalked it up to nerves and told me to relax. Easier said than done!

It was the day before Sri Chinmoy was to give a concert in my home town of Philadelphia, and that evening I was planning to drive home to see my family. I had never met Sri Chinmoy in person, but I had begun meditating his picture and was excited to meet this spiritual man who had inspired me so much with his writings and philosophy.

In the middle of class something inside of me told me, "Just let it go, let it go, let it go..." I started to breathe normally, for the first time in many years.

I sat up straight, shocked. Nobody noticed what had happened to me, because I really didn't want to call attention to myself.

After the class ended, I just sat in my chair long after everyone else had left and I just breathed, amazed and measurelessly grateful.

That was over a decade ago, and I have never had difficulty breathing since. The next evening, at the Concert, I thanked Sri Chinmoy in prayerful silence for healing me of a terrible, chronic affliction.

A few years ago, one of my dearest friends gave me a precious, original copy of *Transcendence-Perfection* as a birthday gift. Sri Chinmoy composed the 843 poems in that book in a twenty-four hour period, working from midnight to midnight on November 1st, 1975. I was born in the autumn of that year, and this book has always been a source of special inspiration for me. I consider this volume to be a miracle of improvisation and invention. No matter how short or how long, each and every poem in *Transcendence-Perfection* rings true.

Here are some of my favorites from the book:

***He Asked God Who He Was***

*In the small hours  
OF his earthly life  
He asked God  
Who he was.*

*God answered in the evening  
Of his life:  
"God's transcendental Silence-Vision  
And  
God's universal Sound-Reality."*

***Merrily, Merrily***

*Merrily, merrily  
I shall spend my life.*

*Merrily, merrily  
I shall enjoy myself in sleep.*

*Merrily, merrily  
Immortal day within me shall grow.*

*Merrily, merrily  
The ancient trees within my heart shall climb.*

### ***Therefore God Loves You***

*You smile in dreams;  
Therefore  
God loves you.*

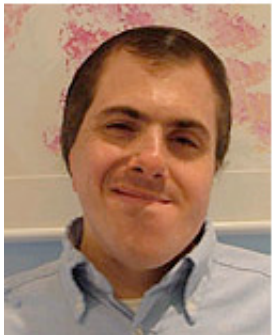
*You love in hatred;  
Therefore  
God loves you.*

*You do not sleep.  
You manifest God  
All the time  
In every possible way;  
Therefore  
God loves you.*

—Sri Chinmoy

From [Transcendence-Perfection](#)

I enjoy repeating many of Sri Chinmoy's poems aloud. I find that they embody a subtle sweetness and deep feeling which becomes clear when they are recited. While they might refer to exalted experiences and ideals, they are also absolutely grounded in the real world. They can be of genuine, practical help to any seeker.



Like all the genuine Teachers, Sri Chinmoy gives one hundred percent of the credit for all of his achievements to the Supreme, the Inner Pilot. Miracles help to strengthen and enrich our faith. I hope these stories and meditations on miracles may help to enrich the reader's faith in God, who is none other than our own higher Self, and our own inner Divinity.

**[Mahiruha Klein](#)**

Editor

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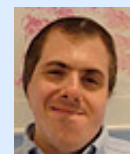
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## Cuahtlatatzin: The Miracle Of The Humble

by [Barney McBryde](#)

There are few things in daily life more distressing than a miracle. Along one proceeds in one's existence with the laws of nature behaving themselves in an orderly and predictable fashion when suddenly things become disorderly and unpredictable — the laws of nature start disobeying themselves, other realities start intruding upon the familiar realm. You set out for a swim, and end up taking a walk; you want to slake your thirst with some cool water, and end up drunk. If, however, actual miracles disturb the peace, stories about miracles are much safer and are indeed positively inspiring.

The quibbling rationalist mind may demand to know if the miracle story is 'true', if it is a story of something that actually happened, if all the details are accurate and precise. Let us, however, reject such demands with the same question we use when the same mind asks the same question about myths: 'Is it historically true? Did it really happen that way?'. We



dismiss such literalists by pointing out that a myth is not 'a true story' but rather 'a story about truth'. This justification we shall apply to our miracle stories as well. This is not to concede that we secretly think that they are untrue. Let us indeed lean towards the opposite view. There are indeed, Horatio, more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of by the sadly limited rational mind and its supposedly unbreakable laws. Historicity may not be our chief concern but it is more than likely that many miracle stories are both stories of truth and true stories.

One of my favourite miracle stories is of events that occurred in 1531 but that echo down the centuries - alive and influential today.

Mexico in the 1500s must have been a sad place. The destruction of Aztec society by the interlopers from across the ocean was nearly total. How many perished in the genocidal fury of the conquistadores? It is a story we have seen repeated again and again in the sad history of our race: one peoples' greed and power visiting destruction upon all in their path.

Disempowered, humiliated, irrelevant in their own land, a remnant of a subject nation, the Aztecs lived in the crevices of the new society constructed upon the ruins of their suddenly destroyed civilisation.

Cuauhtlatatzin was born in 1472. He was thus forced to live through the destruction of his world. He is described by later Spanish writers as a 'poor Indian', but what indigenous inhabitant of the New World was there, eleven years after the death of Montezuma, who could not be described thus? He was a solitary, mystical character, given to silence and penance. In this time of turmoil Cuauhtlatatzin turned inward to deeper, more substantial realities than the chaos around him. In 1524, at the age of 50, Cuauhtlatatzin and his wife adopted the religion of the invaders. There are students of sociology who would see such a move as a calculated attempt to move ahead in a new society, but a 'poor Indian' was nothing in 16th century Mexico even if he were a member of that tiny minority of Aztecs who found spiritual solace in the breast of the Prince of Peace whose message had followed His blood-soaked devotees to the New World. Cuauhtlatatzin took the new name of Juan Diego, and twice a week he would walk the 20 km to the nearest church to worship and study the spirit of

But the lady replied, 'I earnestly implore, my son the least, and with sternness I command that you again go tomorrow and see the bishop. You go in my name, and make known my wish in its entirety that he has to start the erection of a temple which I ask of him. And again tell him that I, in person, the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of God, sent you.'

The next day the 'poor Indian' returned to the bishop's palace. Once again the bishop dismissed him demanding a sign that he spoke the truth, and this time had servants follow him. Losing sight of him, those tailing Juan Diego returned to the bishop with tales of the man's duplicity and recommending that if he returned with his lies again he be punished harshly.

When the divine realm erupts into daily life, daily life continues with its mundane realities. Here was a man talking to the Queen of Heaven but still unable to overcome his powerlessness in cruel human society. And a man who, while obliged to perform the will of heaven, had also worldly responsibilities to fulfil. And it was at this point that those other responsibilities intruded upon Juan Diego's already troubled existence.

The next day he was unable to return to the lady for his uncle fell fatally sick and Juan Diego nursed him, summoned a doctor and finally realised that he would need to fetch a priest.

