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In the Stream of Consciousness

Chapter 17A – Part Two: When the Seed Matures



Nitya and Jauhar, reproduced in Love and Blessings

The Mr. J of the story is Surendranath Jauhar, known familiarly as Jauhar, who Nitya described often as his best and closest friend. While Nitya had a number of very dear disciples, there were only a few people with whom he felt wholly at ease as an ordinary human being. There was never a thick line: he was intimate with a number of disciples, but it must have felt significantly different than simple friendship to him, from the inside. Ultimately, he was a special companion to everyone.

During the Saipa invasion of India, during the late fall and winter of 1979-80, Deb, Peter O, and I, flew from the old Bangalore airport to Delhi, and stayed with Nitya at the Aurobindo Ashram. Jauhar was the Big Cheese of the Ashram, but we hardly had a chance to talk with him—he was almost always closeted

with Nitya, who left us to our own devices, which was fine by us, as Delhi was a splendiferous place to explore in those days, with little traffic and clear blue skies, ancient crumbling relics of former ages poking up all over.

The first story in the second part of *In the Stream of Consciousness*, *When the Seed Matures* (reprinted in Part II for convenience) relates a trivial and perfectly natural incident that catapults Mr. J into a new and unanticipated life of spiritual dedication, inviting us to contemplate the role such accidents play in our lives.

Deb amplified the point and invited us to offer similar examples from our own experience. She wondered how the effect would be changed if Mr. J didn't care so much about his appearance, or if the yogi in the newspaper had been someone else. What if J's internal seed wasn't yet mature enough to heed the call, or it happened at a different time of his life? She asked what it would mean if the incident hadn't happened at all, would he have found his way to the same guru by some other means?

Bill thought the shoe-wrapping newspaper was like the Taoist idea of the 10,000 things, essentially nothing in itself. He cited physicist David Bohm's theory that in a global or universal sense there is a network of influences operating, meaning that there was an actual physical connection between the cobbler and Mr. J. He added that the most important factor is that J was ready to be influenced, however it came about.

Deb commented that there is an unfolding beingness we're all a part of, and it contains reciprocity. Jan seconded the idea, affirming we're attracted to and by that beingness, and it means we have a conscious role to play in joining up with our opportunities. We took this idea up later, but it is the essence of the matter, after all. Part II includes part of a poem by Tony Hoagland that provides a vivid image of how the tide of being and our longing for meaning and participation work—really, play—together.

I'm the note taker these days, so I didn't say much, but I might have mentioned the picture Deb and I saw by "accident" in a

newspaper in Portland Oregon in 1970, of Nitya and his Bhagavad Gita class. It's almost the identical story to Jauhar's, except I didn't care quite as much for my appearance. I have shuddered all my life to think what my life might have been without the rocket boost of Nitya's influence. In my mind's eye, in those days, though I didn't know it, I was crossing a razor's edge suspended in nothingness, ready to plunge off to my doom on either side, and he guided me to stay on the narrowest of paths to a solid footing, many years later.

Three cheers for newspapers!

Several of us argued initially in favor of conscious willpower in producing the quantum leaps that have blessed our lives. It certainly *seems* like we are doing things on purpose. Yet brain imaging has convinced neuroscientists of what the rishis discovered ages ago: our sense of purpose, our keenness to do things, our very interest, comes at the tail end of extensive processing going on unconsciously. We couldn't function at all if that work happened in our waking mind, so it takes place out of sight. It's much more efficient that way! Once the plan is laid, it is implemented by stimulating conscious emotions and desires, and yes, pride and all sorts of iffy added attractions. Whatever convinces us to go along. The ego has to think it cooked it all up, to avoid possibly fatal stumbling and doubts. It's convinced, and so charges ahead. Which isn't a problem, unless it hasn't gotten the right message to begin with....

Moni talked about how important a civil service job is in India, which Americans might not realize. Many Indians dedicate their whole education to trying to obtain those posts. It's a conscious goal and a high achievement that takes years of hard work. It's a kind of academic "Nobel Prize," and there's nothing humble about it. She imagined Jauhar as having matured to a place where he no longer enjoyed the politics and tediousness of managing a bureaucracy, thinking, "This isn't it... there's something missing." That's what got him ready for what she called his Dis-illusion Day.

Moni herself had grown up working to become a lawyer, and did. She had no expectation that she would go off with a Swami and abandon her career, but it happened, and she never went back. Somehow these events are a natural (and most fortunate) part of our growth.

That's right: Nitya taught that we are more like plants than we might imagine. The seed has in it a program that unfolds for its entire existence. The trajectory is altered by environmental factors, but the plant's drive is to express itself optimally, in line with its genetic proclivities.

