



# Hillside Retreat

When I retired to live in the Himalayas

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## Part One

For most people, the idyll of my house, hidden almost at the top of a hillside covered in trees and bushes would be a perfect place to hide from the ignorant masses that lived in the valley below. And that is why I had chosen it. I had been staying in a hotel in the town below and happened one night to look out and up at the hillside. There was nothing but darkness, except for one dim light shining near the top of the hill. I sat and wondered who might live there and how they managed. The next day, I had my driver and guide, George, in the room and pointed out where the light had been coming from. He studied the hillside for a while and then said he thought there must be a road to the top from the other side, because this side of the hill just didn't indicate a path or road. He went off to investigate amongst the locals.

After a light lunch, we set off to find the mysterious house and although George couldn't understand why I would want to interfere in the life of someone else, rather than enjoy the pleasant bars and restaurants of the town, and in this heat, he knew that once I had an idea in my head, it would have to be investigated. It was quite a long journey that took us on a road that skirted the hill. The road upwards, when we found it, was no more than a dirt track, clearly hardly used at all, with bushes growing on the track itself. We almost reached the top when the track ran out, so we walked to the top and over to the other side; the side that looked down to the town, tiny now, where I had sat last night.

The house was a one storey largely wooden affair with a pointed roof. It was in disarray and seemed deserted. We were cautious because we knew someone lived here and didn't want to offend them by strutting around as if we owned the place. There was no-one at home so, bit by bit, we explored the house all around outside and then even poked our heads in through the door and looked inside. There were two rooms in all with two shuttered windows in each. It was in a derelict state and clearly had no modern amenities like electricity or drains. The owner,

when he eventually returned from god knows where, was a very old man, well wrinkled, and with a wispy white beard. He was bent over a bit with age but was quite mobile and almost sprightly if you used that word generously. He was not at all surprised to see us although I imagine he had very few, if any, regular visitors.

A very generous old man, he sat us down on two rickety chairs and served us cool water from mismatched cups. He took a sip from his own cup and then waited for us to begin whatever it was we were here for. George, better at the local lingo than I was, and much more diplomatic, cleared his throat and then told the old man about my experience of the night before, when I had seen a light on the hillside. The old man listened and then got up and went briefly indoors. He came back with a lantern, a large one with a brass base and a large bulbous glass top. He simply put it down on the ground and waited again. This, you see, is the difference between nosy westerners and the simple people from these warm climes. He didn't understand why I should be interested in his light, and at that moment neither did I.

The upshot of all this was that we talked with the old man and he told us of the people who had lived there and had died off, one by one, until he was the only one left. He had a brother who lived about seventy miles away but had no money to visit him, and sat in his old house on the hill waiting for god to make his mind up.

Surprising George, I said that I was looking for a house like his to get away from people and live a calm and reflective life. I thought the old man would be insulted and be very attached to this house in light of all the people from his family that had lived and died here, but instead he became reflective. We sat in silence for a few moments and then he broke the stillness by saying that I couldn't buy a house here because the State law said that only nationals can purchase property in this area. As an outsider I could only rent or be a guest of someone who already lived here. I was surprised that he knew the law, and relieved because I didn't want to buy anything anyway. The old man said I

should come back tomorrow so he could have some time to think. So we left, and I for one was feeling a bit uncomfortable. I hadn't asked him if I could rent his house, and no-one had mentioned money. And in any case, where would he go?

Later, at a local bar in the town below the hill, I reflected that the old man knew more about me than I did. We had hardly talked at all about my renting his house and yet he seemed to know what I wanted. He had said he would think about it; think about what? There was no offer made or spoken about. And yet, at the same time I felt that I already lived there.

## Part Two

I was settling in very well. I had made a list of the things I needed; a very comprehensive list. George hired people to carry the things from the end of the track, over the top of the hill and down to the house. I had definitely not skimped on anything and had a massive supply of mainly tinned foods, dry pulses and flour, lots of airtight boxes and tins to store things in, and half a truck load of bottled beers. I even had a small petrol generator with several cans of petrol. Furthermore, I had told George that I wanted a weekly supply of fresh foods delivered and he agreed to do it. I even ordered him to find me a cleaning lady to visit every month and give the place a really good going over. This was definitely not a Robinson Crusoe type of adventure; it was properly five star luxury escapism.

The old man had been very keen to get away and said I should pay him six months rent up front. That would allow him to do the things he wanted to do and leave me without concerns about rent for a while. I asked him why he was so keen to get away and he told me that my idea of old age and attachment to this house was primitive. I was suitably impressed by his answer and reflected on my assumptions for a long while afterwards.

I had two rooms, clean and fully stocked with everything I could think of. I had someone make me an outdoor shower that was really a frame that held a bucket high up and had holes. The toilet was going to be difficult but I made arrangements, primitive but effective.

I fell into a routine quite easily; I suppose it's not difficult when there's nothing pressing that must be done. I woke at about 4am, and anyone who knows me will not be surprised by that. I made a cup of sugary, milky tea on my two gas ring cooker complete with a large gas canister, and enjoyed the early morning songs of the various birds all around. The sun came over my patch of life at about six and warmed me quickly. I had sun all day, until about 4pm when it disappeared over the hillside behind and above me. I cooked eggs in a very buttery pan and enjoyed them with sliced bread. One problem with living here was that the locals never understood the art of good bread baking. Since only tourists ate bread, it reminded me of the sort of bread you could buy in England in the 1970s; pretty firm, tasteless and prone to going mouldy after a few days. Anyway, it was either this bread or no bread.

After breakfast, I would lay out some fruit for mid morning snacking; always bananas and then a choice of apple, pomegranates, peaches and similar stuff. I would take the bucket and walk down the hill for about five minutes. There was a small emerging stream there that didn't really flow but was more than a drip. I had to wait for several minutes until the bucket filled up and then made the harder uphill journey back to the house. Then I pondered on life, wrote a poem or two, or just sat in the warm sunshine thinking of nothing in particular.

Lunch was a deep and meaningful process of sifting through lots of tins of stuff and choosing a lucky winner. This was the most difficult decision I had to make in the whole day. Whilst I did this crucial decision making, I would pop open a bottle of beer and let it help me make the choice.

In the afternoon, after a big belly nap, I would do some gardening. I decided that I would only tackle one bush per day, because there was no rush, and decided to clear an area in front of the house. My idea was to develop a big open space where I could set out a table or something like a picnic area. The house itself was small but with all this space around it might feel more substantial.

The evening started whenever I wanted it to and consisted of drinking lots of beer and opening more tins. The only difference between the lunchtime tins and the evening ones was that I was more elaborate in the evening, mixing and matching food and experimenting with unusual combinations.

On the odd occasions that I wanted company, I could walk about ten minutes along a simple animal track and then sit on a rock where I could watch the town below going about its business with tiny ant-sized people scurrying along to somewhere and back again. George came once a week with fresh supplies and usually stayed for several hours, drinking beer and passing on news to me. I did have a radio and listened to news as well as music, so George's contributions were not really new to me, and often contained frivolous and pointless detail. I did enjoy his company though. Later, I discovered that it was possible to get TV programmes by siting a satellite dish higher up the hillside. I made sure that the dish was out of my sightline and had a very long cable running down to my house. The TV was good company at times when I wanted more than ant-sized scurrying about.

One of the major events was when George brought me goat meat with the weekly supplies. I enjoyed cooking it outside on a sort of barbecue and it lasted for three days or so. I was always pleased at the thought of plenty of beer, and a tray full of good meat. It made me feel complete.

### Part Three

I talked with George about the picnic area that I wanted, after I had cleared several bushes from in front of the house, and he said he could sort it out. I was always impressed by his ability to handle any request, even when sometimes, having said it was no problem, he conveniently forgot about it. Those were probably the times when he actually couldn't, or didn't want to do the task, but he never said no to anything I asked. He said that his friend Sharma sold wooden planks and even did some assembly work himself. He had juniors who were trained to make beds and furniture so this sort of thing should be easy for him.

In the end, Sharma built a sort of long table, and that was it. It was about ten foot long and three foot wide, and he even supplied six chairs. I didn't know why I needed six chairs, or even why they looked like indoor dining table chairs, but I was easy and just went along with the idea. George and Sharma mostly ignored me and made what they thought I wanted. I was happy for them to do what they wanted because at least they were making something; I wouldn't have known how to do it myself. Although the chairs were well sanded and polished, the table was mainly rough wood. Sharma said that it would be outside and the important thing was that it could cope with the wet weather if there was any, and the chairs, being better quality could be moved indoors if the weather was bad, or when the monsoon came.

At the end of the project we all had a picnic on the new table. George brought extra goat meat and Sharma said he would be the cook because he rated himself 'first class'. I dragged out a crate of beer and we started with a good long drink. Sharma said he hardly drank at all but I later discovered he could drink anyone under the table; the table in fact that he had built! After a few drinks that loosened us up, Sharma started the cooking and also told me about himself, as if this was a pre requisite if he was to eat my goat meat.



I have five children, he began, four daughters and a son. They are all at school. My wife stays at home, and I have the furniture store. I have two apprentices; one is my brother's oldest son.

I opened another bottle of beer and prepared myself for a long session of family matters. In fact, I didn't really listen to him, but instead became engrossed in his cooking methods. He opened a bag and took out nine small steel containers of his spices. He put the meat in a pan and washed it with water from my daily bucketful but used hardly any. I had noticed this difference between us negligent westerners and these locals; they valued everything so much. Next he removed the meat and chopped up several onions very finely and put the pan on a gas ring, making sure to regulate the heat very finely.

Well, do you?

I had missed much of his information and now found myself being stared at inquisitively by my two friends, waiting for an answer. I drank from my glass of beer and said I had been distracted by the song of a nearby bird. They wanted to know about my progeny so I told them about my three children.

The meat, when it was ready, was better than I have ever made myself, although I rate my cooking skills as 'first class' as well. In addition to my hunger, which must have made my tasting skills very keen, I was also a bit drunk. We ended up admiring the table and the marvellous skill of Sharma to have built it, and then stared helplessly around randomly, in our various drunken stupors.

I remember George saying they should get going, and I told him to sober up first. George insisted but couldn't get out of his chair, and Sharma was equally incapable. We all decided that we needed a nap and whilst I went indoors, Sharma spread himself on the table after half clearing it. I don't remember where George passed out but when I awoke, the night was in full swing and my two friends were gone. I

opened up another bottle of beer to help me come round and chewed at some of the meat left over in the pan.

#### Part Four.

Often things are not what they seem, and I found out why Sharma had done the job on my picnic table. George knew about my spiritual activities and had spoken to Sharma. He had mentioned nothing at our first meetings and then at the picnic table inauguration party. He was testing me out, I suppose, on what sort of person I was. George let slip, probably deliberately, that Sharma wanted some guidance about a curse that had been placed on him, and I cottoned on immediately the linkages that had led him to me. As a rule I don't do any Tantric stuff anymore because it drains energy and makes me very tired and also because knowledge that a Tantric is in the area spreads like wildfire. People always want to know about material things like their business, children, exams and stuff, and all of these things are irrelevant to me. I am not interested if someone's son is going to marry or have children, or whether someone is going to be rich. These are material things and do not interest me at all. That had been one reason why I had left my last apartment and why I had been wandering in the hills, and why eventually the house on the hill had got my attention. I wanted to be alone with my spiritualism.

Anyway, I told George I wasn't interested and put such an angry inflection in my voice that he realised he had gone too far. He had been the one I relied on to pack up my last apartment and to keep quiet about my interests. In these parts though, the locals are very superstitious and seek out people like me for answers. So we just sat and drank some beer and listened to the birds preparing for the night to come. They were singing quite loudly, even through the sound of blood pumping through my ears in anger. But my anger doesn't last long and soon George and I were chit-chatting about irrelevancies again. The frivolities of the everyday are safe ground.

Sharma must have heard about my reluctance but he came to see me anyway, with George, and deliberately avoided any mention of spirituality. He had got used to a weekly visit, to get away from his business and probably his wife and children, and came when George did, to deliver my fresh food. We always had a good time, drinking, eating and joking about. But you know what it's like; once there is an 'elephant in the room', or in our case an elephant sitting at the picnic table, and so I relented.

I agreed to tell Sharma what he wanted to know under pain of a curse from me if he spilled the beans of my spirituality to anyone else. His eyes went wide with that threat and he solemnly agreed, although I know that this kind of secret is very hard to keep hidden.

It was getting dark and we three friends were sitting at the picnic table with fresh bottles of beer.

First of all, Sharma, I can tell you that you have not been cursed. I shall tell you why. You know that when you are with your wife you can stand very close to her, kiss her, and even make love and be completely comfortable with her close to you. Ask yourself why you cannot stand close to another woman without feeling uncomfortable. There has always got to be a certain distance that you will be to another woman and if you get closer than that distance you will start to feel uncomfortable, and so will she. This isn't just with you but with anyone. Even if a man stands closer to you than you expect, you start feeling uncomfortable.

The reason for this is that we all have energy that we emit from our bodies at all times, even when we are asleep. The energy radiates about 16 inches from your body. When you stand next to a person who is about 32 inches or more away from you it is comfortable, but if they or you get closer then the energies of both people begin to touch and intermingle with each other. Because the energy of one person is different from another, they do not match or attract, and therefore

start a feeling that wants you to take a step back or 'repel' the other person's energy. When you got married, it took a while before you and your wife became very intimate even though you may have had sex the first night. That is just tradition. But over time you begin to tune into each other's energy fields until you both are completely compatible.

When someone places a curse, the person identifies with something of yours, typically a front door, or if they have been in your house, they might remember an object, a vase or similar. It is common for people who have been cursed to find red chillies, coloured string, or leaves in a particular shape on their doorstep. Close your eyes and you can easily picture these items. They are used to make it easier for the person to send negative energy to you. The person who has cursed you will then concentrate on the items or your front door and begin transmitting negative thoughts to that image. It takes a long time to build up the negative energy but eventually it gets strong enough to affect you. You don't know why, but sometimes you get a strange feeling of uneasiness. It doesn't matter whether you clear away the stuff left on the doorstep or move the item that has been identified in your house because the actual object is irrelevant; it is just a place where the negativity can be sent.

You pass out and in through your door regularly every day and that is an ideal place to pick up negativity. In the end this negativity upsets you although you don't know why you are so upset. It can lead you to make mistakes in business decisions, or rows with your wife, but whatever it is, it does the job of leading you into failure.

Let me tell you how miracles happen; just as a curse can allow someone to send negative energy, so the thousands of people who visit a particular temple take positive energy with them. It collects and becomes huge. When someone knows how to harvest that energy, or usually manages it by accident, all the energy boosts that person's life and can solve complicated problems in a moment. It is like having

thousands in the bank; when you know how to make a withdrawal, you are rich!

Now I will explain why you haven't been cursed. I can see your energies by using the methods I have. When I see someone for the first time I automatically look to their aura, or energy levels. It's no different to the physiotherapist, who having been trained, cannot help but study the way a person moves their arms, legs and body. I know you haven't been cursed because if you had been you would be carrying your own energies but also some energies that are alien to you. I can see no negative energies or energies that don't belong to you. So, if you think you have been cursed, you are wrong. The problems, if you have any, are not caused by that.

We fell into silence then, and quietly drank our beer. There was some meat still in the pan, so I got up and brought it over to the table. We all ate and chewed at bones. Delicious!

## Part Five

I knew that the curses session with Sharma wouldn't be enough for him because it never is. People always come back with more questions and in the days following our session I began to feel the weight of impending doom to my hill retreat lifestyle. There is one certainty with people and spirituality; no-one can keep it to themselves, and Sharma knew full well that my threat to curse him if he spilled the beans to anyone else was just a gesture. Nevertheless, I kept to my daily routines and began to feel better, day by day. Many people have asked me why I ever agree to have these sessions, and surely people will go away and disregard my claims if I didn't speak or cooperate with them, but the truth is that this is a gift. It is not mine to give or withhold.

The following week, George and Sharma turned up as expected with all the fresh food goodies I always looked forward to. I knew the next session was inevitable when Sharma additionally produced a coconut;

it has many symbolic qualities in spiritual matters. Ignoring the obvious coconut, I produced lots of bottles of beer and we fell into our routine. George filled me in with news from the town below and the increasing prices of lentils and even rice. These staples of the poor were causing unrest in the town but what could anyone do about it?

Instead of the goat meat I enjoyed so much, George had brought two chickens, ready killed, plucked and prepared for the pot, and this time George declared himself the chef and got on with the meal. Now we had three 'first class' cooks! I was quite happy to just sit there and be fed.

Ask me then, Sharma. I decided to get to him first so that we could solve the issues nagging at him before the party could be spoiled by indecision. He was a bit surprised that I had read his mind and after a long gulp of beer and a bit of composure, he asked me.