Come the Tuesday he set out to summon the priest. He must fulfil the will of the lady, and yet he must fetch the priest for his dying uncle. To fetch the priest he must pass by the hill of Tepeyac. He skirted the hill that he might not be interrupted even by the will of heaven from his duty, but the lady descended toward him. 'What's there, my son the least? Where are you going?' He bowed before her — 'My Child, the most tender of my daughters, Lady, God grant you are content. How are you this morning? Is your health good, Lady and my Child? I am going to cause you grief. Know, my Child, that a servant of yours is very sick, my uncle. He has contracted the plague, and is near death. I am hurrying to your house in Mexico to call one of your priests, beloved by our Lord, to hear his confession and absolve him, because, since we were born, we came to guard the work of our death. But if I go, I shall return here soon, so I may go to deliver your message. Lady and my Child, forgive me,



his new path.

By 1531 Juan Diego's wife had died — their sorrowful separation perceived and endured in the light of that other poor man in a colonised nation — the carpenter of Nazareth - rather than the disciplines of the winged serpent Quetzacoatl — and Juan Diego had moved to live with his uncle.

It is a miracle that a man may live a simple, humble life in this world and grow ever closer to the divine, yet Juan Diego's miracles were to extend even further than that.

Did you ever listen to Jennifer Warnes's album 'The Famous Blue Raincoat'? Her poignant voice drifts through the songs of Leonard Cohen, the mythical troubadour of Jewish Canada:

*There was a child named Bernadette  
I heard the story long ago.  
She saw the Queen of Heaven once  
And kept the vision in her soul.  
No one believed what she had seen  
No one believed what she heard  
That there were sorrows to be healed  
And mercy, mercy in this world...*

Some things never change.

On Saturday 12 December 1531 before the dawn, the desert around the hill of Tepeyac was biting cold. A solitary figure made his way past the base of the hill. Barefoot in the desert harshness and wrapped around with a tilma — a rough cloak made of cactus fibre — a 'poor Indian'. In the silence of the desert vastness the figure paused. He heard the voice of birds singing — mellow and delightful, excelling even the calls of the coyoltotl and the tzinizcan. 'By fortune, am I worthy of what I hear? Maybe I dream? Am I awakening? Where am I? Perhaps I am now in the terrestrial paradise which our elders have told us about? Perhaps I am now in heaven?'

He looked towards the east, to the top of the mount, to where the sun would rise.

Did not Dante Alighieri stand similarly — 'mid way in our life's journey' — before a small hill? But when he tried to ascend the hill to the light that offered him solace, he was forced back by the wolf of fraud, the leopard of incontinence and the lion of violence and

be patient with me for the time being. I will not deceive you, the least of my daughters. Tomorrow I will come in all haste.'

The lady answered, 'Hear me and understand well, my son the least, that nothing should frighten or grieve you. Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you not under my protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within my fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything. Do not be afflicted by the illness of your uncle, who will not die now of it. Be assured that he is now cured.'

And Juan Diego believed. He believed with such implicit and total faith that he cast aside concern for his uncle and aspired only to hasten with a sign to the ever-doubting bishop. The lady directed him to the summit of the hill and there he found a great abundance of beautiful flowers growing in defiance of the frosty desert season. Juan Diego picked those flowers and gathered them up in his tilma — his poor man's cactus-fibre cloak. 'My son the least, this diversity of roses is the proof and the sign which you will take to the bishop. You are my ambassador, most worthy of all confidence.'

Arriving at the bishop's palace with his miraculous burden, Juan Diego was assaulted by the bishop's servants seeking to seize this astonishing bounty of flowers. But when they tried to, they were suddenly unable to see real flowers but rather the blooms seemed only pictures on the cloak of the 'poor Indian'. In their cruelty and doubt they were unable to even truly perceive the bounteous gifts of heaven.

Now they ushered the 'poor Indian' once more before the bishop. Once more he knelt before the Spaniard and told his story. 'Behold. Receive them,' he concluded and, unfurling his tilma, scattered the flowers upon the floor at the bishop's feet. But all eyes fell astonished not upon the flowers — for at that instant there appeared upon the cloth of the 'poor Indian's' cloak the image of the lady, the image of the lady who had appeared to and spoken to this humble man, the image of the lady who called herself Coatloxopeuh — 'the one who crushes the serpent', the precious image of the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of God.

was forced to travel through the depths of hell, to climb the rocky mountain of purgatory, and traverse the full array of heaven before reaching that light.

Juan Diego, however, looked and heard a voice calling him, 'Juanito, Juan Dieguito.'<sup>1</sup> Joyfully he climbed, and at the summit he saw a lady. Her garments shone like the sun, the earth around her sparkled like a rainbow, her voice was tender and courteous. He bowed before her.

'Know and understand well, you the most humble of my sons, that I am the ever-virgin Holy Mary, Mother of the True God for whom we live, of the Creator of all things, Lord of heaven and the earth. I wish that a temple be erected here quickly, so I may therein exhibit and give all my love, compassion, help, and protection, because I am your merciful mother, to you, and to all the inhabitants on this land and all the rest who love me, invoke and confide in me; listen there to their lamentations, and remedy all their miseries, afflictions and sorrows. And to accomplish what my clemency pretends, go to the palace of the bishop of Mexico, and you will say to him that I manifest my great desire, that here on this plain a temple be built to me; you will accurately relate all you have seen and admired, and what you have heard.'

A bishop who lives in a palace, a Spanish lord of souls, is not a man to whom a 'poor Indian' may ever speak, but Juan Diego hastened to Mexico City and pleaded with the bishop's servants and was eventually admitted to the bishop's presence. The bishop heard him... and brushed him off unbelievably.

Returning to Tepeyac, Juan Diego prostrated himself before the lady - 'Lady, the least of my daughters, my Child, I went where you sent me to comply with your command. With difficulty I entered the prelate's study. I saw him and exposed your message, just as you instructed me. He received me benevolently and listened attentively, but when he replied, it appeared that he did not believe me. I exceedingly beg, Lady and my Child, that you entrust the delivery of your message to someone of importance, well known, respected, and esteemed, so that they may believe in him; because I am a nobody, I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf, and you, my Child, the least of my children, my Lady, you send me to a place where I never visit nor repose. Please excuse the great

The bishop and his companions fell to their knees. "They shuddered and, with sorrow, they demonstrated that they contemplated her with their hearts and minds".

How long should a cactus fibre cloak last? — twenty years? Five hundred years later you can still see it and the image that it still bears. And in the eyes of the image, inverted and distorted with ophthalmological precision - the image of a bishop and his servants: the sight which the image 'saw' in the instant of its creation. Or so they say. That is the story.

What can we take from this story? What should our response to this miracle story be? We could advance upon our knees up the aisle of the vast Basilica of Guadalupe and cast our gaze upon the sacred image. Or - perhaps more importantly - we could draw inspiration from the story and carry that out into our life.