This is actually a most consoling concept. Because our waking mind is not privy to the whole program, we feel baffled and anxious about the future, and those types of emotions interfere with the smooth development of the psyche. We are taught to do our duty and follow the rules laid down by our "betters," and some day we will become what we should be. All such ideas lead us away from our dharma, our natural expression, though they likely do bear a nodding resemblance to it. What's omitted, to our loss, is freedom of choice and creativity. Conformity is preferred. Well, we can learn to do without creativity, and once we give it up we are merely repeating the iterations of the past. It drains the joy from life, but reduces the need to think, which, if your thinking is filled with anxiety, is a relief.

Moni recalled that Nitya told her that everything that happens in our life was meant to be. Certainly everything we register is mysteriously coherent with our existence, as we have often spoken of before.

In the last few classes we've been pondering what Nitya calls the selectivity of consciousness, and it is now widely accepted as the way the brain works as a reducing valve. Our senses register a vast amount of data, which could easily immobilize us if we didn't select the most useful and relevant vibrations and disregard the rest. Part of the brain's genius is to ignore almost all the input, and pick out the little bit that is crucial to us. What matters has a "shape," too, and it accords with our evolutionary development.

The overarching challenge of being human is to counteract the repressive dictates of the societies in which we have to live, to allow at least some measure of serendipity to find expression.

We began to share examples of how the impetus of our beingness found resonance in the world. When it came to Andy, he insisted that life is jam-packed with this. It really is a continuous, everyday process.

Nonetheless, Nitya was speaking of those rarer moments when a life-changing breakthrough occurs. Entering a loving relationship is one of those moments. Andy told us of how his latest came about. He was in Mexico at his second home, and Oregon poet Kim Stafford was holding a poetry workshop in the city. Kim is a close friend of Johnny Stallings, who has a house next door to Andy. Andy planned, quite firmly, to *not* attend the workshop. He's an artist, not a poet! The night before it opened, he woke up in the middle of the night and thought, "I'm just being a jerk. I should go to it." The next morning he got a call from Johnny saying he should definitely attend, and right after that he got a call from Kim, saying *he* thought Andy should attend, and he was so convinced of it he was going to let him join for free. So that afternoon, Andy trundled down to the hotel where the workshop was taking place, knocked on the door of the meeting room and it was opened: by GAIL. The rest is history.

Andy added that all the reasons we give for what we do are not right. I agree: we make them up. Our conscious mind is accustomed to explaining what we are doing to keep people from snooping and sneering at us, but it actually *does not know why we do what we do*. We are basically lying all the time. Plausibly. Just telling tales tailored to the temporal tenacity. At least to ourselves, we *could* admit that we didn't know, and be grateful for the inspirations, but more often we lie to ourselves as vehemently as we do to others. Except maybe to the boss, where it's really important to have a really good story ready to hand.

Andy made another good point: all our explanations feature us as the main character. Well, come on. It's only natural. But we

could figure everyone else was the main character in their own stories, and make room for that. We go wrong when we insist our version trumps their version. It might, but we should take a close look first, instead of simply assuming we are right and they are not.

There were several good stories shared, of life changing accidents, but I'm not going to recount them. You had to be there. But you've had many yourselves. You could send me one of those, and I'll pass it along.

When the Seed Matures is a wonderful illustration of the role of luck, also called chance or fate, in our life. Luck is an aspect of the Absolute, according to the Gita, and you can see how our discussion gives added depth to this verse:

IV.22) Satisfied with chance gains, unaffected by conflicting pairs (of interests), non-competitive, remaining the same in gain or no gain, he remains unbound in spite of having been active.

We can imagine from this how being dissatisfied by chance gains leads to bondage, because we start constructing rigid parameters to get what we want. Okay, we've all done that as part of growing up, but now we're being offered an additional access back to our souls: revering the role of chance or luck in leading us to the awesome lives we've lived, as satisfying as practically any in history.

Jan agreed that our agency is unconscious, that we don't really know how it is coming to be. Steven added that there is a global change happening, always, and we are swept along by it. When all is said and done, we should do everything we can to manifest good for the planet. His way is keeping an open heart, being sincere, and desiring spiritual mentorship, and it has served him very well. He is in good company in our little band of compatriots.

Part II

Although I've already sent out the stories in a bundle, I may as well reproduce them in their specific classes, for ease of reference. It's good to reread them.

When the Seed Matures

Mr. J. qualified himself for civil service in India. He was posted as the collector (equivalent to county commissioner) in one of the districts of the state of Gujarat. Very soon he earned a name as an able chief executive of the district.

He sincerely believed his external form mattered as much as his performance. One day one of his shoes needed mending, so he sent it to the cobbler. When it was brought back, the shoe was wrapped in an old newspaper. As he unpacked it, his attention was caught by a picture of Sri Aurobindo. Underneath was a thumbnail sketch of the seer, poet and philosopher.