You said that you can see the energy levels around me and other people. I believe you but can you explain it to me so that I can see them as well or at least prove to me their existence? Don't think I am questioning your skills or expertise; it's just that once before you said we should never believe anything and that belief is a sort of cheap way out. You said we should either know or not know, and should always doubt everything.

I began my session. Well, Sharma, you're right. You should never believe anything. You might not be able to prove it scientifically, but even then you should not believe anything unless it seems right to you, until it seems right inside your very being.

The ancients said that the whole world was just energy, and modern physics agrees with that. When you go into molecular science, everything is atoms, and within those, protons, neutrons and electrons. But we won't go in that direction. I can prove to you quite easily that there are energies all around us; we just need to have the

correct equipment to capture the energy. For example, if I turn on my radio, I can listen to lots of channels. Where do they come from? When I turn on the TV, the same is true. Where are the programmes coming from? They are not inside the TV. The TV is the correct instrument to capture and interpret the signals of energy and turn them into the programmes we watch. And there are millions of mobile phone signals passing around and through us at this very second. Otherwise, how would people be able to communicate with each other?

People are stupid. They are quite willing to accept that the air is full of energy signals because they can see the end result, but will not accept that there are other types of signals as well, just because they cannot immediately see an end result. Anyone can see what I see, but you have to put in the time to learn and tune in to the signals. I have nothing that you do not have as well, or that anyone else has. If I want to play the piano, I would need lessons. If you want to experience the energy, you need to just tune yourself in, like I might tune in to a radio station. I know nothing of your business because I haven't put in the time and do not have the motivation to learn. You cannot see signals for yourself because you haven't got the time to find out.

But even you have experienced some of these signals. There are many times when you must have thought, my heart says this but my mind says something else. We are trained to follow the mind in such events, but I always trust my heart. That is the first step towards recognising these signals. If you use the mind you will never realise any of these signals. It's like using the radio to try to see a TV programme. It is simply the wrong piece of equipment. Spirituality comes from the heart not the head and so using your head is entirely irrelevant in spirituality. There is an even more powerful centre, the life centre, which you can use, but that discussion is not for now. You would not understand. So, Sharma, have I answered your questions?

The chicken was very succulent and we ate in silence, except for the slurping of the hot broth, thick with onions and tomatoes, and the occasional crack of a bone as we bit and sucked the goodness out of every morsel of the unfortunate birds. There is a certain satisfaction you get from such simple activities as a pan of meat, a stack of beer, and a few good friends, that you cannot get from anything else. Simplicity is bliss.

There was only one matter left to discuss that day. I told George and Sharma that from the next time we met, they would have to come up with discussion topics and not me. I wanted to know their stories, or the tittle tattle of the town, rather than my spiritual stuff. We agreed to that with another drink and some burps of satisfaction after our excellent meal.

#### Part Six

We were settled indoors as a huge rainstorm had established itself over the skies around us. This was the first time we had sat inside and although it was pouring with rain outside, we were feeling very warm and stuffy. The door was open and it was fascinating to watch the earth turn to mud and the raindrops fell so hard that there was a permanent mist across the ground rising to about two feet high; and to add to that, speaking was impossible as the rain rattled down on the roof, gushed down from the gutters and splashed around outside. So we just sat there, the three of us and enjoyed a new experience. Well, it was a new experience for me at least; I can't speak for my chums. Our picnic table bravely stood and took the beating from nature, determined to front out the storm.

After about an hour, the weather relented and we were left with just a dripping from everything; the gutters, tree branches, twigs and leaves, the picnic table, and a fine mist of the remaining cloud. Today, we cooked just inside the front door and George commented that the house could do with a porch. Sharma's professional eye immediately



began to scan the wall and I could feel fast mathematical calculations going on inside his head. It seemed that there was a certain inevitability that occurred at that moment and none of us ever questioned the decision even though it hadn't really been decided; only commented on. My only role in this matter was to provide the funds, and since I did have quite a bit of money tucked away, I was happy for my friends to grasp the idea and turn it into reality. In the end, Sharma said he would send the boys out to measure up and get the job done. I had never seen his apprentices and looked forward to it.

Sharma turned up the next day with his team of two apprentices and was a changed man. Gone was the frivolity of our weekly bash; today he had his professional hat on and he even refused a beer! The two lads measured up and spoke formally to Sharma, their boss, and he barked out orders and instructions in a dialect I couldn't understand. In the end, with a shake of his head and a mop of his brow with a red handkerchief he told me it would take two days. He didn't mention money and I had already decided to let George do the negotiations; I was very poor at haggling. The team was gone without telling me a start date, but I didn't care. It didn't have much to do with me. Once they had made their minds up both George and Sharma usually just got on with it and I was happy for them to do it.

After that interruption, the rest of the day was a bit mixed up because I had fallen out of the routine. I reflected on that and wondered if in my own way I was just an automaton, like the folk in the town below. Was I really a free spirit, or was I just being automatic in a different way to everyone else? I spent a lot of time thinking about that. It reminded me of an experience that still makes me question things to this day.

I had been in hospital to have a reversal of an ileostomy operation. The original operation had been carried out to rest my intestines and bowel. Basically, it is a procedure where the tube leading from the

stomach to the small intestine is cut and guided out of the body. I had to wear a bag, and as food waste was passed out of the stomach it would be collected externally in the bag instead of going into the intestines and then onto the bowel. So I didn't go to the toilet for two and a half years!

In the hospital after the operation, the aim was to be able to go to the toilet and as soon as that was achieved I could go home. There was a whole ward of men in the same position as me. Since none of us had passed food waste down there for a while it might take three or even four days before we could go to the toilet successfully. That had made me think. The whole aim of our lives right at that moment was to put food in at the top and then pass it out at the bottom. Nothing else was important. And really, life is that simple, isn't it? We pile on lots of other stuff; marriage, children, careers, money, houses, etc. But really life is so simple. It had made me question why we strive for everything under the sun. Is any of it worthwhile? Are we simply living a pointless existence and simply fooling ourselves? Massive questions!

## Part Seven

The two apprentices who turned up a few days later spent most of the first day lugging wood over the top of the hill and stacking it outside the house. I realised that I couldn't offer them much hospitality because I didn't have soft drinks. I would have to put that right. So I shared some tinned fruit salad with them. I could have given them fresh fruit but thought they might appreciate something new to them; canned fruit; ironic or what? I also realised that I had fallen for another regular trick. Sharma had said two days, but I realised that was just fantasy and it would probably take nearer two weeks. Sharma was just like George in these matters; promise everything but do whatever is possible within their own timescale. I didn't really mind because I wasn't living to a timetable either, but it did make me smile that these people didn't think it was important to promise something and then

just let it slip, as if that was the natural way of things; which it seems it was.

For the next week or so, I spent more time away from the vicinity of the house because I didn't want to interfere with the apprentices and because I wanted to have more privacy. I spent the time walking in places I had not walked before, and realised that I had spent the majority of my time previously just in and around the house. Except for fetching water and the walk to the rock to watch the town at work, I hadn't in fact explored anything else. It worried me briefly but then I thought; why should it be necessary to explore? Anyway, I did do some, not because I wanted to but because I had to be away from the house.

There was really nothing except bushes and trees, with the occasional find of colourful flowers which I sat and admired. I never understand why the first reaction of some people who see wild flowers is to kill them by pulling them up to display in a vase at home and watch them slowly die. It reminded me of a Haiku by the Japanese Zen man Basho. He was walking along and saw a beautiful flower and wrote the Haiku describing it. I can't remember the poem now but it was very beautiful. He was writing about the flower of a weed that most people pull up and throw away. The question was why is the cultivated flower seen as beautiful when here you have a flower that no-one has planted or watered, dancing by itself with nature? The more I wandered the more beauty I saw in the plants and trees. And I noticed that the trees grew into shapes that gardeners would see as ugly, and prune them back, and remove certain branches. I often wondered if it was just me that saw beauty in the wildness of nature or if I was missing something that everyone else seemed to see but not me. Although I suppose tended lawns and flower borders do look nice as well. Should I just stop questioning then and let everyone get on with their lives? Even out here, where I had escaped from the madding crowds, the questions keep coming. Does that mean the questions are valid, or is it just habit that makes me ask the questions?

On turning another corner of this hillside, I saw a tumble down house, or large hut; it was difficult to tell what it had been. It was made of wood and its walls had caved in until it had collapsed into itself and looked like a jigsaw waiting to be spread out in the grass and re-constructed. The wood was rotted through and there were no signs of a previous occupant. I stood and wondered about my house. Someday I would be gone and the old man I rented it from would be gone as well. Would anyone care to speculate on who had lived there. In fact, I hadn't really thought about who had been there before me, except for the discussion that first day with the old man, so why should anyone in the future ever wonder about me? I was getting too involved and so, reminding myself that I was a Zen man and a Tantric, I turned and headed home to my exuberant comforts.

A bottle of nice beer and the shade of a friendly tree made me feel much better and I even spent some time watching the apprentices working on the porch. I fell into a half sleep and dreamt I was in the Wild West, an old man snoozing on the porch waiting for the buffaloes to thunder by in their millions. When I woke with a start, I thought back to my favourite movies. I love Westerns and reminded myself to ask George if it was possible to get some old films on DVD. Then I remembered I would also need a DVD player. One thing leads to another.

## Part Eight

As inevitably as night follows day, we had to have a porch inauguration party. It ran the length of the house and stuck out about four feet, perfect to put out the chairs under. There was no floor to it, just the hard earth below our feet, but it felt perfect to me. George had done the dealing with Sharma and I thought the price charged was a fair deal. I tied a ribbon between two of the four upright wooden poles holding everything up and invited Sharma to cut the ribbon and formally open the porch. It was a grand affair; Sharma, swelled up with

pride, gently cut the ribbon and we sat down to celebrate. Then I asked George if he had the sign. Sharma didn't know about it and was really pleased when George unveiled it to name the house itself as 'Hillside Retreat'. We didn't have any tools and so for now, rested it against one of the uprights with a view to nailing it on later. Sharma hadn't invited the apprentices to the party; something to do with his seniority or something. I gave him some money to give to the apprentices as a thank you from me. And so we popped some beer bottle tops and dived in.

George became a bit melancholic after a while and I asked him why. He took a long sigh and said that he had had lots of dreams when he had been younger but most of them had come to nothing. I opened up another beer for him and thought either the beer would get to him first to stop him, or otherwise, I owed it to him to listen. He said that all he had ever wanted was a simple life like mine was now, but people kept involving him in aspirations and ambitions until he fell into line with them and started playing the game of life. He had been married to the daughter of a local farmer and she had big ideas. She wanted a car for herself, a diamond ring, and fancy clothes. He had worked hard and tried to make her happy but she had been a bottomless pit of greed and wanting. She had never been happy and he eventually left her. They had no children and she even blamed him for that. He spread his arms wide and asked me if it was his fault. I told him that none of it was his fault, even though I didn't know. All I knew was that he was a fine friend of mine; I could stake my life on it. The rest of the day was real male bonding stuff until we all agreed that we would be friends forever, and to hell with the world!

## Part Nine

Inevitably the day came when my first visitors arrived. It was in the late morning when two women arrived over the hill and into my oasis. I didn't need any introductions; I knew who they were. It was a mother in law and a daughter in law. The daughter in law wore a veil to

completely cover her face except her eyes. It wasn't because she was a Muslim, but because of anonymity, although anyone who knew the mother in law would know who the veiled one was. The mother in law postured as if to speak but I raised my palm and beckoned both of them to the chairs waiting under the porch. This had happened to me so many times that it was second nature.

The inability to produce a child, hopefully a son, has many causes and if the cause is not spiritual, I always recommend they see a doctor. Most cases are medical in some way and I never fake a claim to make people happy or appease them. I only deal with the cases that are genuinely spiritual in nature.

I took the two women a glass of water each, a symbol of purity, although I also had a bottle of dilute to taste orange, a leftover for the apprentices from weeks before. People expect symbolism in these sorts of meetings. They drank whilst I turned away and walked as far as my cleared area allowed and then I breathed my exercises to prepare me for the session. So far no words had been spoken by anyone and often words are not required until the diagnosis. I felt the energy of the daughter in law whilst my back was turned and looked inside at her energy levels and aura distribution. If it was a spiritual issue for her, she would have energy blockages in certain parts of her body, most likely between her stomach area and below the heart centre. Then I turned and returned to the porch and sat down. I had to gesture again to the mother in law to remain silent because her words would be irrelevant. I indicated that the daughter in law remove her veil and she did so, revealing very bright and alert brown eyes.

Looking over her body I recognised two things immediately. One was that she had been a man in her last life. People often think that if a woman is beautiful she must have been a woman for several lives. This is untrue and the beauty of a woman several times born is different from the sexual beauty that is exhibited by a woman that has just become one from previous male incarnations. Secondly, I noticed that

she had a blockage which was very dark. I see auras in black and white, not colour, and hers was very dark, indicating a trauma in earlier life. I couldn't tell, however, if this blockage was causing her infertility.

I got up and moved a spare chair to about fifteen yards away and then asked the mother in law to move there. She was a bit put out. This is also normal because the mother in law always thinks she should be at the centre of things and is the most important person. I don't put up with idiocy and would have asked them both to leave if she hadn't complied. She did move but showed great disregard for me.

Then I sat next to the daughter in law and asked her questions. I already sensed the problem and it was confirmed in hushed questions and answers. The mother in law would need fine audio equipment to hear our conversation! Ha! She had been subject to a forced marriage five years ago and had a bad childhood before that. She had secretly been taking some drug or other, made from flowers and leaves, after intercourse to stop pregnancy and had even hurt herself to stop it when she was unable to get access to the drugs. Her blockage was spiritual but not in terms of her fertility; she was perfectly able to conceive. She needed help to unblock her childhood memories and come to terms with her marital issues. I told her I could help her with those matters but whether she stayed with her husband or not was up to her and not spiritual at all.

Her case was typical. The vast majority of infertility cases have nothing to do with spirituality. But I felt sorry for her blockages because she was like a bird in a cage; beautiful but trapped by circumstances. She just needed to fly and be free. This society, however, does not recognise such simple things especially for women. I told her I could give her a mantra to help with the blockages, and other matters were up to her. She agreed but I emphasised that her mother in law and no-one else either, should know what was going on or what mantra I had given her. She nodded and agreed.

Then I went over to the mother in law and lied to her about everything, telling her that her daughter in law had blockages that I could help with that would open up her ability to have children. It would take at least nine months of treatment with mantras. I said nine months because that is the magic number for inception to birth and people buy that easily. After nine months they could try for a child again. Until then she should not have sex.

I had saved her from legal rape for nine months and during that time I would direct the mantra to her blockages. I took the daughter in law inside and gave her the mantra. Then they both left after the mother in law tried to pay me for my services. Because my skills are a gift, I can never accept payment in money, although I have previously accepted food as a gift. I told her to donate the money to a charity for children. She thought greedily that a donation to children's charities would help her to be a grandmother. I also asked the daughter in law to return in one month's time.

It is very important to understand what a mantra is. People think it is important to repeat the words of the mantra but that is entirely incorrect. The words are only there to remind someone how to breathe. The secret to a mantra is to breathe it and so energise the body or part of the body that it is directed at. One simple mantra is Om Nama Shiva Om. If you simply repeat it you might as well repeat Coca Cola or some similar phrase.

The Shiva mantra has eight parts to it when it is translated into breaths:

Onnnng

Na (lower and very short)

Ma (then higher and longer)

Shi

Va

A

A (variable pitch)

Onnnng



The Om is actually oh..... with an ng at the end rather than an m. The oh..... lasts for as long as your normal breath and the ng is added right at the end.

Anyway, you can see from the description above that the easiest of mantras is actually very precise and that is why you have to hear it from a Tantric before you use it; otherwise it is just so much hot air.

I watched the two women disappear up the hill and then opened up a bottle of beer and had a good drink, at the same time wondering how long it would be before I would have to leave my home yet again.

## Part Ten

A story came to me that evening about a mystic called Kabir. Lots of rubbish has been written about him recently as people try to make him into a religion, and in fact there is officially a religion based around him today. He was a very poor man who lived in a village with his wife and children. As his prowess as a holy man spread, he was visited by more and more people. He was a very generous man and never let anyone leave without giving them a meal, however basic it might be. His wife even complained that their children were going hungry because he was feeding the visitors. But what really got him was that he no longer had any time for his own practices and so contrived a devilish plan.

Kabir went to the town and bought a bottle of whisky. Then he linked up with a local prostitute and went around the town, seemingly in a drunken state, showing off his girl. Word spread like wildfire, as you would expect, and people stopped going to see him, thinking he was a fake. And so his family life returned to normal and he was left alone to follow his own spiritual practices.