Leonard Cohen concludes his song:

*Tonight, tonight I just can't rest  
I've got this joy here inside my breast  
To think that I did not forget  
That child, that song of Bernadette.*

Charles Dickens in his story of the miraculous visitations upon the benighted soul of Ebenezer Scrooge ends with the words '... and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us!'

As we put down the story of Juan Diego the phrase that echoes in my heart is 'I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf'.

The great pope John Paul II travelled far and wide across the globe in his years of dedicated service to mankind, but the very first trip he made from Rome was to Mexico and the image on the ragged cloak of the 'poor Indian'. He spoke there of those words of Juan Diego, 'I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf', and saw the 'poor Indian' who spoke them as the great example to the world of the virtue of humility - the virtue that allows us to stand honestly before God.

'A small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf' - may

unpleasantness and let not fretfulness befall, my Lady and my All.'



that be truly said of us, and all of us!

[Barney McBryde](#)

Auckland, New Zealand

1 The dialogue between the Virgin and Juan Diego comes from an English translation of the original account of the events, entitled the Nican Mopohua, or Huei Tlamahuitzoltica, written in Nahuatl, the Aztec language, probably by the Aztec Don Antonio Valeriano in the middle of the sixteenth century.

A full copy of the document can be found at [www.sancta.org/nican.html](http://www.sancta.org/nican.html).

## What You *Don't* Know Can Enchant You

by [Noivedya Juddery](#)

I've studied the movies. I know a little about the craft, and am privy (like anyone else who reads the right movie magazines, or watches the special features on their DVDs) to the "magic" of the movies, the hows and wherefores of making a movie. Recently, I've even attempted to make a few movies of my own.

So now I *appreciate* the art form. I appreciate why *Citizen Kane* is considered so superb, despite the lack of car chases. I appreciate why Fellini, Chaplin and Preston Sturges are considered geniuses. And despite this – or because of this – my favourite film is the one I appreciate the *least*.

You probably know it, or at least, you've heard the name. *Singin' in the Rain*. 1952. Gene Kelly as a silent film star who starts singing and dancing with the coming of talking pictures in 1927. With Debbie Reynolds as his girl. Donald O'Connor as his best friend. Wonderful songs. Great jokes.

It's not the sort of movie that a film buff is expected to name as their favourite. Shouldn't I single out *Les Enfants du Paradis* or *The Passion of Joan of Arc*? *Singin' in the Rain* is... well, it's pure entertainment. What is it trying to say? Probably (hopefully) nothing. It was made to be a box-office hit – and it was exactly that – but somehow it has grown in stature over the



Someone said that, if technology is advanced enough, a primitive culture will think that it is magic. But who needs to find a "primitive" culture? My personal culture is literary, creative, spiritual, but it isn't really practical or technical. You can entrance me with your magic.



decades. In a 1987 poll, a group of international critics named it one of the top five films ever made. These judges weren't shallow and meaningless – not when they discussed the cinema, at least. But perhaps they decided that Gene Kelly and company gave us the greatest entertainment film in history, on par with the intellectual pleasures of *Citizen Kane*, *Potemkin*, and all those highbrow explorations into the human psyche (or whatever they were).

When they made this film, something worked. The songs were good. The dancing was good. The direction was good. The performances were good. The cinematography was good. And the script (usually the weakest thing about movie musicals) was excellent. Most importantly, it all fit together. No doubt everyone was trying to do the best that they could do. But somehow, they did even better than that. Whatever happened, it was incredible.

I can't understand it. I can't appreciate it. Though I can appreciate most aspects of the film, I can't appreciate the film as a whole. I can merely watch it, astounded. Surely that is a sign of artistic genius.

Of course, it's not the only work of art from the past century that fills me with wonder. I am amazed by the Channel Tunnel, that tunnel that once allowed me (along with millions of others) to travel from Paris to London, underneath the English Channel. A feat of engineering that I simply can't understand. Not even remotely. Sure, many engineers could explain it intricately. But for me, it has a magic that not even the movies can claim. Not even *Singin' in the Rain*. How can such a feat be possible? I'll never understand.



While film is more fascinating to me, engineering is more amazing. A contradiction? No, quite the opposite. Film fascinated me enough to want to read about it, to learn its secrets. I even know how the pictures appear on the celluloid. (Seven years working in a film archive can make anyone an "expert".) But I've never read about engineering.

Closer to home, I'm amazed by the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It's a landmark of Sydney, often photographed with the equally astounding Sydney Opera House. Completed in 1932, it's often called "a remarkable feat of engineering". Any Aussie child can tell you that. It's drilled into our heads.

But then, I also look on in wonderment at the Gladesville Bridge. This is the *other* bridge that crosses Sydney Harbour, a non-descript little bridge in the outer suburbs. But I see that, though suspended over the water, it has remained standing for all these decades. How many millions of tonnes has it supported in this time? How can a structure like this be so strong?

Perhaps you know. Perhaps you are rolling your eyes, aware that even a small amount of engineering knowledge would aptly explain such phenomena. But in my ignorance, it all seems like a miracle.

Perhaps, even if someone explained it to me in perfect detail, it would still seem miraculous – just like *Singin' in the Rain*, or any other truly wonderful work of art. Certain things are so sharp, so brilliant, that they must surely take a small amount of genius.

[Noivedya Juddery](#)

Canberra, Australia

## Plumbing The Deep

by [Sumangali Morhall](#)



By far my greatest fear when I was younger was one of deep water. I suppose as fears go that's quite a rational one. It was perpetuated by *Jaws* - a movie surely unavoidable by anyone alive in the late 1970s. At the time, *Jaws* served as confirmation that fear of the sea was absolutely justified and almost constituted common sense. Those who ventured beyond the shallow end of a pool I crowned in my mind as heroes, and as veritable demigods those who would dive head first from a board. Those who would wade out far enough to lose their footing in the ocean however, I labelled as reckless dolts who did not properly value the life they had been given.

When harboured and reinforced for twenty years, even the most rational fear can reach irrational proportions and formidable strength. It seemed God had to carefully engineer an opportunity for its final dismantling, starting with a phone call from a friend — out of the blue so to speak. My friend had planned and paid for a scuba diving holiday in the Caribbean with a partner who had since gone off in a huff about something, so would I go instead? Many excuses came to mind, but you can imagine that none of them would be very convincing faced with such an offer. I accepted, viewing it gravely as a service, and nervously hoping more specific and robust excuses would present themselves when faced with the ocean itself.

It was with much trepidation and considerable self-transcendence that I completed my training and gained my diving license, graduating from the shallow end to the deep end of a pool somewhere in Alabama, then to the murkier regions of a former quarry. I would use up my air in half the time of my peers due to my anxiety, but by that time I had resolved to face The Deep once and for all, and I would not be deterred by any amount of cajoling.