Mr. J. read the brief account given in the paper, and in less than a week he found himself sitting at the feet of Sri Aurobindo as a fully dedicated disciple. Even now he's the administrative head of a big educational unit in the Aurobindo Ashram.

What role did the cobbler play in changing Mr. J's life?

* * *

Tony Hoagland's poem Not Renouncing ends with an image of the two threads we were teasing all through the class:

I stood in one garden,
looking over the fence at another.
I thought I had to change my life or give up,
but I didn't. Year after year

they kept growing into each other:
the dreamed into the real,
the real into the dreamed—the two gardens

sending their flexible, sinuous vines,
their tendrils and unbuttoning blossoms,
ceaselessly over their borders.

Part III

Some gleanings from my chapter XV Gita commentary are closely related to our discussion:

How is it that the gunas blind us and turn us into fools? Foolish humans go by the appearances created by their sensory system within the theater of their mind's eye, but the wise can additionally intuit the animating principle behind the surface play. They know that what they are seeing is an imaginative display projected within their own brain. Instead of retaining the detached wisdom of our inner "transcendent Lord," who knows nature to be a conditioning factor only partially perceived by the mind, foolish people mistake their cerebral passion play for reality itself. Once this happens, they are likely to be trapped by their convictions, and what they see is then further warped by the funhouse mirrors of the gunas, sattva, rajas and tamas, cycling between differing degrees of obfuscation.

Everyone lives in a universe of their own making, and yoga is the process by which we can pry ourselves free of it, to some degree at least.

The key issue is whether your efforts are directed toward liberation or toward defending your bondage. We can easily delude ourselves that we are putting energy into honest self-examination when what we're really doing is rationalizing our faults or subtly steering ourselves away from them.

One of the ways a yogi must strive most diligently is to discern and disarm the subterfuge by which our internal self-protective mechanisms undermine our conscious intentions.

Part IV

Dips took my invitation seriously, which I very much appreciate:

Talking about happenstances...and newspapers!!!

Around 2005 (before stumbling on your Classes)

I had just left my alcoholic husband and had decided to move forth on my own and shifted into a tiny studio apartment. Being a free-lance Line Producer of Adfilms, I had days without work till a project fell in my lap, and so was quite broke too.

Thus I was miserable, lonely, depressed and had an over-thinking Mind which was running riot down negative dead-ends. I really really was looking for a form of meditation so I could calm my Mind somewhat. I tried chakra opening classes, I attended some talks given by another Guru Nityananda (who since has fled the Country 🙄), attended some Art of Living classes, danced at a Sufi session...but none of them seemed right.

One day having read up on yoga and forms of meditation, I thought of trying 'tratak' to concentrate the mind.

"One such method is called *Tratak*, literally translated, it means to gaze. Tratak is a tool to remove the disturbances of the mind. It is a simple yet powerful tool. A practitioner of Tratak has to fix his/her eyes on an object. This object can be the flame of a lamp, candle, a *Shiva Linga*, or a black dot on the wall.

This technique makes use of the underlying connection between the mind and the eye. This connection has been well documented in clinical studies. When we fix our gaze on a particular object, without moving our body, our mind becomes stable. This is the

underlying principle of Tratak which helps in reducing stray thoughts. "

The only little spiritual piece I had in my home was a tiny tiny figurine of a sitting Buddha.

Placing my little Buddha in front of me, I fixed my gaze and started practicing the above. I was so low that all I did was keep asking for some light to show me a way & help me get out of my misery. I probably did this for 4-5 evenings. Of course my Mind did not see much change.

Very shortly thereafter though, on a weekend, I read a little advert in the papers saying there was a FREE day trip by bus to a Vipassana Centre 4 hrs away from Bombay and we would be back by the evening. I had some vague idea about Vipassana, that it was a meditation retreat and that an acquaintance had once mentioned that it felt like a prison and she had run away in 3 days. This I thought was a good opportunity to check out the Centre and the living quarters and whether I could manage the 10 days. Having tried so many diff methods I decided to be open minded and not have any preconceived notions and thus took the trip. I found the place very green and pleasant and the room a tiny cell but very clean. So having read the Dos and Don'ts, I didn't attend the introductory talk about what the method was all about and decided I would surprise myself once the Course started.

Of course I surprised myself in many ways but the most gob-smacking was that this was the pure 8fold teachings of Gautam the Buddha!

And I have been going for a retreat at least once a year since then.

AUM

love n rgds

Dipika

PS Have always wondered if my abject misery n being down at the bottom of the pile... got heard by that mass crafted idol... I

connected this link much much later... but I think it did, though
haven't shared this with others.