I was also in a dilemma. I wanted to stop this before it started and for one thing I drank too much that night and forgot to eat, and had a terrible next day. One thing that people don't understand is the sheer

strain suffered by Tantrics. It is very hard. And another thing that I know people think is; why has a Tantric got to lie, as I had done to the mother in law? Well, for me, the most important thing is the spiritual well being of the person I see. I don't care how the deal is done as long as the person has a solution. The mother in law didn't need any help that I would want to give her but the daughter in law did. And truth is irrelevant in these cases as long as you don't lie to the person who needs your help. The mother in law, quite frankly, can go and #### herself.

In the morning I found myself in the dire straits of a huge hangover, and so I drank two bottles of beer for breakfast to calm the pain. Time seemed to slide and the next thing I remember is George shaking me awake. He said I looked ill, as I spied him through one half open eye and the pain wracked me through the eye and into my head.

After a while I came round a bit and told him about my visitors. He shook his head in disappointment, although he was probably the blabbermouth who had let the cat out of the bag. He asked if he could cook anything for me but I just told him to bring lots of beer; today was essentially cancelled. I didn't even notice that Sharma had come with him until a few minutes later, as he sat with a Cheshire cat smile on his face.

My chums tried to cheer me up and it did have an effect, especially when I threw up dramatically and then felt much better. I told them to make anything to eat they wanted and they did; a special meal of baby buffalo meat that they had brought with them. Even in my stupor, I enjoyed this new experience as I had never had it before. The smell was fabulous and I even managed to keep some of it down.

George told a story that had all three of us in stitches, about a shopkeeper in the town who for some reason or other had been chased down the main street by his wife who was wielding a frying pan. It was hilarious because he kept running and begging for mercy at

the same time. No-one knew if she caught up with him and tomorrow he was going to be very embarrassed by everyone who knew him.

## Part Eleven

The next valley to the west of here is a tourist destination, with lots of Europeans travelling and even staying for long periods. I had decided one day that I needed to update some of my supplies, CDs and books and similar and so asked George to bring the car so we could have a day out. Most of the everyday things I needed could be supplied by George, but when it came to Western home comforts, clearly I needed to go myself.

It is very strange that you can live in this valley and hardly anyone from outside the area visits, whilst the advertising techniques in the West can propel another valley, almost the same in every way as this valley, into a mountain adventure playground. I have previously lived there myself and noticed that everything is twice the price and there is less and less space for ordinary people to live because they can make more money by converting their homes into guest houses and don't need to do any other work at all. They just sit in shacks, out of the way, and get paid handsomely for tourists to live in their homes. I am not sure about the rights and wrongs of that but nevertheless, that is the way it is. And some of the displaced locals even get jobs in the restaurants or larger hotels. Who wants to maintain a traditional culture when you can earn real money? I suppose the higher principles of conservation belong to the rich people who themselves undermine the very things that they wring their hands to save!

We set off bright and early for a journey that 'as the crow flies' is about 40 miles, but the road has to follow the contours of the hills and so the journey is really about 60 miles. After so many months in my retreat I was pleasantly impressed by the traffic and villages and the everyday hustle and bustle around me. We arrived at about lunchtime and struggled to find a parking space. Eventually we got in to the town

and I went straight into a music store that would grace any high street in the UK. I bought a bit recklessly, I suppose, but ended up with twelve CDs of various types of music. I also managed to bag a DVD collection of Westerns including those by my favourite actor, Clint Eastwood. I smiled as I imagined how George and Sharma would enjoy Spaghetti Westerns!

There is a very good German bakery here and after the poor attempts at bread baking elsewhere in this region, I bought lots of real bread, bearing in mind I would have to finish it before it went off. There is also a cake shop next to the bakery and I treated myself and George to a huge slice each of carrot cake. The portions are the biggest I have ever seen, and I have never seen anyone empty their plate. In fact the shop has a supply of boxes so customers can take their slices away when they finally admit defeat.

Suitably fortified, we went on through the tourist shops like there was no tomorrow and bought all sorts of small items; things that might not be useful but give comfort when spread around the home. Some candles were purchased as well as healing oils, but I didn't buy any incense sticks because these were for tourists; I could get the real ones locally and at about ten times less money. Just before we left, after I had bought shampoo and soap and hygiene related stuff, I remembered that we needed a DVD player, if we were going to enjoy the Westerns, and George said he had seen a shop earlier that looked like it might sell that sort of stuff.

We left the town like shoppers on Christmas Eve, fully loaded and all spent out. George stopped at a bar down the valley and we relaxed with beers as we watched the afternoon slip into evening. Then we returned from this madness to the tranquillity of Hillside Retreat, which felt even more tranquil than normal after our day out. I always felt less inclined to travel and more secure in myself, knowing that the tourist areas were so close if I needed them. Whilst I avoided the crowds, I did have a sense of ease knowing that things were close at

hand. And the best thing of all was that I had my oasis when I wanted to shut all the madness out.

I asked George if we would need more petrol for the generator if we were going to have our Western cinema nights and he said it would be better to run those evenings off a car battery and said he knew what equipment was required to set it all up. So I left that to him. We had brought some fried and hot chicken portions from a place on the way back and now sat at our picnic table and relished them with the regulation bottles of beer.

## Part Twelve

Sharma had never seen a Spaghetti Western before and so was very excited. On the day when George was due to visit with the supplies, I had told him to come later so that we could all enjoy the film in the evening together, and so we gathered at the picnic table with the TV at one end and lots of supplies. The beer was standing to attention in rows, the goat meat had been cooked and the shiny DVD player was waiting for the signal to start shooting. The excitement was childlike and even I was wound up although I had seen 'For a Few Dollars More' lots of times.

In the end it was brilliant. Unable to contain himself, Sharma spent most of the time on his feet, shooting from the hip and feeling every bullet personally. He had forgotten all about us and was as much an actor as Clint Eastwood was. He swigged his beer like the characters in the film, careless and, unlike the actors, dribbling it down his chin. At the end of the film he could only walk with a wide swagger and looked at us in that sideways 'go for your gun' sort of way.

The introduction of our film night was a resounding success and I showed Sharma the covers of the rest of the films in the DVD box set. He said it was the best film he had ever seen and wanted to know when the next one was due. George had been less excitable but also

agreed it was a brilliant film. So, not only were we drinking and goat meat eating chums, we also shared a love of the Spaghetti Western.

### Part Thirteen

One morning, I had another visitor. Again, I knew the problem before anyone had a chance to speak because it was a woman alone, with another veiled woman standing higher up the hill looking down. When you get this combination it is always about an abortion, with the chaperone standing away for fear of bad karma. Even though they had both travelled together, at the point of interaction with a Tantric, the chaperone will never approach.

I went through the routine of gesturing her to sit in a place where the chaperone would be able to see everything, and I took her a cup of cool water to drink. I left her for a few minutes to compose herself after the journey, and then sat near her. I told her that she should ask just one question and that I didn't need to know the details. She asked in a very brittle voice if abortion was murder.

I told her: we should not use words like murder. Every time we do anything, we are killing something. Even when you pull up a potato you are taking its life. If you pick a flower you are killing it. If you cook meat, it has been killed first. Even the water you have just drunk has had microscopic life in it, and on your walk here you have stepped on and killed insects. Every act you do involves killing in some way.

Life and death are intertwined. They are inseparable. You have been made pregnant against your wishes and a life has been placed in your womb. It is your decision whether to keep it or not. Yes, if you decide to have an abortion you will be killing the baby inside. Be in no doubt about that. But there is no right or wrong about it. You don't ask if it is right or wrong to eat the potato. So why is a different sort of life more important? Ask a mother which of her children she loves most. She will not be able to say because in their own way every child is unique. It is

humans who have decided that a potato's life is worth less than the life of a human. That is incorrect. In God's eyes all the creations are equal.

I looked at her aura whilst she digested my words and saw that she had very clear, virtually flawless energy flow with only a suggestion of very light grey areas. These are irrelevant in spiritual terms because they sort themselves out. Then I continued.

You must make your own mind up. I will give you a mantra and you can use it to help you. Follow my instructions and repeat the process I will give you for seven days. Then you will know in your heart what the correct decision is for you. Do not ask yourself repeatedly after that time because then your mind will come in and keep changing your decision. The heart centre will only ever give you one answer and you should take that as your guide.

I indicated for the chaperone to come down, and now that the job had been done she did. I gave her a cup of water and asked the pregnant woman to follow me into the house, making sure the chaperone could see her friend but not hear the mantra. The mantra I gave her was a short repetitive one that makes the breath short and tugs at the stomach. It pulls energy first upwards and then pushes it downwards into the groin area. It highlights and emphasises the energy between her womb and her heart centre, an important relationship in these matters.

As usual the chaperone tried to pay me but I declined. I told her that there was a man who sits at the river bank in the town, begging, near the square market. She should give the money to him, without saying any words.

After they had gone I reflected on the Western view of abortion that seems to concentrate on the progress of the foetus. It seems that people think it is acceptable to kill a baby if they think it is not yet at a

point of being able to feel, or resemble a human. I have always thought that this view is ridiculous. I am not opposed to, or for, abortion, but there must be a simple realisation that abortion means that there is killing involved irrespective of the stage of progress of the foetus. I bounced myself out of these thoughts and decided to listen to some music from my recently acquired CD collection and chose some mindless country and western tunes that saw everything through love tinted glasses and promised eternal love if only she would accept him for who he was.

#### Part Fourteen

The problem with being from the West is that a person gets used to having anything that his heart desires. We were sitting at the picnic table after a long and hot afternoon which was now beginning to mellow into early evening. The beer and chicken had done its job and I had let my belly out to wobble and enjoy itself. George and Sharma were equally at peace with the world when I happened to say that I hadn't had fish for a while. Now, George had been getting me the fruit and vegetables that were in season and that was fine; that's how most people in the world live. Fish was not really a part of the diet here, particularly because we were hundreds of miles from the ocean but being from the West, my palette had led me to say what I said. Had I been in the UK, I could have rushed to the supermarket and been eating fish fairly immediately.

George screwed up his face and pondered, whilst Sharma just looked puzzled. Moments elongated into longer ones until George said that there was a lake about 30 miles away. We could have a day out and get some fish. I said that I had never fished and the other two said the same. George said that it wasn't necessary to fish yourself; the locals would catch something for you. And so it was decided that we would have a day out at the lake, the name of which I can't remember now.



We set off a few days later, all three of us. That was the first time that Sharma had left his business behind to join us. The drive down the valley was beautiful, as hills fell away to reveal fields and the colours of farming. The occasional ox cart and the increasing numbers of bicycles showed us we were entering the plains and in no time at all, we were parked up at the lakeside. George hired a boat and it came complete with a skipper cum fisherman, and we went out over a smooth and calm stretch of water. I left George to discuss our requirements for enough fish to grill and feed the three of us and he returned from a discussion that six medium fishes would do the job. It meant nothing to me because I couldn't define medium; was it sardine sized or dolphin?

I recalled to my chums the story of when I had gone out in boats before, especially when I was the guest of the Indian Army in Kashmir and we went out on Dal Lake. For you who don't know it, Dal Lake is the lake on which all the romantic Hindi film songs are filmed, or were until it became too dangerous because of the civil war. George said he'd been out once on a speedboat, and Sharma said he couldn't swim. In fact, as it turned out, none of us could swim but we didn't let that bother us. We were sailors of the seven seas today, at least in our imaginations. George reminded us that we needed to get some fresh limes on the way back and we three put that thought in our heads for later.

The fisherman was brilliant and was catching fish on his line nearly every time he cast out. It was as if the fish had been made in a factory; they were all virtually the same size and shape. I don't know what they were called but they were silvery with a hint of pink, about twelve inches long, and quite slim. The fisherman guaranteed that we would never taste better fish than these. We were out for about two hours and the serenity and silence of the water was so relaxing.

The skipper put the fish in an iced polythene bag and placed that into a polystyrene box, to keep them cool. He said the fish would remain

fresh for several hours packed like this. And so we set off back to Hillside Retreat, picking up fresh limes and other vegetables on the way. George said he was a specialist cook when it came to fish, although we later found out that he had hardly ever cooked fish before. But we didn't really care. In fact we were becoming very carefree generally. The fish was a bit burned on the outside but very succulent inside and the sharpness of the limes contrasted well with the delicate taste of the fish, eaten complete with heads and tails.

It was just turning into evening when a stranger came to our retreat, a man of about fifty, dressed in traditional clothes, looking a bit bedraggled. George recognised him and introduced him as a trader from the town, Ahmed. I welcomed him and tried to hide the beers, in case he was a devout Muslim, but it was a futile attempt because our picnic table resembled a brewery open day. George told me it wasn't necessary because Ahmed had been known to take the occasional drink and so I reversed my policy and invited him to enjoy a bottle of beer.

Ahmed said he was sorry for turning up like this but he was desperate and had heard of the Tantric that lived on the hill. I asked him what it was that bothered him and he said it was the ghost of his uncle that was troubling him. I asked him to tell me the story but then stopped him and said that he might want to speak just to me rather than in this audience. He said it didn't matter to him and so I waved to him to start.

His uncle had died about a year ago, being very well off, but not leaving a will. Most of his wealth was tied up in businesses and a cousin had taken them over. No-one really minded until a few months ago when Ahmed had started having dreams that his uncle wanted someone else to inherit the businesses. The ghost told him that the businesses were going downhill with this cousin in charge. Increasingly, the dreams were becoming more regular and now he even sensed a presence during the day.

I told him that I needed to think this over and could he come to visit me tomorrow. I could see various blockages in him, especially the typical male blockage at the heart centre, but I also sensed the influence of someone else, not a ghost, on him. I asked him about his family and we had a bit of a chat. For me, this was deliberate and designed to glean information from him but also to let me scan him a few times for other energy points and blockages. I told him that he had lost a son some years ago, and that he had also lost some money on a speculative business deal last year. As usual when I tell people about their past, he was suitably surprised by the revelations, and after a moment of gasping, he asked me if his son was in heaven. I told him that his son was safe and happy.

Ahmed went as suddenly as he came, mumbling about seeing me tomorrow. I turned to my chums but the moment had been changed forever. They were looking at me in a funny way and I realised what it was when George asked me how I knew about his son. I said the information was just there, and I noticed it, and spoke about it. Sharma asked if I knew anything about him and then I knew the evening was over. I edged around the discussion and then said I was tired and maybe we should call it a day. I escaped into sleep.

## Part Fifteen

The problem with ghosts and spirits is that they have been given a bad press. There is nothing frightening about them. Spirits are simply people who have died but for some reason cannot move on. This might be because of a sudden and unexpected death when the person then does not know they are dead. I have moved many people on from this position simply by communicating with them. The only thing to remember is never to tell the person they are dead because they will not accept that. It's just like moving on a drunken person who has temporarily lost their way home. There is no point telling them they are drunk. Ask them who they are and steady them on their feet and

tell them which way to go. Often that is all it takes, and is a simple process.

Some are a bit more difficult, like the family of four that one night appeared at my flat where I lived previously. They were ghosts. They stood in the corner of my living room for three nights. They may have been there during the day but I couldn't be sure. And just put yourself in my shoes; you can't simply get up from the sofa and tell them that you are going to bed because it is your time to go to sleep! And although they won't stop you, could you go to bed knowing that there were four people standing in the corner of your living room? They were a father, a mother, a girl of about eight and a little boy of about six. I stayed up for three nights with them but couldn't get anything out of them. And although it appeared that I would not be able to help them, they still stood there waiting. After three days they disappeared and it wasn't until about seven months later that the answer came to me. Then I re-called them to me. The name of the man was Bariam, and he had been thwarted and rejected by his family when he married his wife. They had all met a violent death together. I knew they had died together in any case, because they were together each time they appeared to me; they couldn't move on because they were tied to each other and to Bariam's family, but had been rejected. I eased them on to their next lives although I knew that they were all going to different places.

The other type of lost spirits is like Ahmed's uncle; they have something in the world that they are attached to and this keeps pulling them back. In fact I knew immediately that Ahmed's uncle wasn't the one who was troubling him; it was much simpler than that. It was his wife who was filling his head with nonsense partly to recover the money lost in the speculative deal and partly because of her ideas of personal grandeur if all the businesses were in her hands. This is always a huge problem for a Tantric; separating the real spiritual stuff from the mundane and greed led aspirations of the material world. Ahmed's problem was that he was quite meek, and the real driver was

his wife. I told him to see me tomorrow so I could make up a suitable story for him to go away with that both suited his wife's aspirations and solved the ghost issues for him, which were just a subconscious construct.