I had to be pushed off the boat on my first adventure in the open sea. With all that outer paraphernalia and inner baggage, the physical and mental strength to do it myself had to be developed over time. I was enraptured though, from the very first moment. The harsh sun, the growl and fumes of the boat engine, the nauseous movement of the waves, the weight of the equipment, were all replaced by purity and gentleness on the other side of the ocean's skin. Fear turned to awe as I entered a world where I did not belong, but



There was no sound then except that breath: the husky drawing in, and the chink of exhalation releasing plumes of amorphous bubbles. Colours were completely new; their hue and luminosity changed constantly, with a freedom alien to the flat shades known to land. Freedom of movement in all directions was also new and brought boundless fun, though my own mammalian efforts took me nowhere in comparison to the sleek agility of sea creatures. Stillness was a favourite practice, controlling the posture and breath to hover inches from the seabed. Movement without effort was the crowning joy, drifting with the tide over coral gardens, tiny fish hovering and darting, as would bees over blooms.

The creatures seemed to look on us as bumbling enigmas. They showed no irritation by our presence, neither fear, as they knew any lazy flinch of theirs would easily outsmart us. Some were notoriously intelligent, and many seemed positively hospitable, even taking time from apparently busy schedules to play games. The beauty, power, and harmony of that vast and strange environment have etched themselves on my mind and heart. I can still see a flock of eagle rays emerging into view, their massive wings forming slow, graceful arcs suspended in a saline cathedral. I can still catch the cheeky glance of grouper snatching chunks of raw fish from my pocket. I can still feel the specific majesty of depths beyond 100ft. I'd have imagined the form of a shark in those depths would have caused me to expire from sheer fright a few weeks before. In reality its beauty disarmed me, and I saw only the grace and efficiency of movement. The perfection of that creation brought tears to my eyes. In The Deep, to my surprise, I seemed to meet the Creator in myriad beguiling guises.

which had ample room to house me. How humbling to be at the mercy of such a body of vastness, floating in a medium of which the human body is largely composed, but which alone would not sustain it for more than a few seconds. Up to then such tranquillity was unknown to me, but seemed a perfect natural state. My breathing became slower even than it was on land, and I used less air then even than my peers.



I have visited other oceans since, but I no longer hanker for sub-aquatic charms. Perhaps it is the growing sense that such peace and beauty are in-built, requiring only the key of meditation for their discovery. An ever-deepening Deep seems accessible without need of a license or expensive airfares, without the use of weights, wetsuits, and cumbersome canisters, and without the job of conquering fear.

[Sumangali Morhall](#)

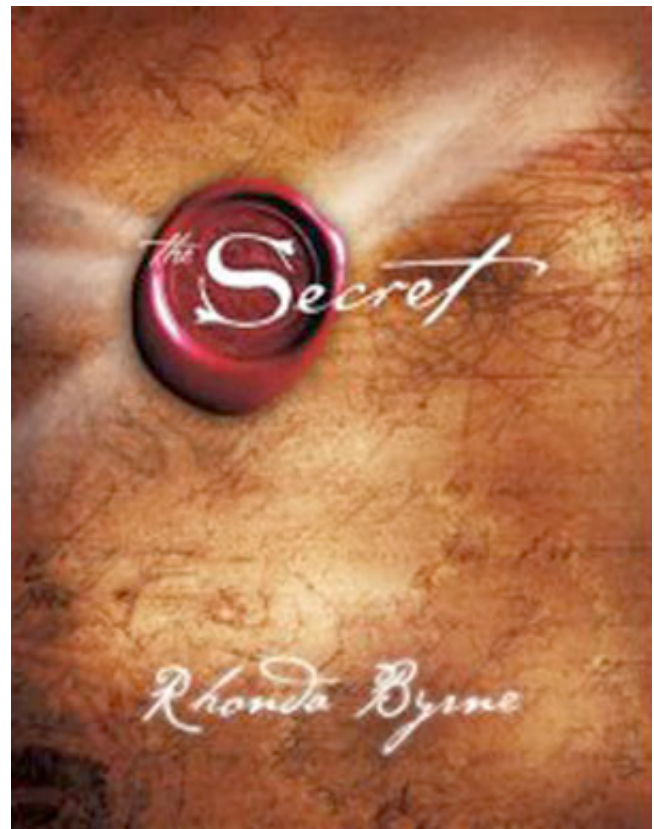
York, England

## Miracle Unravelled

by [Abhinabha Tangerman](#)

Summer 1996. Accompanied by three old friends, I'm touring Europe by railway. The dusty Italian trains contrast sharply with the neat, clean and comfortable vehicles back home. The scenery back home however is no match for the riches of Tuscan and Umbria with its rolling hills, fragrant olive groves and fairytale villages. In Sienna, a little jewel of beauty in the heart of Tuscan, strolling through the small shaded streets, lounging outside little bakeries, we suddenly find ourselves on the main square. It's a touristy place after all, we realize, but with reason. We decide to pay a visit to the little museum bordering the square, as good tourists are wont. Ambling through its halls lined with old paintings and frescoes, I try to drink in as much Renaissance beauty as my receptivity allows. After completing the tour of the museum I casually glance sideways and almost choke. What I'm seeing now defies all common sense and reasoning. One of my best friends from Holland, whom I know is on her own holiday somewhere in Europe, is walking out of the opposite hallway, accompanied by her parents and siblings. My stomach turns. What are the odds? On the same day, on the same hour, in the same little museum, in the same little town and both a thousand miles away from home! I feel an unknown kind of joy. This cannot be mere coincidence. This is a miracle.

A miracle is something we consider rare, unusual, mysterious, inexplicable and generally unnatural. But



Well, if we always think negatively – 'This always happens to me!' or 'I'm never able to make ends meet' – then that is also exactly what we experience, not because it is our fate, but precisely because we have created the experience ourselves by thinking and unconsciously believing it first. By contrast, someone who always thinks affirmative and positive thoughts about himself – 'I'm so grateful for being healthy',



is it right to classify a miracle as such? We get caught up in the grind of everyday life, the hustle and bustle of our outer experience and the repetitive and often monotonous rhythm that accompanies it. So anything that comes to us from an inner, invisible source or from worlds beyond our terrestrial grasp strikes us as unnatural. It is in that vein that we often speak of miracles.

At the same time miracles are ingrained in the very tissues of life. They happen every day; better yet, at every moment. “Is there anything in life that is not a miracle?” spiritual philosopher Sri Chinmoy rhetorically asks. Miracles are right in front of our eyes, if we only cared to look closer. They are natural laws of the universe; laws which we often do not yet understand fully. That’s why we call it a miracle. The ancient Roman theologian Saint Augustine couldn’t have worded it better when he said, “Miracles are not contrary to nature, but only contrary to what we know about nature.”

The recent documentary/movie “The Secret”, adapted from the book by Rhonda Byrne, is all about understanding these natural laws of the universe. It tries to shed light on one of the primary universal laws, which it calls “the law of attraction”. By knowing and understanding this principle the scientists, philosophers and authors featured in the documentary claim one can have unlimited happiness, health and prosperity.

According to the law of attraction we draw towards us those experiences that correspond to the thoughts inside our minds. With every thought that we think we send out subtle energy-waves into the universe. The universe acts like a kind of wish-fulfilling genie and grants us the experience we – often unconsciously – asked for. Like a potter it moulds the energy of our thought into a concrete experience. If the energy was good, positive and divine, then the experience is good, positive and divine. If the energy was negative, discouraging and depressing, then the experience resulting from it is negative, discouraging and depressing. Our thoughts are the blueprint for our reality. How does that work exactly?



‘Everything will work out well for me in this new job’ – will have very good and encouraging experiences, because his positive thoughts will have created them. Every thought we send out into the universe like a boomerang will come whizzing back to us in the form of an experience. This is the ‘secret’ the movie speaks about. We are all lifesize magnets, attracting to us whatever is inside our minds and hearts. Once you are fully aware of this law, this cosmic rule of life, you can take control of your life and become a conscious and thus happier creator of your own experience.

Need health? Think healthy thoughts, quite literally, visualize yourself being healthy and strong and the universe will do the rest. You’ll be laughing all the way to the gym. Need money? Just put yourself into a state of wealth and prosperity and offer gratitude to the universe (or God, for that matter) for granting it to you. Pretty soon the green stuff will be rolling your way, sticking to you like iron fillings to a magnet. Need happiness? Just think of all the things that make you happy and they will start happening. Before you know it you’re lying on that white sandy beach you were visualizing over and over in your mind. Or writing that best-selling novel, for that matter.

Need a new lawnmower? You get the idea.

The opposite is also true. Want debt? Just think you have too little to spend and you’ll always find yourself dangling on the wrong end of your check balance. Want failure? Visualize you’re never going to make it, strengthen that self-doubt and you will attract failure, without fail. Want misery? Keep your mind in the gutter of life, think the whole world is against you, curse your fate at every moment and cash the big fat misery-check.

If it sounds all too simplistic, just try it out yourself! Turn your life into a spiritual experiment. It will eventually become a spiritual experience, fulfilling and satisfying you far beyond your imagination. Be your own miracle maker and manifest the beautiful dreams that you have carried inside you from the day you were born. If this is not the purpose of your life, then what is?

*“The fullness of life lies in dreaming and manifesting the impossible dreams.”*

*-Sri Chinmoy.*

[Abhinabha Tangerman](#)

The Hague, The Netherlands

## Miracle In Jamaica, New York

by [Sharani Robins](#)

I slowed the car to a stop under the shade of a tree on the residential street lined with houses that were typical for this Jamaica, Queens NY neighborhood. It was a perfect spring morning with sunny skies, trees awash in blossoms and flowers blooming everywhere within the well-manicured yards. I was about to attend a group meditation with students of spiritual teacher Sri Chinmoy. Because I myself am a long-time student of Sri Chinmoy, I undoubtedly qualify as an old-timer at many of the activities of the Sri Chinmoy Centre held in this Queens neighborhood. Yet I walked up to the house with a sense of anticipation for what the morning would offer at this gathering comprised mostly of new students of Sri Chinmoy. My eagerness stemmed from the fact that I had not attended a meditation meeting at this first floor apartment, now transformed into a spiritual oasis, since the fall of 2005. That first and only visit found me delighting in a social gathering filled with games, food, meditation, singing and video watching -- affectionately termed a "Joy Day" by Sri Chinmoy.

Today I came as a guest for their regular Sunday morning group meditation.

Upon arrival, the foyer inside the front door sparkled with neatness. Gleaming white cubbies lined the wall to hold our shoes in the tidiest of fashion. Then I walked in the door and was instantly mesmerized by the elegance of this apartment turned meditation mecca. The walls themselves and everything inside seemed to sing a cheerful and harmonious tune for the onlooker. Light blue carpet and furnishings created a peaceful aura and several striking framed photographs on the wall of Sri Chinmoy in a serene gaze added to the meditative atmosphere.

In the main room established and decorated for



Our meeting included reading aloud, group chanting of mantric words such as aum, silent meditation, walking meditation, meditating upon a short video of Sri Chinmoy himself in meditation, and singing. Afterwards we took prasad and shared news and conversation.

This small gathering impressed me deeply. Humble and heartfelt, it inspired me in the core of my being. In the space of only a couple of hours, I felt as if my inner existence had risen to the surface and been sumptuously fed in a realm of beauty, simplicity and harmony.

From the outside this miracle haven looks like an ordinary house on an ordinary street. Inside a doorway to the soul waits to be discovered. Reaching



meditation, the shrine table for candles and flowers perched underneath a large window draped with sheer white curtains. The sunlight streamed in through the window creating a symbolic reminder that we would seek inner light during our meditation together.

Just past the area for meditation is the kitchen and a small art gallery of sorts that had been created with numerous abstract paintings by Sri Chinmoy arranged on the walls. The paintings offered a palette of cheerful primary colours combined in harmonious fashion inside similarly colorful frames. Beyond that a library of numerous spiritual books could be found and another smaller room currently in a state of remodeling but seemingly also intended for group meditation.

Once I finished looking around, I joined in the flurry of activity to prepare for the meeting. Cuttings of flowers from the yard were brought inside and vases were emptied and arranged for adornment of the meditation shrine table. Candleholders were diligently emptied of old wax. The shrine cloth was whisked off the table and a new fresh one was quickly in place. A row of candles inside exquisite votive holders were lit and flickered in welcome.

I was put to work washing cherries for prasad. We would take this prasad, an Indian word for blessed food, at the conclusion of our meditation. As additional people arrived, so too came more food for prasad. Pastries were artfully arranged on platters. Oranges scored for easy peeling. Together we hand-lettered invitations on artsy note-cards to announce an inaugural book discussion meeting of the group later that week.

By the conclusion of these preparations, this already beautiful and inviting atmosphere now additionally glistened with the care, concern and dedication permeating every loving touch of readiness. When we finally sat on chairs and cushions on the floor to begin the meeting (which themselves were also elegant yet simple), I felt as if the intensity and dedication of these shared preparations set the stage for a meditation all the more cherished as a special and sacred inner journey.

and passing through that doorway is quickened by the treasure chest of soul-stirring tools found in Sri Chinmoy's contributions as an author, teacher, musician and artist coupled with the peace-elevating interior décor. By the time I left this shared meditation, a tangible and palpable sense of spirit pervaded my awareness. My soul, previously hidden underneath the ordinary routine, entwined itself in the forefront of my consciousness. I left feeling like spirit is the main fabric of life – not just in theory but in concrete and current reality.

I find this transformation to be nothing less than a miracle, even if eventually tarnished by the return to my daily outer-world responsibilities. Inside this house on a regular-looking street, I mingled with people from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds (representing the Ukraine, Scotland, Guyana, Bangladesh, India and America) in a spirit of harmony and community. And this despite meeting half of them for the first time on that day. Breaking the bread of spirit together melted away our differences and fed our souls. No wonder the name of this meditation group is called "The Oneness-Heart-Centre."