I made up a story and got rid of him when he came to see me. Really, I should write up a bank of made up stories and simply delve in and pick one out. People often think I am a bit harsh, but my real interest is spirituality and not the nonsense of the everyday world. About one in ten of the people who visit me are really suitable candidates for my consideration and the rest should know better or go to a fortune teller who will appease them with tales of a tall dark stranger or some similarly idiotic fiction. The only thing that did bother me was that Ahmed had made no spiritual progress in this lifetime and the dark blockage below his heart centre showed me this. I could have helped him at a personal level but, quite frankly, I didn't care, or have the inclination to do so. He was not a case I cared to intervene in.

## Part Sixteen

Being a Tantric is not a choice once you have become one. You have the choice of following a path in life or not, but once you get past a certain point you can never undo what you know. The Tantric is like a receiver that is always on and scanning as an open channel. Whatever comes within reach is there, like it or not. And that is why I can often sense spirits. Anyone can do it, but most people build high walls to defend themselves from the world and live through a tiny window that is their life and includes their family, job and such. I am open and it is easy both to receive everything that comes in that is good, and that which can destroy me as well. So, as I have my own private retreat, I am safe only in name really, because I can see things thousands of miles away as easily as something in my hand in front of me. And there is no choice either about responding; you have to if it is required.

And so, one morning a spirit came to me. Someone called My Choudhary had died in the last few days, I don't know exactly when, and I could sense his spirit and a message he wanted to send to his wife. He had lived in the town. I called George who came quite quickly. I asked him to ask Mrs Choudhary to come to see me, and asked George to use his car to bring her if she didn't have her own transport. I had a message for her. George was surprised because he wondered how I had heard of Mr Choudhary's death. I told him not to worry, and as he left, I began my preparations to meet the woman.

George returned empty handed and told me that she didn't know of me and wanted to be alone. I thought nothing of that and returned to my daily routine of relaxing. It didn't matter to me if she came or not; I had done my part of the job. I created a little box in my memory and shoved in all the information. It's a bit like a filing system in an office. Sometimes there are hundreds of little pieces of information, or mantra's given out, that can sit there until they are required or until they rot away and disappear. An example of this was the little box created for the daughter in law who kept aborting her babies and had come to see me. A little bit of me kept her in mind all the time, to reinforce the energy of her mantra to transform her energy blockages from negative to positive. So whilst her case was 'live', Mrs Choudhary's was now 'filed'.

George asked me how I knew about the death in town and I simply told him that it had come to me. He asked me what death was and I said that death is the easiest question to answer of all. He asked me to tell him, so as I was already semi prepared for Mrs Choudhary who hadn't turned up, I diverted that energy to answer George's question. I said:

Imagine you are driving your car and suddenly it breaks down, what about you? Are you dead? He answered no he would still be very much alive unless it was a fatal accident. I reminded him that it was only a breakdown and so he said he would still be alive. Exactly! The body is

like a vehicle that transports you around. You are not the body but over time people have become used to thinking of themselves as the body. Just as the driver is separate from the car, so you are separate from your body. Just as a car can break down and be repaired, so a body can be ill and be repaired by the doctor. There comes a time when your car is so old and decrepit that you scrap it and get a new one. And so it is with the body. There comes a time when it is beyond repair whether that is because of old age or an accident. The spirit simply leaves the body and finds another womb. Simple or what?

How do you know, asked an excited George? I told him that I had died twice in hospital and had experienced death first hand. I also knew about some of my past lives and have written about them. I then told him that I already knew where I was to be born next time but I was not prepared to talk about that to him. George was amazed and wide eyed because I had never been so open to him before and I realised that perhaps my exuberance had been too much. I asked him to keep all this to himself; even not to tell Sharma. He promised but it was like a sieve promising not to leak.

## Part Seventeen

We had another Western movie night. This time it wasn't a Spaghetti Western but a film called The Gunfighter. It's the story of Jimmy Ringo, famous for being an outlaw around the time of Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp. The story was about the outlaw trying to go straight but everywhere he went, his reputation was there first and some young gunslinger, wanting to make a name for himself, would be waiting for a challenge. It wasn't like the last few films we had seen and I think Sharma was a bit disappointed because there wasn't enough killing and pointless destruction. It was very powerful though. At the end of the film, having avoided a challenge in the town he was visiting, and about to leave, Jimmy Ringo is shot in the back by a young cowardly gunslinger. Just before he dies, Jimmy Ringo asks the sheriff to let the young man go and let him find out what it is like to meet gunslingers in

every town who want to fight the man who killed Jimmy Ringo. A story with real meaning!

At the end of this film, instead of Sharma walking wide and loose with his shooting hand ready on an imaginary gun, we were all reflective. I told them that the film was a good example of the circles of life and karma. They didn't know about the circles of life so I felt obliged to tell them, especially since I was feeling a bit guilty for showing a film that didn't completely satisfy Sharma's bloodlust.

Every time we make a decision we start a circle. A simple example is breakfast. You decide you are hungry and that starts a process. Once you have had your breakfast and solved the issue of hunger, the circle is completed and disappears. But some circles are clearly not so simple to complete; circles of marriage, children, jobs, and friendships are but a few. A circle can last for most of your life, and in some cases, for many lifetimes.

In one lifetime, a person might start thousands of circles and also have thousands brought to this life from that last several lifetimes. The aim is to complete as many of them as possible before death and so carry less weight of burden into the next life. The circles are not of equal value and many are so light you might never notice them. But some are very heavy and form major barriers to success in the next or subsequent lives. Examples of heavy burden circles are murder, rape, and actions that cause pain and suffering in a major way. The weight comes from the negative energy created by the victims. You can easily imagine the negativity heaped on by someone who has been raped. But if a person is murdered and has all the circles of their life to complete, part of that burden will fall on the murderer who will inherit the circles. An example might be the pain of a murdered man who wanted to see his children married and to see his grandchildren. All that and more has been taken away. Also the negativity created by the dependents left behind will add to the burden until the murderer has little chance of any good karma for many lives. Some say for seven



generations, but I am not sure of that. It is a very significant number, seven, and that is another story.

And so, you see, Jimmy Ringo was carrying a huge burden of bad karma from all the killings he had committed. Even though he was trying to go straight, he still had to carry the pain inside. When he was killed, it was an opportunity, because now much of his burden has been picked up by the young gunslinger that shot him. Sometimes death can be a great benefit. If no-one had shot Jimmy Ringo, he would have carried all the memories of his misdeeds for the rest of his life and then carry the burdens of bad karma with him into his next life, and so on. He is a winner, by being shot dead!

Sharma cheered up much more after my explanations and said he enjoyed talk like this. He even went on to venture we should have talking sessions like these but I remained non-committal. Never mind that Sharma, I said, tell me about the karma of the chicken we have just eaten. He was thoughtful; or should that be empty-headed?

## Part Eighteen

One morning, I was returning up the hill with my bucketful of water for the day, when I saw, sitting on one of the chairs under the porch, a man, dressed in white traditional dress. I had been taken aback when on the very first day, George and I had visited the old man who had lived here and he had not been surprised to see us. Well, the boot was on the other foot now, and I wasn't surprised to see this man. That was strange, I thought, and probably suggested that I was at ease with myself. The man stood up and introduced himself. He had come on behalf of Mrs Choudhary, and brought me some cut flowers, and an intricately woven basket full of fruits. He apologised on behalf of Mrs Choudhary that she had not come to visit herself, but asked me to accept the gifts and invited me to visit Mrs Choudhary in her home. I returned the flowers because I didn't want to be any part of killing

them, but accepted the fruits, although of course they had also had to die to be here.

The problem with being a Tantric is that most people who know about us, are frightened. They think that we are almost devil worshippers, and if Tantra was translated into the Christian religion, for instance, we would be closer to devil worshippers than anything else. In Hinduism, there is no devil, and Tantra comes out of the Hindu tradition and the Goddess Kali Ma, (the Black Mother), especially. There is an element of the darker side, but the world includes darkness as well as light. I remember times when, after visiting Hindu believers, they have had the priest in to purify their homes; they are that misguided. I was wondering why this man had come; whether Mrs Choudhary really wanted to meet me, or whether having refused the original invitation she was covering herself just in case I used my powers against her. I asked the man to take a seat and made an orange drink for him whilst I pondered the invitation.

It reminded me of a story at the time of Alexander the Great's invasion of India more than 2,000 years ago. As the Greek armies were leaving Indian soil, a General remembered that Alexander wanted a Fakir brought back because he was fascinated by these near naked holy men. He asked at a village and the villagers told him that there was a naked fakir living down by the river. The General went there and stood in front of the fakir, lying down and sunbathing at the riverside. The General ordered the fakir to get up, but the fakir simply opened one eye and asked the General to take three steps to the side. The General asked why and the fakir said he was blocking the sun. The General pulled his sword and said that unless the fakir got up immediately and came with him, he would slice his head off. The fakir smiled and said he had been waiting for such an offer, and invited the General to free him of his body. You see, the fakir didn't live according to the rules of the everyday.

And so, I found myself in a dilemma and looked for an answer in my heart centre. I turned to the man and told him to thank Mrs Choudhary for the fruits but declined to go with him to her house. I then asked him to wait whilst I looked around for the item I wanted. I found half a brick, and put a coin on top and gave it to the man. He was bemused but thanked me and returned the way he had come, up the hillside.

George came to see me that evening and brought a message from seemingly a variety of people who were getting concerned about me. Perhaps they thought I was a vulture, sitting on the hillside ready to swoop. He wanted to know why I hadn't agreed to visit Mrs Choudhary, and what the meaning of the brick and coin was. The people of this area are very superstitious and he said the word was getting around that I was a powerful Tantric, not that they would know the difference between a powerful Tantric and an empty paper bag! I said I had nothing to add and so we settled down for an impromptu drink although, in his haste, George hadn't brought anything delicious to cook. So we chose from the tins we had and settled on a tin of meat, acceptable but nothing special. He did try to convince me to visit Mrs Choudhary but was half-hearted because he knew me and knew I was a strong-minded person.

George left after a few hours and said he would have to report back to the friends of Mrs Choudhary, who had sent him. I said that he should just report as he thought fit, and we left it at that.

## Part Nineteen

George contacted me the next morning and said there were a group of people coming to see me. I asked him who they were and he said that certainly Mrs Choudhary would come, and the priest from her local temple. There were also some friends of Mrs Choudhary, and he would also be coming as one of the two drivers. I realised several things right

then, but most of all I realised that Mrs Choudhary was frightened and that is why she was bringing the local priest.

If there is one profession I hate from the depths of my being, it is priests, because they are preaching something that they have no understanding of. All they have is knowledge learned from books, and taught to them by teachers who previously learned from books. They can quote from scriptures but know nothing for themselves. If there is one group of people who can never gain nirvana, it is priests! I hate them because they give people wrong information and false hope. For me they are like errant children and I had never met a priest that I couldn't discredit in a few minutes. They are greedy and soulless, damning themselves and others to lifetimes of negative karma. I will not go on but I could fill a thousand pages easily and still be angry!

I prepared myself for Mrs Choudhary because in the end she was the only one who mattered. After about two hours I saw the first of the visitors coming down the hill. I had adorned myself for the occasion by using a turmeric based mixture and drawn the eye of the OM on my forehead. Well, after all, you have to entertain the audience, don't you? They were about six or seven and I thought about the number of chairs I had; six. Well, I for one could sit on the ground.

The priest was in front and I saw immediately that he was an idiot. He had drawn two parallel lines across his forehead but missed the exact levels at which they should be drawn. In addition, I noticed that the lines were too red which meant he had not used the correct mixture of the ingredients. The mixing of these pastes is a very specialist job and even I don't know how to do it. The point is that a particular mixture awakens the energies around the third eye in men, and is designed to close that energy in women. If it is done incorrectly it is just body art which in itself is fine, as long as priests don't claim or infer that it means more than it is. Behind him, about three places was the only woman, presumably Mrs Choudhary.

I placed the chairs in a line, and washed some cups. I managed to get six in all, mostly mismatched. But that didn't matter; I expected that most people in this group wouldn't touch my cups with a barge pole. I was worse than untouchable to them. I filled a jug of cool water and sat on the floor facing the chairs and waited.

George rushed ahead when they were close and I simply waved him to one side. The nervous callers stood awkwardly by the chairs until I waved my hand generously for them to sit. George filled the cups and offered them around. They all took the cups offered but no-one drank. It made me smile. The Hindu priest started to recite something and so I let him. I didn't know what it was but guessed it was a purifying and cleansing kind of thing. He went on and on, and I sat on and on staring him directly in the face without flinching. In the end he tapered off, and a silence fell. I let it continue for a while and then started.

Mrs Choudhary, I am so sorry to hear about your husband. Although I didn't know him in life he came to me in death.

This created a bit of a shuffle and nervous clearing of throats.

I asked you to come because he had a message for you.

The crafty priest broke in and declared I should say what I wanted to and then they could go. I simply locked eyes with him until he was broken and averted his. Then I let the silence go on until they had all learned a lesson; you don't mess with a Tantric.

Mrs Choudhary, the information I have is personal to you. I would prefer to tell you alone.

We will all hear it, one voice almost shouted.

Is that your decision? I asked Mrs Choudhary

She nodded.

Very well, I said, and composed myself to give the message. Your house is double fronted. When I walked into your house I saw a planter on the left. There is a long corridor on entering your house with one door on the left first and then one door on the right further on.

There were gasps.

At the end of the corridor there is a door that leads into the kitchen and when I went through there, there is another door directly ahead that leads to a small room. When I looked in there, I saw shelves full of vegetables.

By now the panic was rising in my audience.

Please don't worry; there is nothing to be frightened of. I reassured my guests.

Inside the vegetable room there is one wall that is brick and the other walls are plastered over. Working from the bottom row of bricks travel along for seven bricks. Then travel up through the odd brick to the next even one and then again from the next odd brick and to the next even one. That brick is loose. Behind that brick there is a small box hidden. I will not tell you what is in it because it is personal to you. That is what your husband came to tell me. I have told you and now my responsibility is finished.

This is real Tantra.

No-one moved for a long time. The priest had a half frozen smile and Mrs Choudhary was simply frozen. I waited. I sat still until all the people had got out of their chairs and set off. They soon disappeared over the hill and I collapsed onto the earth sideways. I don't know how

long I was like that but when I came round I had a splitting headache. Often, I can have migraines for several days after a real session like that. The unburdening of information can really weaken you. Sometimes I have not been able to get up unaided, and often cannot eat for days. This time I knew that I was finished for a few days but I could get up and sit in a chair by myself.

George returned after about three hours and told me the town was in chaos. No-one knew what to do. There had been a box although George hadn't seen it. George himself was out of his head and so I told him to cool down with a beer and get me a crateful. I was too weak to do much myself. I had to keep stopping him from leaping about and telling me over and over again. I did tell him to make sure no-one came to see me for at least five days except for him or Sharma, and that from now on he would have to be my representative. I would see no-one without an appointment. I told him to tell would-be visitors that I was casting a spell against all visitors who came without an invitation. I thought that kind of threat was enough. In the Himalayas people are very superstitious and hold on to warnings like this one.

## Part Twenty

The next morning George and Sharma turned up early and Sharma was dressed up like I had never seen him dressed before. He was simply in awe of me and I had to tell them both that I was the same person as always. It took a long time for them to settle down and drink beer with me. There was always a space that had never existed before and I had to get angry before they got the message. I told them they were my friends and right now I needed friends because I was weak. They were better after that and looked after me with beer and food. I joked with them about what the townsfolk would think of the Tantric drinking beer and eating meat. They both paused and then laughed uncertainly. I realised it might take a bit of time to get back to the way we were although things could never be the same. I almost went for the

Spaghetti Western option but thought better of it and decided to keep films for later.

George's phone didn't stop ringing because everyone knew that he was the link. I told him to deter everyone and he was as good as his word. Even then, some people will not be told and one man appeared at the top of the hill the next day. I still had the eye of the OM on my forehead and let him approach. He tried to ask a question but I simply answered that he was now marked and he left. In fact there was no mark to lay on, but it aroused the fear in him. I sought out my small tent and all the camping stuff that I always carry with me. Ever since I was sixteen, I have loved hiking and backpacking and now I saw this as a way out. I remembered the tumble down hut that I had seen on my walkabouts when the apprentices had been building the porch and so decided to set up a temporary camp there. It is one thing for people to get to the house but no-one would start exploring the hillside knowing that a Tantric was out there. And I was sure that no-one visiting would dare to touch anything in or around my house; they would be too frightened to do that. So I planned to come and go as I wanted to get supplies, but base myself in the campsite.

This kind of escape is not new and there are examples of this going back thousands of years. Most of the famous temples still have sites placed nearby, but secret from believers and the congregation. In olden times, though, they did it the other way around. They would build a spectacular temple near to the centre of their original base, and the ignorant believers, being materialistic and wooed by their eyes, would think that the new temple was the seat of the enlightened. In this way, the Tantrics could continue with their spiritual lives uninterrupted by the masses of visitors who were only interested in marriage, business, and babies.