This quality of unity is a central tenet of Sri Chinmoy's teachings and the ease in which we shared the gift of spirit across cultures, age, religion and race proved to me it is attainable. Remembering the beloved holiday movie, I contend that 34th street in New York is not the only place to find miracles. In New York, miracles can also easily be found on none other than this humble street in Jamaica, Queens. I found a miracle there and hope you find your own miracles on any street address anywhere across the globe simply through cultivating the purity, beauty, simplicity and peace inside the ever miraculous meditation.

[Sharani Robins](#)

Rhode Island, USA



# Miracles And Me

by [Palyati Fouse](#)

*“Each breathing moment is a miracle”*  
 – Sri Chinmoy, from [The God Of The Mind](#)

“I’m going to die” is a too oft repeated phrase and I have come to realize that my life is a living, breathing miracle. No, really, my life is a living, breathing miracle.

Come on now, isn’t everyone’s? Isn’t birth a miracle? The word “miracle” is often used intended to make an impact, but winds up being taken casually by the listener. That’s what I’m talking about. What is interpreted as a miracle is a personal belief, except in the case of certain religious institutions, which have a defined set of criteria to determine what a miracle is and is not.

According to a recent count off the top of my head, I have had no less than 10 opportunities to leave the planet in a not so nice way and the potential for leaving in a number of others. Yet, I walk, talk, laugh and cry. Isn’t this a miracle? Why one person is spared and another dies is something best left to the philosophers. I am simply, grateful.

A violent car accident, a couple of wicked skiing falls, one into a deep ravine, and staring down the barrel of a loaded 44 revolver (yes, the hole is very big) held in the uncertain hands of a drunk has caused me hours of sleep contemplating life’s purpose in general and, more specifically, the fulfillment of my own. It’s difficult to think about these incidents and gut wrenching to write about them. Even though some happened over 30 years ago, my heart races, my stomach hurts and my breath comes quickly.

Worst are the things I thought about doing and at the last second changed my mind. With no knowing of the outcome they play over and over again haunting my thoughts, causing the physiologic reactions. I wonder if this is similar to how a soldier feels after coming home from war, leaving his buddies behind. It must



On the way up I noticed only two other people walking through the area on a different trail. We acknowledged each other with a wave. Kinda cool, I thought, alone on the mountain. At the time I was moving along nicely, not punching through. The sun continued to shine. I reached a boulder field and even though some rocks farther up were exposed and heating up by absorbing the sun, I kept going. It looked like a big, white, bubbly, expanse to me. Almost to the end of the field, the hair on the back of my neck stood up. The mountain finally had my total attention. Unmistakably, I heard the earth move. Above me, there were rock slides, not big ones, but even a small stone at speed can ruin a day. I stood and watched it for about five minutes before I decided to go no farther. I ate my sandwich then started down.

It happened on the second or third step. The snow gave way. With one leg I instantly dropped down to my hip between two boulders. I reached out to arrest the fall, badly spraining my wrist.

I’m no Indian sadhu, but my reaction was instant. Somehow (and the how is a big mystery here!), I levitated out of the hole and squatted with two feet close together. It was then I realized my situation. Alone, at the top of a boulder field on heating rocks I could not see, not a trekking pole or stick in sight to probe my way, I had to do something quickly. I had to do something now. Completely aware, keeping low

come from war, leaving his buddies behind. It must be as Sri Chinmoy says that a miracle “only increases our curiosity. It does not help in raising our consciousness” ([Aspiration-Glow And Dedication-Flow, Part 1](#)).

Living on the edge of the wilderness, I hear story after story of the un-forgiveness of Mother Nature. I joke with people about the Alaskan wilds that so many stories end with those fateful words, “And then they died.” We like to relish the beauty and wonder of the mountains, rivers and forests. In reality, nature is a dangerous and unpredictable place to be humbly respected.

In late April, I thought I was doing just that. Instead I was nothing short of stupid. It was a sunny, spring morning and the local newspaper had an article about a hike to Byron Glacier, one I hadn't been to. OK, I thought, today is the day. I checked my daypack for a jacket, hat, knife, lighter, starter, compass, and safety kit with a space blanket, whistle, mirror and a few first aid items. For extra measure I packed a lunch, some extra food bars, and water, got in my car and drove to the trail head.

By this time it was early afternoon and the sun was strong. This was my first indication not to go. My second mistake was setting out even though I knew the snow would be unusually soft. Soft snow is a no-no when contemplating climbing glaciers! But, I told myself I'm light and it wouldn't be a problem, thinking more of the effort than anything else. My third mistake was that I didn't bother to tell anyone where I would be.



## Four Mini-Miracles

by [Jogyata Dallas](#)

*Miracles, of course, are only miracles because we haven't the foggiest what's going on. Human ants struggling to break free of the finite, peering out from the tiny speck of dust we inhabit into a stupendous, fathomless universe, an endlessness so astonishing and mysterious as to defy language,*

and stomping, probing with my feet, I slowly moved away from the exposed rock to what I hoped was colder, more stable snow. It was. When I finally made it off the rocks, I got out of there fast.

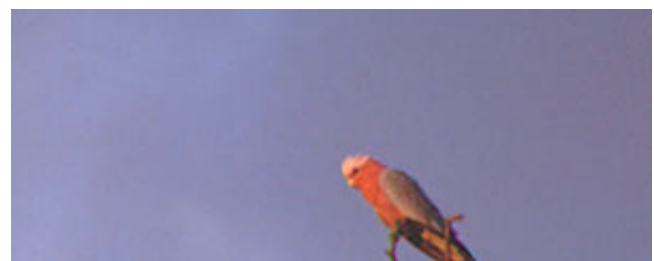
It wasn't even the next day, nor the next, when the whole incident finally sunk in. It was when I was sharing the story with a friend. She was astounded. “You didn't tell anyone where you were? Listen, you jerk, call me and leave a message on my machine if you ever go out alone again. You promise?!” She went on to horrify me even more by letting me know that if I had gone down with both legs, searchers might have never found my bones. Then it hit, big. This was going to be yet another incident that will haunt me for the rest of my life. Not only, “And then she died”, but also, “she was never seen or heard from again.”

In this case, levitation was my miracle. I believe my reaction was not mine, but that of an Unseen Hand grabbing me effortlessly by the back of my neck and carefully placing me down to live and serve another day. I am grateful my purpose was not to be a lesson to others to be smarter confronting the Mother when she is changing clothes; it is simply not proper, nor wise.

Can a human be a living, breathing miracle? To me, without a doubt, just ask the Unseen Hand.