And so I set up camp next to the tumble down hut. I erected my simple but effective green two man tent, built a fireplace out of rocks, circular with a small opening at the side for fire lighting and adding



fuel, and took a chair from the house for sitting and reflecting in. I made three visits from the house to the camp site in all and in the end felt safe and secure. I hadn't told George or Sharma about this little plan and was close enough to spend time at the house if I wanted or become the recluse that circumstances demanded. I had enough tins of food for a few meals and planned to spend most of my time at the house. The idea of a bolt hole was reassuring.

Returning to the house I experimented with placing the chair at various angles until I found one that let me look up the hill easily and was near enough for me to slip away into the bushes in a moment, if required. In the end, the first two days were uneventful except for the lone man I mentioned earlier, and I reckoned that it was because the townsfolk didn't really have a plan. The life of a Tantric is really a see-saw affair; no-one likes you at all, but at the same time they are mesmerised by your ability and can't leave you alone.

George and Sharma came after a few days and told me that a delegation wanted to come from the town to honour me. That made me laugh a lot. Honour me out of fear more likely. I told them that I never partake in these kinds of false ceremonies; I hadn't even gone to scatter my own father's ashes in the river when the rest of the family had all done so many years ago. False ceremonies only strengthen people's superstitions and can do no real good. There are many celebrity holy men that appear on TV regularly. They may have had powers once but now they were just like ordinary people because they had dropped the very skills that had made them famous. But for the general public, it is safer and much more fun to have these 'dangerous' holy men safely imprisoned in their TV personas and within the rectangle of the TV screen than have them living free, especially on hillsides, like me.

## Part Twenty One

After the hullabaloo of my session with Mrs Choudhary had calmed down a bit, and all ideas of a celebration fizzled out, there came along a quiet period of time when no-one visited and even my friends George and Sharma behaved almost normally. Rumours were spreading in the town that my session with Mrs Choudhary had been some kind of trick and I was happy for that to take hold; at least it helped me to relax a bit. George had brought some baby buffalo meat again, and this time I was able to enjoy it much more than the last, hangover dominated occasion. We drank beer and joked around. It was brilliant!

In the end, even Tantrics have to compromise. A few weeks after the great revelation of a loose brick in Mrs Choudhary's house, I realised I couldn't have it all. I 'saw sense' as George put it, and agreed to visit the town to speak about religion. Now, I don't follow any religion and I know that religion causes more harm than good in the world, but the locals wouldn't understand my arguments, so I let them call these discourse sessions whatever they wanted. For me they were discourses on important elements of personal spiritual development, and I set the rules of engagement.

The deal was that no-one should touch my body whilst I was in the town, and no-one should trouble me at Hillside Retreat unless they had an appointment made through George. The reason why I said no-one should touch me is that Hindu women in particular, try to touch the feet or body, as a sign of respect. But this done repeatedly, interferes with the internal energies of the person being touched. Additionally, I didn't see myself as a holy man and saw no reason why people should show such respect. One further condition was that I would take questions at the end of each session but the length of each session would vary. I might be there for five minutes or an hour. I would not let myself be put in a box of time, tradition, or frivolity. And so my last condition was that I should not be introduced by speeches from local dignitaries, or as I preferred to call them, fools.

I decided on five discourses and rather than cover them in great detail, I simply reproduce my notes below. They were each attended by about thirty five people, or so, including the local priest.

## Part Twenty Two

The first discourse was on; Free Will or Destiny

The question of whether we have free will, or if destiny is pre-written for us, is difficult to answer only because we frame the question incorrectly. The mind loves to work in an either/or way and this question does not fall into this category. The answer is simple; we have both free will and are guided by destiny. That might sound contradictory to some but it isn't. As an example, we can consider a journey. I can decide whether to go to the lake to go fishing, or to go to the tourist shopping centre. That is my free will. But once I start out on the journey to the tourist shopping centre, my destiny is tied up in the collective whole of all the people travelling around me, and the circumstances of the things like the weather, time of day, and other factors. If there is an accident, then I will be part of that experience but had I gone fishing, I would not have been involved in that accident, although I would have been tied up into the collective destiny of the people travelling to the lake.

In this way we can see that we have initially the free will to decide for ourselves but our every decision is then tied in with thousands if not millions of other factors that then create a whole of which we are just a little part. It is not that simple though. We never make decisions purely on our own. In real life we think of those around us like our partner, children, family and friends, the time, our habits, our dislikes and preferences. So if there is a destiny, it is partly made up of what we have decided previously, and what influences the whole has on our decision making now. Clearly, the less mess a person has in their life, the fewer factors there are and the more our decisions can be our

own. If someone doesn't have a family, or a job, or many friends, then that person is freer to make their own decisions.

The second discourse was on; Your Inner OM

It is important to ask about everything and many people fail in their spirituality simply because they don't question. For instance, there are millions of statues, but a person starting a new business will automatically get a statue that represents good fortune and wealth. That is logical but entirely wrong. Ganesha the Elephant God is a Hindu symbol of good fortune but it is also much more than that. It is like inviting a person into your home because he plays football; you don't bother to find out what else he is until he robs you and clears out in the middle of the night. There are 30 million Hindu Gods and Goddesses (Devatas or Devis) alone, give or take a few thousand, and everyone cannot simply pick one from the top ten and get it right. It is important to tune in to your own Devata or Devi. When I found mine, I had not even heard of her, and it took me quite a while to work it out.

I will tell you how to tune in. Like many other spiritual matters it is fairly simple. The sound of the universe is OM. It should be sung at a normal voice and is sung like this:  
ooooooooooooooooooooooooohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh  
hhhhh...ng. The ng comes right at the end just to finish off the sound neatly and has no other meaning than that. We say OM but remember the ending is really ng. The sound should be sung for a normal lungful of breath and so for some people it will last longer than for others. Then all you have to do is vary the tone of the sound up or down. Do it when you have lots of free time and stop when you get tired. You might have to do it for several weeks or maybe you will get lucky and get it immediately. You know when you are tuned in when you can no longer hear your voice, because the inner OM matches exactly with the OM of the universe and the sounds cancel each other out. That is why there are millions of Gods and Goddesses; because there are millions of varieties of inner OM's. When you can no longer hear your

own voice you will still know you are making the sound because you can feel the vibrations of the sound in your body. Once you have mastered that simple tone, you need do nothing else. Your Devta or Devi will come to you. Remember, the image is only representational because humans connect better with pictures than anything else. There isn't really an Elephant God, or a Devi riding a tiger, but the image sticks easily in the mind, doesn't it?

When you have found your vibration, you will get everything else automatically; there is no need to pray or follow rituals. A Devta or Devi can come in many forms, sometimes just as ordinary people. Just accept whatever comes and remember. Keep reminding yourself of the image you have every time you have a free moment in your busy life. There is nothing for you to do because your spirituality is yours by right, it doesn't need to be earned. This is when your journey begins. This is essentially why you were born; all else is frivolous, but may be fun.

The third discourse was on; 30 Million Gods

How can you expect to know God? It is impossible because if you believe there is a God, then you are an infinitesimal part of the creation and how can such a small part understand the whole? The Hindus got it right when they created 30 million Gods and Goddesses, (Devta and Devis), because then you can simply tune in and understand the little bit that is there for you. It's like a small child left in the cake shop; it can't possibly eat every piece of every cake. But we humans, thinking we are masters of the universe, insist on wanting it all. Don't forget, one small natural disaster lets us know how much masters of our own world we really are. So don't be impatient and don't think you deserve everything; just embrace the part you're in. Isn't that simple?

## The fourth discourse was on; Why Can't You Find God?

The reason why people cannot find God is that in order to find something it has to be lost first. You cannot find something that you haven't lost.

Once there was a little fish. It had heard that there was a great ocean somewhere and decided to investigate. Firstly, the little fish asked a bigger fish who said that this was a question too big for it to answer and perhaps the whale might be a better bet because it travelled far and wide. So the little fish went to ask the whale. The whale nearly ate the little fish by accident. The whale said that he had heard of the ocean and when sea creatures die they go to the great ocean where there is lots to eat and where no-one gets eaten. Other than that, the whale had no more to say except to recommend the little fish to go and see the old and wise octopus that lived right at the bottom, down below. The little fish travelled a long way to see the octopus who told him there was an ocean but it was too much for the little brain of the little fish to understand. He should just trust that one day everyone would reach the ocean which was wonderful. The little fish gave up because no-one seemed to know anything for sure.

One day the little fish was swimming away without a care in the world when it got caught up in a fishing net. The net was being pulled up out of the water and the little fish could only struggle and try to free itself. Suddenly, the little fish was out of the water and looking down and across and saw the huge ocean below it. The little fish realised that it had been living in the ocean already and that the ocean wasn't somewhere else but right here, right now. The struggles of the little fish saved it, as it fell through the fishing net and back into the ocean. It swam with all its might all over to tell everyone that the ocean was already here, and they were already living in it. Of course, no-one believed the little fish, foolish and young.

## The fifth discourse was on; Building A Bridge To Enlightenment

Why do people go to temples and places of worship? The idea is simple. If you radiate positive energy you can create a good feeling. If a hundred people radiate positive energy then the effect is much greater. So, in theory at least, people can gain a lot by going to the temple. In ancient times, temples were built in a particular way with rounded ceilings so that the sounds of their voices in prayer would be bounced back to them by the curved ceilings and be amplified. Most of these temples are gone now. Even their doors were low so that people had to crouch to get in. Today, of course, temples are like fashion shows where we can all show off our clothes and girls can show off their curves to attract a partner, and no-one cares about the reason for being there. Even the businessmen want the priest to hurry up so they can get back to their shops to make more profit.

The bridge to enlightenment has been lost today, but there is no reason why it cannot be re-built. People who transmit positive energy towards a statue or a building are like someone with a bank savings account; over time it becomes larger. People are very small compared with the energies of the universe and anything you can do to amplify your positivity can only help. The leap from you to the eternal is huge and many people cannot do it by themselves. So you need a bridge. That bridge is lots of people investing their positive thoughts in a particular place so that one day, when you need help, you can get it by withdrawing energy from the that place. You just have to make sure the people you share your energies with are as positive as you are, otherwise your positive energies can be cancelled out by the negativity of others.

And so, with my compromise, peace again returned to the town, and to Hillside Retreat. It is amazing how such a small action like passing on a message from a spirit can have such a huge effect on so many people. It always surprises me how little people know and how much a person like me can rock the boat, even when I don't want to. People

really are like frightened children who need some certainties to rely on.

I called George and Sharma and declared a post-madness party. George brought goat meat, and Sharma brought two chickens. We were going to pig out on meat and drink like there was no tomorrow. And to top it all, we had one Spaghetti Western we hadn't seen yet. Go for your gun, Sharma!

### Part Twenty Three

Well, it never rains, but it pours. The mother in law and daughter in law that visited me every month came on time as usual one day. Although I had said she shouldn't have sex for nine months, the daughter in law had become pregnant. If you remember, she had no problems with getting pregnant, but had been eating a plant based abortion potion each time she thought she was pregnant because she had been forced to marry her husband five years earlier.

I can say that I was not surprised by this news because it often happens. The girl, being distraught at her predicament of the forced marriage had been fighting back in this, her only way. Once she saw me, or probably even if she had seen another 'holy man', she decided to relent and put her faith and destiny in the hands of higher powers. It is a common occurrence. And so, the mother in law and the girl turned up accompanied by two young men, carrying all sorts of treats to thank me. As usual there were cut flowers, fruits, coconuts, and a gold chain and ring for me. I told her at once that I would not accept the flowers, and gold is a definite no for me. The fruits I accepted and it is traditional to accept the coconuts, although I didn't know what I would with so many.

The main problem for me was that the word was out again. After five years of being barren, the girl had become pregnant in only a few months, after visiting the Tantric! The truth was completely different,



but why spoil a good story? In fact I couldn't tell the truth without getting the girl into trouble and so kept quiet. From one genuine Tantric act, the loose brick one, to now the ultimate miraculous act which wasn't, I was becoming famous. There are many women who cannot conceive for various reasons, hardly any of them spiritual, but the girl is usually desperate to get pregnant to prove herself to her husband's family, and the family want her to produce a son, to pass on the family name. Even the girl's natural family want their daughter to get pregnant to avoid divorce and trouble later. In short, it is in everyone's interest that the girl gets pregnant. And if there is one person who can make it happen and has 'proved it' well there will be lots of mothers in law putting on their shoes and stepping out to the Hillside Retreat at this very moment.

As soon as they were gone, I called George and told him the bad news. He thought it was great because I couldn't tell him the truth about the girl, but only that she was pregnant. I told him to stop anyone coming up the hill even if it meant blocking the track at the bottom with his car. I had experienced something very similar to this a few years ago when I had broken a Mala of 108 beads that I had worn round my neck, and given seven beads to a girl for reasons other than to get pregnant. People can easily re-write history and she insisted that I had helped her to get pregnant by giving her the beads, blessed by me. Everyone wanted seven beads from me after that, even though they would be of no real use for the purposes of getting pregnant. So I was in a dilemma. Should I give out the beads for the sake of saving my skin or should I just get out of the way for a while?

George came in the afternoon and said it was bedlam in the town, and his phone had not stopped ringing. Just on cue, it rang right at that moment. I couldn't stop laughing at my notoriety, although I didn't really know if I should be crying instead. How can I get out of this one, I thought? George laughed along with me but, I expect, for different reasons. We decided the only action right now was to drink some beer, and so we did. It helped calm us both down and we sat just looking at

each other and smiling at the uncertain future. I was beginning to think that my paradise was being closed in on again, and wondered why I couldn't just keep my hands in my pockets, my mouth shut, and become a silent Tantric.

George came up with a sort of solution. He suggested that I hold another discourse in the town just about how to use spirituality to get pregnant. That would stop everyone rushing up here, and help people. I couldn't tell him that I hadn't done anything to help the girl, but otherwise the plan was good. I could just come up with some mumbo-jumbo and get myself off the hook, and when some of the girls didn't get pregnant I could be suitably rejected as a trickster by the local populous. I told George he was right and he should announce it to the townsfolk. I told him that I would conduct the discourse in seven days, which gave me lots of time to make something up. Then I offloaded some of the coconuts on him and felt even better!

#### Part Twenty Four

I had lots of fun in the next few days and even mentally created a hat called the mumbo-jumbo hat that I put on when I felt that I should be doing something for my discourse. The problem was that, after the joking and laughing, I felt responsible to put out something useful. However, even when there are spiritual reasons for the inability to conceive, each woman's cure is personal and there isn't a generic cure for everyone. There is nothing in fact that can be done in a mass way, except general advice about spiritualism, like positive thinking, and the like. I even remembered the Kama Sutra. People usually think of it just in relation to sexual positions, but it is steeped with spiritual imagery, and certain positions are designed for particular types of sex, including conception. But again, each person requires a personalised programme even then.

The beer wasn't helping me to make up a discourse either. So, just in case, I drank even more but it only gave me a hangover. Sharma

wanted to know what I was going to say in the discourse but I put him off easily by distracting him with beer, meat, and cowboy stories. George was equally excited, and thought that I had solved the biggest riddle of all, guaranteed pregnancies for everyone! Anyway, four days of my seven had passed without a single appropriate thought settling inside me, and telling the truth even crossed my mind. It was only because of the girl that I couldn't tell the truth.

In the end I decided I could only be genuine, even though I had lots of fun with the idea of mumbo-jumbo stuff. I decided that the only way forward was to do a Sadhana, which is a seven day process in which the Tantric energises a particular place. Then I would invite each girl to enter the circle of energy and be blessed by Kali Ma herself. I told George to put the word out that the event would be for women only; one mother in law with one daughter in law from each household. No other females would be allowed; no aunties, grandmothers, single girls and so on. The only exception would be if a mother in law has passed away; then the girl could bring another female relative.

Putting out strict instructions like these heightened the expectations of everyone, and some people from adjoining towns were also getting interested. I told George not to encourage anyone but also not to put people off. I asked Sharma to buy every incense stick in town that was of a sandalwood, or rose, fragrance. He was really excited to be in on the act.

On the said day, I started the session at dusk. There were about forty women in the room and I asked George to pass between them and confirm that they were all genuine mothers in law and daughters in law. Then I asked them to listen very attentively.

You all have your own way of praying and your own idea of God. I want you to pray at your shrines in the same way as always. I am going to hand each of you four sticks of incense, two of sandalwood and two of rose. You should burn first sandalwood, on the first night, which is

tomorrow night. The next night rose, the next sandalwood and the fourth night rose again. Burn them at sunset and do not throw away any of the ash or the end of the stick when it is finished. Take a piece of waste paper, newspaper is ideal, and after the fourth night wrap up all the ash together in one envelope of paper. Include the end of the sticks as well. They should be snapped in two first but not so they break into two parts. If they do break completely into two, don't worry. George will collect the envelopes of ash from you the same night, that's the fourth night, and bring them to me.

In the meantime, I will start a Sadhana tomorrow morning. A Sadhana lasts for seven days and is an energising exercise. I will add your ash envelopes on the fourth night and on the seventh night the Sadhana will be complete. George will arrange transport with you. At dawn on the eighth day you should wear white clothing and no jewellery at all. None of you should wear the bindi on your forehead either. We will all stand near the energised circle and I will ask each young woman to enter the circle, one by one. You will each be given a mantra to repeat under your breath. Then I will ask you to leave the circle before the next young woman enters. Mothers in law should attend but will not be required to enter the circle.

So now, please come forward to accept the incense. Please pay me with the smallest value coin you have. Those coins will also be put in the circle and help with the energising. You can collect your coins on the day and keep them safe at home. But never spend that money. If you need a reminder of what to do, please call George. I have written down the instructions for him and he can help you to remember. Do not come to the hill until the eighth day.

With that I distributed the incense sticks and returned to Hillside Retreat. I had asked Sharma to bring me a live chicken which he had done, and then I sent them home.

## Part Twenty Five

I had already decided that I would draw the energy circle at the tumble down hut where I had set up temporary camp previously, and the next morning went there with the chicken in a box and took a sharp knife and a bucket. When I had cleared the space, I estimated the circle should be about eight feet across. I repeated my personal mantra until I felt the spirit of the chicken would be liberated properly and then pulling its wings over each side and grasping both feet in the same hand, I rested its neck on a stone and swiftly chopped off the chicken's head. Straight away, I thrust the still struggling bird into the bucket and the blood spurted out. I held the chicken over the bucket until the last drop of blood had been liberated and then took a breather. After a short rest I poured the blood slowly out until it completed the circle. I continued to drip the blood until it was all finished. Then I started the energising process with mantras.

The idea is that the circle creates a boundary to hold the energy. I am the only person allowed into the circle and if anyone else tries to enter it, they will be very ill or can even die, especially as the Sadhana reaches its seventh day. One girlfriend of mine ignored my warnings and deliberately put her hand inside a smaller circle I was working on and then told me she was in fact still well and feeling fine. And she was. Except to my trained eye; I saw many black energy blockages appear immediately. I don't know where she is now but I know she is ill. The last I heard of her was that she was on medication for depression and was having panic attacks. Whilst I was working on the same circle mentioned above, a Nepalese woman gave me some purple flowers to put in the circle. She said she knew what I was doing and knew never to put her own hand in let alone walk into the circle completely. She also said she knew the flowers should be red, but she could only get purple ones. She is the only person I know who knows about these things, besides myself, although there are thousands of Tantrics out there who practice as well. This is the only occasion when I accept cut flowers because the representation of death has to be present before the energy transformation. In the same way the

chicken has to die, the incense has to be burned to ashes, and from destruction comes the energy of renewal and birth.

I returned to the house for a rest and to cook the chicken. I needed to pluck it, clean it out, and cook it entirely by myself. Of course, I would also be eating it as well. I didn't have to eat it all at once either; once cooked I could have it whenever I wanted but should not waste any of it. The waste, even the bones and innards have to be discarded according to a process of thanks to the earth and the universe.

I would be returning to the circle several times each day. I would sit in the middle and repeat my mantra over and over, adding tiny bits of energy to the circle until the seventh day, when sometimes it is almost impossible to sit inside the circle because the energy is so forceful. Then I will close the Sadhana and by the time the young women enter the circle they will feel no more than a gentle pressure on their bodies. The circle is then full of pure loving energy. Whether it would lead to pregnancies though, I had no idea. That's not my problem; it's Kali Ma's problem. In any case a deep spiritual cleansing can do no harm to the young women who partake.

By the fourth night, the energy was building very well. George came to the house and gave me the paper envelopes of the ashes from the women's homes, and left immediately. I walked in the darkness to the circle and placed them carefully in the centre. Then I sat down and opened them all, mixed them together and added the coins that I had been given on the first night. Holding everything in my hands, I raised my arms high, and then let the whole lot run through my fingers and fall to the ground. I would not now move any of the ashes, coins or paper envelopes until after the last young woman had been in the circle. I cut the string of a 108 bead Mala that I had been wearing since the first day and let the beads scatter in the circle. Then in the midnight darkness I sat in the centre of the circle and loudly began to raise the energy levels with my chanting, until dawn.

## Part Twenty Six

The morning of the women's visit arrived and they came down the hill to the house, all correctly dressed in white, without jewellery or bindis on their foreheads. I asked George to stay at the house, and took the women to the energised circle. At the circle I asked the women to stand in pairs in a line behind each other; mothers in law and daughters in law side by side. I told the mothers in law to peel off to one side as I whispered the mantras into the ears of the daughters in law. Then I asked the first young woman to enter the circle. It was all very tense. After I sensed that the young woman had gained the energy, I asked her to walk in a straight line forward out of the circle and then remain on the far side. In this way all the mothers in law ended up at one side and the completed young women at the far side of the circle and the ones waiting were with me.

After the last of the young women had passed through the circle, I asked them all to leave the site and return to the house and wait for me there. I had left sweet snacks on the picnic table and orange drinks, although there were clearly not enough cups. There was a bucketful of water nearby so they would have to sort themselves out and wash their cups out for each other. When they were out of sight I went into the circle and repeated my mantra as I collected up all the ash, coins, paper and beads. I put everything into a large piece of newspaper I had brought and returned to the house. I sat at the end of the picnic table and asked George to tear up newspaper into squares, about six inches square. He did that until we had enough to give to each mother in law. Then I divided up all the debris from the circle, making sure that each packet had a coin, some beads and incense stick ends, as well as ash and the original newspaper envelopes. I made one packet more than was required. I had added a coin of my own to the circle previously.

When I was finished I stood up and a silence fell. I told them that the mothers in law should come forward and pick one packet each. They did, and there was the one left. I picked it up, opened it and threw the contents to the sky. That was the packet that belonged to the

universe. I told them to take the packets and do with them whatever they wanted. I would tell them no more than that. After that George led them off and took them back to town. One reason why I didn't tell them what to do with the packets was to force them to think. I knew some wouldn't want the packets in their homes and would probably leave them at their temple. Some would scatter them into a river and some would keep them in their home shrines. One or two would place the packet in their daughter in laws bedroom. They did know, and I had told them, not to spend the coin.

### Part Twenty Seven

I gave Sharma a coin. He took it but looked at me suspiciously. I told him that when I threw the extra packet of ashes from the Sadhana, there had been a coin in it. So I gave it to him but told him that it was better kept rather than spent. Sharma opened his wallet and placed the coin in one of the pockets and said he would never spend it, but asked me what it might mean to him. I said it was just part of the process and he would have to think about its benefit or otherwise, for himself. George noticed me giving the coin and although he didn't say anything, I thought he felt a bit left out. But I had something for him as well. I gave him three of the beads from the Mala. He said nothing but just pocketed them.

We decided to relax and watched a Western, Rooster Coburn, starring John Wayne. It is the story of a committed Christian woman who hires the drunken Marshall Rooster Coburn to help her hunt down and capture or kill the bandits who had killed her father. She is very religious and he is really just a scoundrel who upholds the law. I explained to my friends that this film was a good example of cross destinies, where oddball people get together to solve a problem. There was no way the woman would have taken on this drunken Marshall in other circumstances. Sharma said it was a bit like us, three people thrown together by destiny. I said that was right; we might never have met unless the circumstances had made it possible. If I hadn't thought



about a picnic table, and if George hadn't thought of Sharma, there could well be someone else sat at the table today, instead of Sharma. And if I hadn't originally met George, I might have had a different driver and guide. We should just be grateful that we were thrown together to enjoy all our experiences together.

In the middle of the film, something must have happened to set Sharma thinking, and he simply came out with it; is there such a thing a heaven or hell? I had to hit the pause button, with Marshall Rooster Coburn in mid-shot. I think George would have rather we kept watching the film, but he did half turn to listen to my answer. Instead of directly answering, I told a short story.

One day, a man came to visit the Buddha and asked him if there was a heaven and a hell. The Buddha said no, there wasn't. A bit later on another man came and asked the same question and the Buddha said yes there was. Now, Buddha's helper, Ananda, was confused and asked Buddha why he had given different answers. The Buddha said it was simple. The first man believed in heaven and hell and so the Buddha didn't want to make him complacent and so told him there wasn't. And the second man didn't believe in heaven or hell so the Buddha said there was. In both cases his aim was to make them both search and keep searching. So I asked Sharma if he believed in heaven and hell and he said yes. In that case, I told him, there isn't! And without any more mucking about I hit the play button and the Marshall put a bullet straight through one of the baddies. And I enjoyed that very much, especially with hot chicken and beer.

And so things continued on at Hillside Retreat. Day followed day, and the people of the town occasionally threw up a query or two. And I dealt with them the best I could. I don't know if the locals enjoyed a population boost or not, but no-one really complained about it. I stayed there until the autumn winds began to blow, just after the monsoon rains had been, and then closed up the house and headed for the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and my favourite city in the

whole world, Mumbai. It was hard to say goodbye to my friends, George and Sharma, but I told them that we would always share our hearts and the love we had for each other. I gave my Western film collection to Sharma and he glowed with pride. I could see him holding his own Spaghetti Western nights in the town.

As George drove me down from the hillside for the last time I sensed that the people of the town were inhaling a deep breath of relief. They were much happier with their idiot priest and the half knowledge that might just be called ignorance.

### Part Twenty Eight

They say; 'when in Rome', and all that sort of stuff, and so when I am in Mumbai I live a billionaire lifestyle. It's all linked to my Mumbai wife Pinx's lifestyle. She is from a very rich, military family. So I sat there, in our luxurious ninth floor apartment in a walled compound guarded twenty four hours a day, with a full time housekeeper, and two or three other servants, recounting some events for a magazine. The publication is almost a contradiction in terms because we Tantrics don't need things like a specialist magazine; after all we are not magicians of the magic circle or anything like that are we? But the editor, a friend of mine, had asked me to write a column in the publication every month, initially for six months, and had asked for quite specific topics. The main one he wanted, and thought would 'blow the head off' the readership, was about removing and placing a spirit or 'soul' into a new body. This is certainly an exciting topic for many people, but for me it was just business as usual.

I was living in a small village near Palampur, in the Himalayas, when I had two very similar cases. They were both about two young men who had been married for more than two years each, and whose respective wives hadn't yet conceived. I was invited to the homes of each man in turn. *In this story I am only going to concentrate on one of the cases because I don't want to bore the readership.* I told Samir, the first

young man, that I only wanted to come for a cup of tea and would not be 'blessing' his home. Some people have this automatic reaction that when a 'holy man' visits, there should be all sorts of rituals and procedures. They are all based on ignorance and passed down religiously from generation to generation. For us Tantrics, it all causes more confusion and we are like spiritual vacuum cleaners; we have to clear away this sort of rubbish first. Samir was disappointed but I told him that I only wanted to meet his wife.

The house was a typically two bedroom bungalow, and his wife was a young, slim and very attractive woman. Of course, the purpose of the tea was simply an opportunity to scan her for blockages. She was particularly clear of them and exuded a very bright aura. I could see that she had had a very happy upbringing with lots of love in her life. I turned my attention to Samir, and saw the problem was one of compatibility between him and his wife. I had already seen many typically male blockages in him and now understood the problem. There was a gap, if you like, between Samir and his wife because her purity was too much for his impurities. In this case, all that was required would be to give them both a hand; not literally in bed, you understand. I would have to look for a suitable spirit to place in between Samir and his wife, although I had no idea how, who or when it would be. I left after about twenty minutes and nodded in a 'be patient' kind of way at Samir.

Some days later, Samir, another friend, and I, were visiting a temple. It was fascinating, and as soon as I got out of the car I could feel all sorts of energies around. In the courtyard of the temple, I saw a woman of about forty five, a beggar, sitting on a raised concrete platform rising about two feet above the ground. She was mentally ill and couldn't speak properly as well as having swaying body movements related to a repeated stress condition. She was wearing a red and yellow old sari. I went to a local stall and bought some sindoor, which is a red powder that married Hindu women wear in their hair parting. I returned to the beggar woman and sat down next to her. She became very nervous

because no-one in their right mind would sit next to a beggar, who is worse than untouchable. I opened the sindoor box, and with my finger, drew a swastika on the floor in front of her. Remember, the swastika is a symbol of peace and very significant in Hinduism and has nothing to do with Nazis, in India. She angrily rubbed it out and thrust her hand out for money. I looked deep into her eyes, filmed with madness, and calmly got up. I stood in front of her and took a pinch of sindoor, held my arm out towards her and let the powder slip slowly through my fingers onto the ground. I had freed her spirit, and immediately snatched it up for my own purposes. My friends were very uncertain about what was going on, and so were a few passers by. It took me a few seconds to compose myself and realise where I was, but then I continued our visit as if nothing had occurred.

Back at my apartment, I gave Samir an ash mixture from a previous Sadhana and told him to put it on the floor of his bedroom in one corner. He immediately refused because he was nervous. This is very common for Tantrics; people want help but don't want to be interfered with, at the same time! I told him not to worry, but he was adamant. So I had to think of another way to interfere in his life. After they had both gone, I went into a mini-trance and placed the energy mentally in Samir's house. I hadn't been in the bedroom and so could not place the energy there, but I could see a houseplant that was placed in the hallway, and that both Samir and his wife would pass by several times a day. So I placed the energy there, and tuned it particularly for the wife's benefit. The rest of the day was fairly nondescript. I went for a little walk and in the evening called Samir and asked him to come and see me in the morning.

Samir turned up with his friend Pradeep, and was bright and inquisitive, and started by apologising for his behaviour the previous day, but repeated that the idea of putting the ash in his home frightened him. I told him not to worry. I asked Samir to drive to the temple and check for me whether the mad woman was dead or not. I said it simply and he seemed to get very nervous indeed. Well, I

suppose he would, but there is no easy way to ask something like that. He went off with Pradeep, without speaking another word and returned ashen faced a few hours later, sweating and breathless, although he hadn't been running, but driving. I didn't need to know whether she was dead or not, because I already knew, but I did want Samir in that state so that he would easily draw in the energy I had left by the plant pot in his house. He went home 'to rest' as he put it, and so did Pradeep.

We come to the nittiest and grittiest of issues here. People ask me who do I think I am to make decisions about who should live and who should die, and what qualifies me to direct 'souls' or 'spirits' to someone. All I can say is that I have no interest in morality or ethics, or in the law of the land or international law, or the law of God as defined by the many scriptures that exist today. My spiritualism is far beyond these childish and insolent notions of the material world, and I am not going to justify why a disabled woman can be led to an early grave or why a young couple should be gifted the spirit of the woman. My abilities are a gift and I follow my life and heart centres to the exclusion of all else, especially the mind, or brain. It is impossible to understand the work of a Tantric if you want to understand it in your head, and so you can decide for yourself; either I am right or wrong. If you think about it, I will always be wrong, but remember, I don't work from the brain and if you want bigger realisations in your life, start to use the right equipment for the job in hand. I have always said that it is impossible to buy a cauliflower by using your heart or life centre, you have to use your brain, and it is just as impossible to understand the deeper matters of spiritualism if you use your head. The head is a useful tool for the exercise of the everyday matters in your life, and no more useful than that!

Back in Mumbai, I told my wife Pinx, that Samir would be phoning in a few months time to tell us that his wife was pregnant. She, as always, didn't believe me even though she had seen me do a few things before, so I left it at that. And sure enough, on one very hot and stuffy

evening, as I sat on the balcony drinking beer, the phone rang and Pinx casually swung her arm round to answer. Her eyes became large as she began to recount the conversation she had with Samir. I told her additionally that the child would be a girl, and she would have a slight mental impediment that would come to light when the girl was about three or four years old. I had done the job, the best I could and declared that as: Bingo! It was all sorted.

Just for the record, the other young man's wife also conceived and had a son, perfectly formed with all faculties intact. It had been a very similar case but in that instance I got help from an old man who died peacefully in his sleep.

## Part Twenty Nine

Having written my monthly column, I sat back and relaxed, looking out on the cityscape of Mumbai with night time twinkling lights and the distant background clamour of car horns. This apartment was perfectly placed for all my needs. There were two lifts down to the ground floor with a saluting lift attendant to press the buttons for me. Once out in the compound there were innumerable uniformed guards who stand to attention and salute as well. Out of the gate and Mumbai slaps you in the face; lots of people, smells, and cars. There are always taxis waiting but I usually just risk my life crossing the road to the other side where there is a mini supermarket with any Western produce I desire and a whole host of Indian goodies as well. At times when I just can't face all the saluting I can just pick the phone up and five minutes later, a runner from the shop will appear with my supplies. Easy and simple, and I don't even need to get up to answer the door; some servant or other will do the necessary. We even have a servant whose sole job is to walk our dog, Golu, twice a day!