[Palyati Fouse](#)

Alaska, USA





*poetry, comprehension. Or turning our gaze within, the equally bedazzling frontiers of consciousness, that vast and unknown inner world of possibility and self-unfoldment patiently awaiting God's Hour.*

*In both realms, **everything** is miraculous, every moment bursting with the extraordinary, the fantastic and marvelous. And another great mystery too of God's cosmic game – that we have forgotten who we really are. Hide and seek.*

*"The miracle of miracles," Sri Chinmoy writes, "a tiny, feeble man embodies God-life."*

*Here are four entirely random and unrelated mini-miracle-moments from my own puzzling life, four tales of an ant.*

We were standing among eucalyptus trees and the orange-red hills of the Australian outback, looking up into the dawn sky. "How do they stay together like that?" asked eight year-old Billie, wide-eyed boy-child of a friend. A flock of galahs, thousands of them, were wheeling and turning high up against the blue in mass celebration, rejoicing at the rising sun and new day. It was a spectacular aerial ballet, rehearsed over millions of years, their wings and plumage showing pink, then silver, then green as they banked and soared. Not follow-my-leader but a flawless simultaneity, swoops, turns, loops, 180's all exactly together, a oneness-flight. How could they achieve this impeccable unison? They were revealing the oneness reality of the universe, the physics of the cosmos, the pronouncements of the Vedic sages, moving together like the molecules of your finger, bending, beckoning as one, bound in a matrix of consciousness. The euphoric flight of the birds was a lovely dawn miracle endlessly repeating every sunrise throughout eternity.

\* \* \*

Every morning around 8am she draws back the white curtains and daylight streams into her two rooms, yellow sunlight dappling the walls. She ties back her hair then stands at the window thoughtfully, watching the people in the street three stories below. Then, every day the same, she begins to dance at her window, a slow rush of joy as though delighting in the life below her in the street, responding to its beauty in private celebration. Above the stream of humanity she turns, twirls, sways in her pleasure, smiling, dancing,



Sri Chinmoy is a miracle – I am forever wonderstruck at his life, his accomplishments, his being. In my half century (OK, plus a little extra) wandering about this troubled, sad planet I have never before encountered such an astonishing and miraculous person. Even after 27 years of first hand scrutiny (immersed in his music, his activities, his teachings; years of one's life spent in his company) he continues to disappear most wonderfully over the horizon of my comprehension. I hold him in the most profound reverence, in fathomless admiration and unwavering trust and my whole understanding of spirituality is based almost entirely upon the example which he so powerfully, so majestically sets.

I don't think I would have believed in God had I not met someone so immersed in God and so obviously on intimate terms with a Supreme Being; believed in the possibility of enlightenment had my ignorance not been challenged and confronted by it's reality, here so irrefutably evident in my teacher; learnt how to meditate had Someone not given me a regular dosage of Inner Experiences and kept me on course; or believed in the soul if I had not been taught how to listen to my own.

Discipleship with a master is a fast-track PhD course in God-discovery – a God-realised master is a miracle of evolution, discipleship a miracle of grace and life a succession of quite perfect chances to get on with the supreme task of realising God the Creator and serving God the creation.



eyes closed in abandonment, enraptured by life. She moves gracefully and easily in her unselfconscious joy and you feel touched by her jubilation.

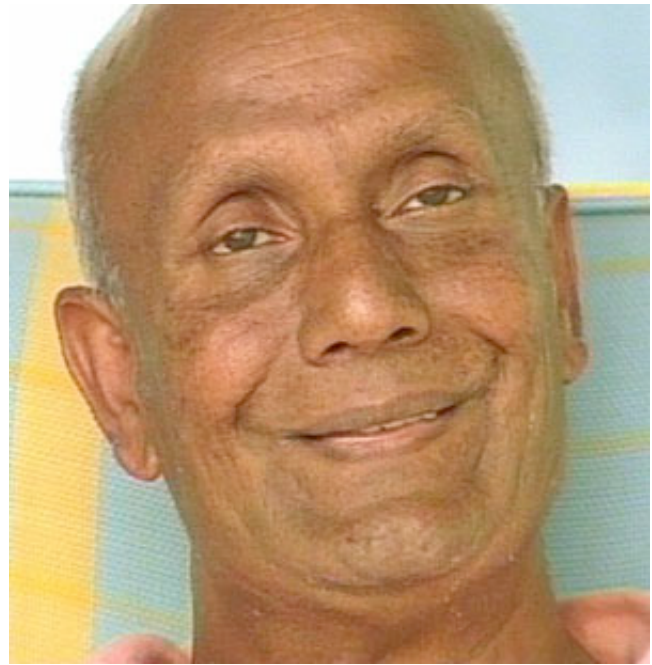
Sometimes in the evenings when we both look out at the street we look across and see each other, wave and smile. Across the divide of a wide road a silent kinship thrives, impersonal, genderless, free of the burden of physical encounter and personality. We will never meet.

Her morning dance is a little miracle of joy and you wonder why you feel so moved. Her dance is a sudden surprise, a gratuitous and random beauty and you feel uplifted as though by a sweet burst of hope. Galaxies and stars turn in your mind, dreams awaken, the tree of life bursting into flower; inside the fragile impermanence of her body some goddess is at play. You feel a sudden rush of elation, a vicarious happiness, an unreasonable exhilaration. A tiny miracle touches your dawn.

\* \* \*

In my twelve years as Koto the Amazing Clown I performed miracles every day. Handkerchiefs materializing behind kid's ears, jellybeans mysteriously appearing inside someone's shoe, a flower plucked out of thin air! Say the magic word and my giant needle will pass right through this fully inflated balloon. Amazing! Those little monsters adored me, I was a god, a wildly fun kindergarten god of endless schoolroom miracles. Child unbelievers, magically-challenged, huddled in a corner, too scared to look and banned anyway by fervid parents. Koto the Dark Clown dabbling in the Black Arts, destined to burn in some awful clown purgatory. Where everyone wears size 18 red shoes, baggy polka dotted trousers, red noses and fuzzy wigs – even Satan wears a sparkly hat, giggles a lot and says, “Hey, how'd you do **that**?” when you pluck flaming hot coals from behind his ears.

At one birthday party for hyperactive, out-of-control seven year olds, I had to clamber up a backyard apple tree to escape a gaggle of demented child revellers intent on divesting Koto of his clown costume. Hysterical parents killing themselves with mirth while their little darlings, hypoglycemic on fizzy drinks and cake, ran rampant. Koto clinging to a branch above scores of clutching, tiny sugary hands, entertaining



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dark, unclownlike thoughts of revenge. Running amok with my giant foam-rubber clown hammer. Miracle I didn't.