I did go down at about lunchtime most days. Pinx would be out at her work, a nominal appearance at a local exclusive school as vice principal, something to give back to the community or nation, or

whatever, and I would saunter to the beer shop for my supplies. There was an alleyway next to it that led down to the butcher's shop. It was fascinating; right at the back were the pens where the live goats were brought each day, then in between was the slaughtering area, and in front was the counter where I bought my meat. I often stood and watched the slaughtering; it was so simple and matter of fact, and I particularly enjoyed when the chap stripped off the goat's skin, peeling it back and then bunching it up and slapping it down on the floor for someone else to collect and deal with. Another fascinating bit was how the innards were extracted in one long piece from the neck right down to the heart, liver, kidneys, and so on, and hung up in a colourful artistic expression of all the bits that let the goat live; such small and various organs, just like we humans have. Anyway, the butcher knew me and always kept the best cuts for me, and on returning to the apartment I would put the package down and mutter some instructions to the housekeeper who would then produce a fantastic pan full about an hour later.

I often reflected how different yet similar my life here was compared to my life in the Himalayas. There, I had the hillside to protect me from people, and here I had twenty four hour security guards. There, my supplies were delivered by George, and here they were also delivered. There, my life was simplistic and here it was made simple by the servants. There, I listened to the radio for news, and here, the housekeeper delivered newspapers in bed with the morning tea. I was a billionaire in the Himalayas of a different sort to the billionaire I was here. And amidst it all, I had hardly any money or personal wealth to rely on! If that's not brilliant, I don't know what brilliant is. The only difference was that here I had my Mumbai wife who could be a bit troublesome at times, with dreams of materialism and wealth beyond the fantastic wealth she already had.

Pinx was most dangerous first thing in the morning. I had a bed made that would put a king size bed to shame. It was so big; I could lose contact with her for hours in the night. In the morning, the

housekeeper would bring morning tea at 6.45 exactly, per my requirements and Pinx would roll over, her beautiful long henna brown hair spreading across on to my pillows. She always looked so beautiful in the morning and is the kind of person who doesn't need make-up to be beautiful. Then she would utter her dangerous words. It must be something that went on in her head during the night that easily slipped out to make me uneasy. They included, on separate days: my friend has just got a diamond ring worth a quarter of a million rupees from her husband; buy me a car; let's go to Paris for a break, let's go to Goa today; and so on. For me, this apartment and all the trimmings were paradise enough and I had no inclination for anything else. But she is a woman with desires....

One morning she had an idea we should go to Goa. I just murmured and said she should find out the price. She picked the phone up and rang one number. When you are fantastically rich you don't have to ring around, and five minutes later the reply came; 50,000 rupees. I turned to her and said that instead of going to Goa, I would take her out shopping and she could spend 50,000 rupees on clothes and accessories for herself. She said that would be a good idea and she decided to have both! I must be stupid!

Anyway, I went for a shower and on returning to the bedroom found my clothes for the day laid out as usual and after breakfast, my suitcase appeared, ready packed. Tickets were delivered to the door and another hour later I stepped out of the lift with a fragrant and radiant Pinx dangling on my arm and we slipped effortlessly into a taxi. There was no messing about at the airport and in the early afternoon, we found ourselves in Goa. Who said it was important to plan and budget? And another thing I found out for the first time; we had our own house in Goa, a bit musty from disuse, but our own house nevertheless! And suddenly three servants turned up and whilst we walked hand in hand on the beach pursued by a servant setting up chairs and umbrella, and serving cocktails, the other servants got the house in order. It all felt a bit like those 1950's Hollywood romantic



films that were made in black and white; except this was true and I was the dashing actor in the lead role.

In a similar way to the events above, we also flew to Kashmir on a whim, went to a nightclub by plane and limousine in Kolkata, and went dolphin watching in a speedboat out of Mumbai harbour. We even had a short cruise. And all these events were triggered by Pinx rolling over at 6.45 in the morning and uttering some fantasy or other. Looking back on some of them, though, they were very good days, although I couldn't live like that permanently.

### Part Thirty

The problem with writing a magazine column is that each piece has to be roughly the same length. The editor expects regular sized features from me although in reality the stories I might want to recall will invariably require different lengths of writing. And I don't want to, nor will I, just fill up a short piece with ramblings to reach the magic number of words. The editor is a personal friend of mine and so I told him I can only do what I can do, and he reluctantly agreed and made some short calls to people in his office to sort something out. In an atmosphere of compromise, I offered to submit my columns early so that something could be done to fill out the page, if required. One suggestion was using images and that was fortunate because I have another friend who is an artist specialising in Zen art.

This issue of length came up especially around one of the recollections I had that was a very short and to the point matter. Some Tantra is so simple that it can be achieved in minutes. I was travelling from Delhi to the Himalayas and my driver was new to me. He knew about my interests and brought up a matter with me, after we had been driving for a few hours and were just leaving the dusty plains behind and starting to climb into the foothills. He said that he had a small baby daughter that was always crying. The doctors didn't know what to do and his wife hadn't slept properly for months. It was destroying the

family and he feared for his young daughter's life if she continued to suffer like she was. After about fifteen minutes of silence, I handed him my mobile phone and told him to phone home. I told him the problem was solved and his small daughter would now be sleeping. He did so, while keeping one eye on the road and was silent for a long time afterwards. Eventually he pulled over, and sat in silence, having turned and looked at me. I raised my eyebrows in question and he said I had been right. I told him never to worry about it again.

This issue was simple. It's like getting your finger trapped in a door time after time. It will make you cry. In this case the baby girl was hanging on to something from her last life that made it impossible for her to be fully in this one. People die in all sorts of circumstances and have all sorts of unfinished karma. Almost all of this is transported in one piece to the next life. Some children who have ongoing traumas are victims of a 'finger trapped in the door' syndrome. One effect of it is that they just grow up abnormal in some way and can manage to function to variable degrees. For some, the trauma is too much to be able to pack it away and function in this life. I had simply looked into the driver's heart centre to locate the girl and moved her bad piece of karma like taking someone's finger out of the door that keeps closing on it. I had not solved the problem that she had brought with her from her previous life; I had just tucked it into present life, and removed the overlap that trapped her in the middle. The problem, I didn't even know what it was without further work, which I was not prepared to do, would have to be solved by her sometime in the future.

In conclusion, I am not suggesting that all disabilities can be solved in this way. Most disabilities have nothing to do with spiritualism, and have physical and material origins. Some ignorant people say that disabled people are people who have done bad things in the past and are now paying the price by being re-born disabled. I can say with absolute certainty that this is rubbish and the stupid imaginings of the uninformed.

## Part Thirty One

One of the most beautiful sights I have ever experienced is watching the Sun setting over the Indian Ocean. My favourite hotel sits touching Juhu Beach and one of my favourite places to visit is the snack bar in the hotel, and drink beer whilst watching the sunset. The only problem with the place is that just before Pinx and I met, I had enjoyed a liaison with a young lady who works at the hotel. So whenever I visit with Pinx, I am hoping that the said young lady is not on duty, or that if she is, she will not suddenly reveal all. She does enjoy, however, emailing me and telling me what a 'bad man' I am. It makes a change from the admiring spiritual seekers who usually like me, although with a little apprehension because I am a Tantric. I suppose I am safe because if the young lady in question did make a scene she would probably lose her job. She wouldn't want that, and neither would I.

Sunset is a symbolic time to reflect on the day, or if I am in a really expansive mood, to reflect on recent times, or even a span of life. Each time a day dawns, it brings with it a whole host of opportunities that unfold throughout the twenty four hours, although many people think of the day as the period when it remains light and forget that night is also part of the day. And it was whilst I was enjoying a lovely sunset one evening that I thought about someone I knew who had just undergone heart surgery and now was failing to come round in the hospital. It also formed the story for my third magazine column. He had been in intensive care now for more than a week and the doctors were privately shrugging their shoulders. No doubt the relatives would be shaking down their best suits for the funeral, and privately counting their inheritances; or am I being a bit cynical?

What I was thinking about was something that is simple but makes me the most unpopular person in the world when I talk about it. It is simply this; when someone is about to die, how do you assess their relative success or failure, in spiritual terms? Materially of course, it is easy. He had five grandchildren, three children of his own, a Mercedes, two houses, a few hundred thousand in the bank, and so on.

Spiritually, the question I ask is this one; what are you taking with you into death? Almost all people refuse to discuss this topic because they are too frightened by the huge jaws of death in the first place and because most people have never thought about spiritualism before, except for the few pennies they scatter out in charity at their temple or church every Sunday, which is like paying the monthly life insurance premium.

The question is purely subjective and the only person who can really answer it is the person who is about to die, except of course we few Tantric types that entertain ourselves with such matters and know how to look inside the person, groaning and begging to live for a few more breathfuls of air. Most people are taught that you cannot take anything with you but these are only the voices of the ignorant priests. If someone thinks that this life is the only one, then they can justify not pondering questions of death or the 'next step'. They are also utter fools because it is impossible for a human to be born out of nothing and then disappear again into nothing at the end of their life. I know this because I can remember some of my past lives and know where I am going next.

Life is like the Mala that people might wear around their necks. One bead represents one life and when you pass on from the one bead, you simply find another next to it. And there are so many beads that run before the one you have just counted past. The thread that holds all the beads together is like your spirit or soul. So when you are born, you don't arrive in pristine condition and you are not a blank piece of paper; you carry all the unfinished business not only from the last life, but from perhaps thousands of lives before. There is a certain spiritual weight that you arrive with and when I ask people about what they are taking with them from this life to the next, I am simply weighing the load that they brought and comparing it to the weight of the load they are carrying now, as they board the express train to their next life. In simple terms, they have failed if they are taking more than they

brought; it means they have not only not completed many of their circles of karma that they brought with them, but in fact, increased the amount of unfinished karma that they then must wrestle with in the next life.

And so, back to the man in intensive care; I can look dispassionately at him because I am not blinded by love for him and neither do I see an unknown chasm of darkness that many people see when they think of death. Typically, he has been successful materially, but has regressed considerably in spiritual terms, and so I can say that his life has been a waste of time and resources. I say typically, because I can count on the fingers of one hand the numbers of people that have decreased their spiritual load in this life, and still have several fingers left over.

The sun had set whilst I had been lost in these reflections, and with a long sigh, I swigged back the remains of my beer, smiled sweetly at Pinx, the simple girl by my side, and headed off with this airhead, back home and to the huge bed. I completed my reflections in the taxi by compiling a 'school report' for the man in intensive care. *He was a hard worker but didn't get on much with other people. He did what was asked of him but unfortunately failed all his exams. Must try harder next time.*

## Part Thirty Two

In addition to my considerable dislike for priests, another group of people I dislike intensely are charity workers. Pinx and I had just arrived at an orphanage where she was donating old clothes for the poor. This complex is in the heart of Mumbai and consists of an orphanage on one side and an old people's home on the other, and is run by Catholic nuns. In a country like India, where there is no State safety net, these places are heart warming because they help people who are at the very end of their tethers. I don't dislike charity workers because of the work they do, which can only be admired, but I dislike them because they think they stand in a higher plane of morality and

righteousness and also believe that their efforts will help them get a good seat at the high table in heaven, presumably with a good view of God.

People often ask me whether their charity work will help them in their search for God, or heaven, or whatever they are seeking spiritually, and I always tell them it will definitely not help them at all! After that they usually depart with that 'holier than thou' attitude I dislike so much. For the odd one who dares to ask me to explain myself I tell them that charity work is good in itself but is only material and does nothing for their spirituality. In fact it can do harm because if the charity worker feels full of himself then he is less likely to seek spiritually, and the ego can get in the way of self searching. There is a story that highlights the point.

One emperor of China, I can't remember which one, welcomed Buddhists travelling from India to China, and granted them free food, clothing, and built thousands of temples. In fact he did more for Buddhism than anyone else, except perhaps Buddha himself. One day, a great leader of the Buddhists was crossing the border into China and the emperor himself travelled there with an entourage of thousands to welcome him. On greeting him, the emperor asked the question; for all this charitable work I have done, what will be my reward in heaven? The Buddhist replied simply; you will fall into the deepest hell, the seventh hell, the Satma Narak. The emperor was taken aback and had to wait for several weeks before the Buddhist explained. He told the emperor that everything he had done was material and he could afford it in any case because he had been born into money. Anyone, in fact, could have done it if they were also emperors. He had done nothing that was spiritual and in fact had only caused himself more blockages by growing a huge ego. He was carrying more karma than ever before because remember; all karma adds weight, good as well as bad! So, the emperor had achieved nothing spiritually at all, but still had time to address his own spiritual issues.

I am not saying that people shouldn't donate money or clothes and whatnots to charity, but it should ideally be done anonymously. It is the duty of every person to help others in need, but becomes a burden if the person thinks that charity is anything more than that. There is a distinct distance between material efforts and inner spiritual efforts, and one never feeds the other. They are utterly distinct and separate. This was my fourth magazine column contribution.

After the orphanage visit, Pinx felt suitably superior for her act of goodwill, and so we went shopping for more clothes that one day would also make their way to the orphanage. Sometimes I want to laugh so much at the stupidity of it all, but in the end, the madhouse is full of mad people who all think that I must be the mad one because they are in the majority and I am on my own with my funny thoughts. We followed the shopping with strawberry ice creams, and then made our way home. Of course, billionaire lifestyles don't require us to carry our own shopping bags and Pinx had simply left our address with the shops and throughout the afternoon and into the evening, the doorbell kept ringing as the runners from the various shops arrived with our provisions. The cake and bread man arrived with his monthly bill and Pinx reached for her notebook where she religiously kept records. Her totals didn't tally with his bill and so they both discussed the discrepancy of a few rupees for several minutes, until a compromise was reached. I was always surprised how she was prepared to fight over a few rupees with tradesmen and shopkeepers, but was able to spend thousands of rupees on a whim! She said that it was important that the traders knew who the boss was. So that cleared that one up.

### Part Thirty Three

My fifth column was the infamous Gujarati girl case. I woke one morning in my apartment in the village near Palampur and had hardly had my second cup of tea in my hand, when I had two visitors. It was about six in the morning but villagers are usually up at dawn so it

wasn't particularly early, I suppose. They were a father and mother, about fifty years old and so I expected that it was about their son. Something came to me then, immediately, and I knew they only had one child, a son, and it was about a relationship he was having. I sat them down and told them the story they had come to tell me. They were shocked.

You have only one child, a son, and he is of marriageable age. You have already got a girl in mind but he won't agree. He has met a girl he likes but you don't like her or her family. You have taken action against your son's will and now he is threatening to leave home. Now, what do you want from me?

They were more than shocked and just sat there silently, fidgeting, whilst I took a slurp of tea. I had forgotten to offer them hospitality and so, whilst they were still in shock I went to the fridge and got out a carton of fruit juice and two glasses. Then the father spoke and told me that the family they had in mind were very well to do and in a small place like this, relationships like these were very important. He added that since they had just the one child, it was even more important to get it right. I wasn't really interested in their reasons because the person I was interested in was their son; he was the one who needed guidance.

I continued the story for them. You have forced the girl to leave here and I think she is in her home town in Gujarat. Your son is searching for her around here and becomes more and more frustrated every day because he can't find her. You are interfering with the destinies of both of them. You will probably lose your son.

They pleaded with me for a solution that would favour them. I was in a dilemma. I had used the mother's heart centre to find the son because I had not met him in the flesh yet. And through the son I had located the girl, or rather, the girl's energy flow. I was yet in further problems because I could see a fatal flaw in the girl that meant she was going to



die in the next eighteen months or two years or so. If her energy flow had been good, I would have told the father and mother that there was nothing I could do because it was really up to their son. But with this further information I realised that the romantic match would lead to tragedy, both for their son, and then for the parents because he would not be able to get remarried into the family that the parents wanted. The complex life of a Tantric, or what?

I needed time to think and so asked the parents to send their son to see me. They said he didn't believe in spiritual matters but I said that he would come if they asked him. So they agreed to tell him and then left. I was in a bit of a pickle. I could tell the son that his girlfriend only had a short time left to live. He wouldn't accept that in his state of mind. I could change his destiny but that only works if he agreed and he was not going to agree if it meant losing his girlfriend. I could just tell him to get on with the Gujarati girlfriend, tell him where to find her, and leave him to his own devices including the pain that was to come. Or I could just deny having any solution.