\* \* \*



## A Miracle Story Told In Music

by [Mahiruha Klein](#)

*To give wings of eternity to that  
which is most ephemeral;  
To make divine things human and  
human things divine;  
Such is Bach, the greatest and purest  
moment in music  
Of all time.*

—**Pablo Casals**

*Bach, Bach, Bach, Bach!  
O heart-piercing, soul-stirring  
melody,  
You quenched the unquenched thirst of  
Eternity.*

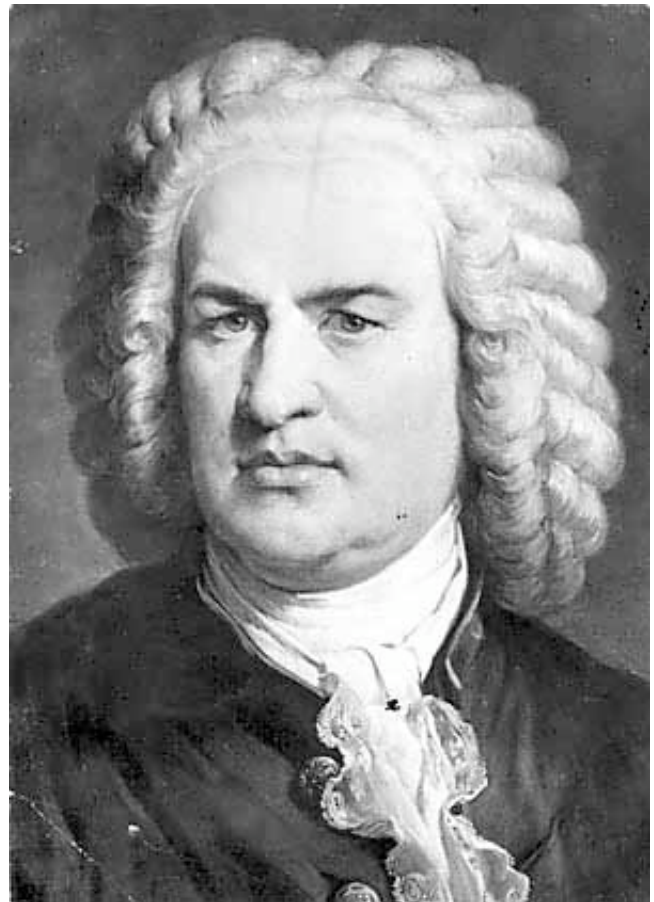
—**Sri Chinmoy**

As a child I would sometimes go over to the big lake by my house and just look at the water and think. I love water. According to Sri Chinmoy, water symbolizes vastness and wisdom.

I like the music of Johann Sebastian Bach because many of his compositions remind me of the water-consciousness in their generous, extended movement and flow.

The Saint Matthew Passion, arguably one of Bach's greatest works, defies description. When I listen to it, I feel privy to some exalted higher worlds. What makes Bach special is his musical purity. Like Shakespeare did with words, he stands aside and allows the music to speak for itself in all of its natural grace.

The first time I heard this piece, I was astonished.



I cannot say which aria is my favorite. But I like the recitative "Am abend da es kühle war" (In the evening when it was cool) and its aria, "Mache dich mein herze rein" (Make thee, O my heart, pure). They are not only beautiful pieces, but they have that sense of the water-consciousness I mentioned at the beginning of this essay. Keats said that great poetry should be to the reader like a recollection of some deeply elevating but long-forgotten truth. That is of course why we practise the spiritual life and meditate. And these arias can definitely inspire a meditative feeling in the listener.

Many people think of Bach as a master of counterpoint, as a musical technician virtually without parallel. And that he was. But what strikes me about the Passion is its emotional richness. Surely this must be one of the most accessible oratorios ever written. Its depth of feeling is really rare.

Three hundred years ago there were no clean hospitals or vaccines. The infant mortality rate was terrible. Some fifty years earlier, the Thirty Years War had wreaked untold death and misery. For these reasons, it is possible that people felt a deep need to invoke God's love and protection. I can imagine that Bach took the aspirations and spiritual longings of his Leipzig congregation and distilled them into songs of almost incredible beauty.

I get to spend lots of time alone, and I revel in it. Bach, on the other hand, with twenty children (half of whom who died in infancy), a full schedule of teaching and administrative duties, had to somehow find time to get his compositions done. He must have been supremely well organized and disciplined, a rock of determination and focus.

While Bach's justly celebrated cantatas were written for his day, for his contemporary church audience, the St. Matthew Passion, which he completed in 1729, was written for his audience in posterity. He kept a manuscript copy with him all his life, and when it was seriously damaged he painstakingly restored it by hand. The work itself has a timeless quality to it. While it relates the great events which attended the last days of Jesus' life, it also jumps forward in time to reflect on the significance or applications of these phenomena to the modern seeker. It also includes meditations on the nature of God and of human frailties and suffering.

Many of the great choruses remind me of the beautiful melodies I heard as a child in the synagogue. They have that same majestic feeling. And certain arias strike me as very similar to Indian *kirtans* (devotional songs). The arias "Ich will dir mein herze schenken" and "Komm suesses kreuz" are mantric in character. They touch our hearts and uplift our minds.

I'm fond of the ancient European and Eastern ballads-like "The Song of My Cid", or Homer's "Iliad" or Valmiki's "Ramayana". Like these, the Saint Matthew Passion is endowed with epic greatness. Bach tells his

'Pieta' is a term referring to any piece of art, usually a sculpture, depicting the Virgin Mary mourning over her lost son. This recitative and aria occurs just at that point in the story: Jesus has been taken down from the Cross and his dear ones are weeping for him. Interestingly, Bach chose to give these pieces to the bass rather than to a female part like an alto or soprano. It is Joseph, the righteous Pharisee, who delivers this magnificent speech, as it were. It's an unusual decision. It's as if Bach is mourning for the Christ directly, through the bass. I don't know, of course, if Bach was himself a bass, or if he sung at all! But the personal, introspective nature of this aria suggests that it held a great significance for Bach himself.

"Erbarme dich mein Gott" (Forgive me O God") is another wonderful aria. Many conductors, composers and listeners consider it to be one of the most heartfelt prayers ever encoded in sound. I agree with them!

Robert Frost's immortal line, "The woods are lovely, dark and deep" describes the Saint Matthew Passion perfectly. Bach was fascinated with beauty and he endowed this music with absolutely sublime beauty.

The Passion is an exquisite work, but it is also dark. Essentially it is a three-hour funeral service. It was written to make people weep. Don't listen to the Saint Matthew Passion to unwind after a hectic day at the office. It is too heavy and dark for that. Listen to it once or twice a year, maybe on a lazy Sunday afternoon, when you have plenty of time to explore its wonderful expressive ingenuity and overflowing emotion.

Like all creative people, I am sure Bach also treasured his time alone. I doubt he would have enjoyed the hectic pace of today's ultra-modern and mechanical world! I am grateful to him for providing this shelter in sound for spiritual seekers. The simplicity and depth of Bach's music is as rejuvenating as the gentle spring rain, and as inspiring as the vast ocean.

[Mahiruha Klein](#)  
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tale with music, and develops characterization through many subtle musical devices: He gives Jesus a “halo” from the string section; he expresses in the arias emotions and ideas from different social classes- from simple people to great rulers; he builds and releases tension masterfully through his placement of choruses and recitatives. Also, the whole piece has an ancient yet ever-new quality to it which is peculiar to the oral tradition.