The son came around lunchtime and I knew immediately I would have to be honest with him. He told me he only wanted his girlfriend and so I told him where she was. I also told him that his parents were very unhappy and if he wanted to please them, I could ensure that their destinies would lead them to meet in their next lives and that they could have a whole lifetime together, but that would require him dropping her in this lifetime. The reason for asking that is because if they were together now, their energies and destinies would intertwine and keep changing moment to moment as their karma dictated. If they never met again in this lifetime I would have a simple task because I would know their view of each other which would be a strong love tinged with regrets and longing. The sheer strength of feeling they both had for each other would make my job even easier and it would be like directing two cars into parking bays next to each other.

The son said no; he wanted her now and didn't care about anything else. So I sent him on his way and the parents had to be disappointed. I didn't tell the son about his girlfriend's short life. I had made a decision to be honest and at the same time guaranteed the son's destruction when he finally would hold her in his arms and she would die as a young and beautiful lover. The parents were also doomed and would live half lives; their happiness crushed. So, in the end, the parents were losers because of their desires and selfishness, the son would have only a fleeting moment of happiness in a life full of tears, and the girlfriend would be the best off because she would die young and be free of this mortal coil, inheriting another one instead.

These types of cases raise a lot of matters for a Tantric because for one thing I have to be dispassionate. It's like a doctor who deals with illness and death every day; the doctor cannot afford to get emotionally involved in any of his cases or he would not last very long. I have to deal with a case the best I can and then drop it and all the attendant consequences, if I am to remain sane and have enough space for my own spiritualism. The question remains though; how honest should I be? Had I told the son that his girlfriend was going to die, I would have been depriving him of even the short period of happiness he was guaranteed to have; heads or tails; each way someone loses. It is important to remember of course that losing and winning are really only childish concepts, based on selfishness, greed and expectation.

#### Part Thirty Four

My last magazine column was on why the Tantric can never win and why he or she shouldn't care. If someone comes to me and I tell them something, two outcomes are possible. Firstly, the person may or may not believe in my prognosis but either consciously or subconsciously will make changes in their lives, so that the outcome I told them would happen, doesn't happen. In that case I will be discredited as a fraud. Secondly, the person may do nothing about what I tell them and then, if the action comes to pass, they will be unhappy with me because I

knew but didn't do something about it. So then they will hate me. In this way, Tantrics can never win and that is precisely why a Tantric shouldn't care what people think about them.

In order to come to these conclusions, I have conducted my own research. When in some instances I have noticed that a particular event will happen to a certain person, I have said nothing about it to anyone, and have seen it occur just as I thought it would. One difficulty, however, is to get the timing right. Often the event happens but not at the time I expected; usually it is over a longer period of time than I thought. Similarly, the expression of negative energies, or placing a curse, has also been tried by me and it works as well, although not to a strong enough degree. This is because if someone genuinely hates another, it is easy for them to generate negative energies. In my case, the people I have tried this on, I have had a general dislike for, but not hatred. It's like running a torch on weak batteries; the resultant light is pretty dim.

All this leads to a dilemma for the Tantric; is there any use in telling people about upcoming events in their lives? My conclusion, after years of deliberation with myself, is that because I have this gift, if anyone wants to know and I can help, I will tell them, remembering to myself that the event may change because of my advice. But one important factor to keep in mind is that I will not be emotionally involved or hold back in any decision, and have a few times, even given out advice about an impending death in someone's family or relationship. The effect this has on people who come to see me is that they think I am very powerful and more frightening than they thought before, but it is exactly the same process to tell someone about a small matter, as it is to tell them of death. For a Tantric there is no difference in the 'weight' of a piece of advice; it is simply how other people gauge the importance of it to be.

## Bonus Adventure

### The Surgery

#### Part One

Karkani was a good rider and had experience of horses since childhood. I was a novice but she told me not to worry because these were not real horses but ponies, and pretty bomb proof at that. I didn't know what that meant so she explained that these ponies were not very likely to panic or charge off if there was a sudden noise or commotion. There go my fantasies of the Wild West and Indiana Jones type of action. In all we were a party of five; Karkani and I, my guide and translator Anand, and two men from the trekking company. There was a sixth pony which was used for carrying the tents, and other paraphernalia for the trip. We were setting off from the Himalayan town of Kullu, and trekking east towards and then beyond Dankhar Gompe, near the Tibetan border. I had travelled extensively by road in these parts before, but there were places that roads don't go to that I wanted to visit.

We had a pretty loose itinerary overall but there were two places in particular that were calling me. One was an ancient Hindu temple hewn out of solid rock thousands of years ago, and the other was the snake shrine that I had heard rumours of. Apparently, no-one had ever stayed the night at this shrine and it was supposed to be full of Shakti, (spiritual energy). My own Devi, Chinnamasta, and in fact most of the Hindu goddesses, originate in the Himalayas, and I wanted to experience this snake shrine for myself. I am a Tantric and know how to protect myself and also imbibe spiritual energies, and I find none of this frightening; it is just energy and enlightenment. A third place that I was looking forward to was a settlement deep in the remote area, about fifty kilometres east of Chhorang where I had been invited to meet and perhaps help the locals with some spiritual guidance. I have always smiled at the idea of me being a spiritual guide and have never

seen myself as such, but if it makes other people more comfortable, I accept such an accolades.

Our daily routine had some common aspects which I will describe here, and then don't have to repeat throughout the account of the trip. One of the two trekking guides would ride on in the early afternoon with the pack pony. He rode faster than our ambling pace and would be setting up camp as we arrived at the end of a day's riding. The tents were a heavy canvas army type issue, and there would be three of these; one for me and Karkani, one for Anand, and one that was shared by the two guides. We had wood fires each evening because at this elevation trees are plentiful, and in the event we had to climb higher, the ponies were generous and carried wood for us. The guides also did all the cooking and washing up, except when we stayed in settlements. The morning cooking also provided for day time meals, which were packed and served up when required. The food consisted mainly of vegetarian food, pulses and the like, and wheat based chapattis and local variations. We would renew stocks as and when required at villages and settlements and always sought out fresh fruit and vegetables if possible. We awoke at about six and were usually riding by nine. I didn't communicate with the guides directly because we didn't have a common language, but Anand spoke both Hindi and English with me, and could speak the local dialect with the guides. Karkani spoke only English because her Arabic and Middle Eastern languages were of no use here.

## Part Two

I have often been asked by people; which religion is the best one? And so, I found myself delivering a talk in a small village that was equally split between Hindus and Buddhists, with a sprinkling of Christians and Muslims. They all lived together in great harmony, it seemed, and so I didn't want to do anything that might ferment conflict. I told them that there were two angles I wanted to look from.

1. Which religion is best? That is an easy question to answer. If you were travelling from Delhi to Kangra, you could use any form of transport including; aeroplane, train, coach, car, motorbike, bicycle, walking. Depending on when you wanted to get there, where you wanted to stop on the way, what you wanted to see on the way, and how much time you had, you could choose any of these methods. The point is, you would get there in whatever way suited you.

Religion is like that. It does not matter whether you are a Buddhist or a Muslim, a Christian or a Hindu; the point is to arrive at your destination. The only difficulty is that people tend to keep the same religion that they were brought up with and do not know much about other religions. But once you are on one route it should get you there.

All roads lead to the same place, some get there quicker; others enjoy the journey and get there a little later. It is not a race, just a wonderful experience. Remember, the holiday doesn't start when you arrive at your destination; it begins when you lock the front door and step out into the street.

2. I cannot see that any religion is better than another because they all fail in one key area. What is the purpose of religion? I don't mean 'do religions make you feel good' type of reasons; I mean what is the ultimate aim of every religion? I'll tell you. The ultimate aim of every religion is enlightenment.

Enlightenment means when you realise your true self, are the equivalent of a saint and are guaranteed a place in heaven. Sikhism says that an enlightened person is like God himself. The Christian equivalent would be a saint.

How many people do you know who are enlightened? If a religion was good at what it does, there should be lots of enlightened people all around. People who go to churches, temples, mosques, are as

unhappy and have lives full of problems just like anyone else. What difference is there between a religious person and someone who does not believe in God? It appears there is none!

So I say all religions fail their ultimate test. And now I will tell you why. I have previously talked about using a radio to watch television; it is impossible because you are using the wrong equipment for the job. For enlightenment you need to use your heart centre, and instead, religion is all about using the head centre. Religions are good for providing a 'map' that tells you what to do. They are good because they provide you with a place to worship, a congregation where you can share and feel good. They give you a leader, holy man, a prophet. They give you a place to share your joys and sadness and eventually they give you somewhere to lay the dead, and feel that they will be safe.

Religion cannot give you enlightenment because the head is the wrong equipment for the job in hand. The head is objective and the heart centre is subjective. Enlightenment comes out of the subjective and therefore you will never gain any sense of enlightenment if you use the head centre. Of course, there is nothing to stop you from enjoying the benefits of religion, and religion can be a very useful tool to help you feel good, make sense of your life, and have a blueprint that helps you to make decisions. For most people, the spiritual path is a difficult choice, and in this case religion comes to the rescue. But for those of you who really want to realise yourselves, the spiritual path is open to everyone. It's like anything else; you have to make choices and live in a certain way. It is very difficult to go on living a material life at the same time as venturing on a spiritual journey. You cannot have all of everything, and so you have to choose, to decide, what it is you really want.

### Part Three

The brain operates like a computer; everything is processed in a yes-no, black-white, on-off way. If you think about a simple question, like which foods do you like the most and which least, the answer has to be very definitive if you use the head centre.

Let's look closer at one simple choice:

I like chips but I don't like rice.

This answer is actually not accurate because life isn't completely definite and clear cut. It is possible to have a more accurate analysis of even this simple choice. Rather than adopting just the like-dislike two-way method of decision making, try using the sliding scale method. So if I ask myself the same question on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being least liked and 10 the most preferred, I might say that I like chips 8 out of 10, and rice 3 out of 10. This means that depending on the situation, I might actually prefer rice to chips; with a vegetable curry, for instance. And note that I haven't put the choice on one scale; rice has its own sliding scale and that means it doesn't have to be 2 out of 10. If you are comparing two items do not just give them one scale so that the total is 10. That just limits the choice. So, if there are ten things to score, each item should have its own sliding scale.

The head centre makes you choose so that the least preferred choice is effectively eliminated, whilst the most preferred is given absolutely top status. You can see how this might affect many aspects of our lives. We make choices about people, political parties and religions on this basis. We either like that person or dislike them; but what about being in between? No person is absolutely bad or absolutely good, yet the head centre needs this kind of demarcation in order to operate effectively. By saying that you belong to one religion, you are effectively putting out that you do not value or like any other religion, even though you might see some good in all religions. The head centre in effect, divides and rules us in our choices.



As soon as you embark on a spiritual journey, you operate from the heart centre and not the head centre, and so you must remember to drop the yes-no type of decision making and adopt the sliding scale method instead. In fact, the heart centre cannot operate like the head centre and needs you to live and operate with the sliding scale method. Many obstacles in your life can quickly be resolved simply by deciding on a sliding scale method. Consider the following:

- You cannot hate anyone because there is no one who is absolutely bad; they might be 8 out of 10 bad, but there is still 2 out of 10 good in them.
- You cannot love anyone completely because they will have some traits that you do not like.
- You cannot be possessive because greed and ambition have bad aspects to them as well as good ones.

So, you can see that it is important to drop the methods that the head centre uses when you are on a spiritual journey, but the head centre can be very effective in everyday choices. For instance, if I want to go to the market to buy a cauliflower, the sliding scale method might be the wrong method to use. The head centre knows the purpose is to buy a cauliflower, will assess the size, price and freshness very effectively. There is no point giving the cauliflower points out of ten in this instance.

Let's look at one example in detail, to uncover the advantages of using a sliding scale method of decision making.

Are you a man or a woman?

In this investigation I didn't use a 1-10 scale, but instead a 1-100 scale. It is possible to increase or decrease the scale depending on the level

of investigation. I know that there is no such thing as a man or a woman because I have never met a man who is 100% male, or a woman who is 100% female.

Think about men who are known well to you. Can you look on a scale of 1-100 and give any man a score of 100? Remember to consider traits of caring, nurturing, sharing, and so on, which are traditionally seen as feminine qualities. Do the same exercise with women that you know; are there any without traditional male traits of competitiveness, ambition, and aggression? I know that these considerations are stereotypical and it also depends on your understanding of typical male and female traits. I am not trying to prove anything scientifically, but my anecdotal approach invites you to think about matters that we ordinarily never consider. When you embark on a spiritual journey you will find yourself questioning everything that you have taken for granted and taken as the truth, and it is very important to address everything that crosses your path.

We all know of stories of holy men, who spent their lives in forests, on mountaintops, or in deserts, but I have never heard anyone ask what they did there. I find it amazing that no one ever asks this fundamental question. Well, I can tell you what they did and are still doing; they are reflecting on all the questions that come their way, adjusting their inner energies accordingly, and then passing on to more realisations that come from the questioning. I live on my own mountaintop, but presently in this world, and I can tell you that some issues have taken me months if not years to get to the bottom of. And once realised, I can move on with fresh impetus. It's like a journey within my bigger spiritual journey. Questions that have come to me include:

- What happens to a thought once it has been thought?
- Did the past ever happen?
- Does a premonition come from the future or the past?

- Are eggs meat? (An important question for vegetarians).
- And so on....

You may notice that many spiritual men seem in many ways to have strong feminine traits. For men it is very important to awaken the femininity within them so that the balance between their maleness and femaleness comes more into equilibrium. It does not mean that they are genetically changed at all, but their inner energies are transformed. Similarly, for women, it is important to awaken their masculine side. You will also have noticed that almost all spiritual masters who are active in the world are men. This is because it is easier and more socially acceptable, but in India, about 10% of spiritual masters are women. Their path is different and mostly self-secluded.

Where ever your spiritual journey takes you, you should address all issues that come before you. Sometimes, if there is no answer, you can leave the issue standing there and one day the answer will come to you. If it doesn't, then it doesn't, don't worry about it. But remember, you will never find the answer in the head centre. Use the heart centre and the sliding scale method to help you. I can remember many times that the answer hasn't come to me immediately. Once, I was dealing with some lost spirits that appeared to me in my home. I couldn't help them at all and so let the matter sit in my heart centre. About six months later, the answer came to me in an instant. I called back the spirits and solved the problem in about two minutes. Sometimes you just have to wait and be patient.

## Part Four

I suppose I should explain a bit about how I came to be on this adventure. It starts when I lived in a small town in the Indian Himalayas, where I had an apartment and a surgery.

I would not be so presumptuous to call my office 'The Surgery', but that is what it came to be known as. I took a ground floor shop at the end of Dalhousie Road and on the floor above, a doctor had once had his surgery. I don't know who he was but when he left, he had forgotten to take down the plaque that read 'The Surgery'. In a way, my shop was a sort of surgery but for spiritual matters only, and certainly I am not a medical doctor.

My apartment was at the other end of Dalhousie Road and often people came to see me there, for spiritual advice. I wasn't too happy with the arrangement because it meant I might be disturbed at any time. So, when it became available, I rented the ground floor shop and opened it as a spiritual surgery, for those people who had a pain in their soul. If anyone was in dire need they could phone me up and I would agree to see them at the surgery; otherwise they could attend at any time from Mondays to Thursdays 10am to 3pm.

I had moved to this small town in the Indian Himalayas to retire and ponder on matters but found myself to be a person that attracted a motley mixture of locals who were in need. Most cases that came to me were not spiritual at all. People mostly want to know about marriage, children and money; in other words, matters of greed and personal material satisfaction. Others came with what were clearly medical concerns and wanted me to cure them with a mantra, or the like. I always told them to get to their doctor. A few, and it was always good to have them, were genuine spiritual problems that I enjoyed immensely.

Let me tell you about Karkani, my girlfriend. Her name derives from Arabic and she has mixed parentage; Arab and Indian. We met in the

Himalayas whilst I was on one of my daring adventures to get to the banned area of Chinese control, Aksai Chin. That is an area occupied by China after the war with India in 1962. Anyway, I digress.

We decided to take a first floor apartment in a small town, populated by a few streets full of locals but also frequented by tourists and sometimes Buddhist monks, on their way to religious places. The rent was very reasonable although everything is reasonable if you compare it to UK prices. The apartment consisted of a living room with a balcony looking out at mountain foothills, one bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. There were loads of rugs and blankets scattered on the floor, on top of each other because at night and especially in winter the cold seeps up through the floor, and we had an Indian army type oil burner in the corner of the living room. These burners are dustbin sized, with a paraffin oil supply. Most people who have never experienced one turn up their nose at the idea of paraffin heaters, but I can set your sentiments at rest; there is no paraffin smell, and the exhaust is pumped out through a pipe into the air outside. They are really warm, these heaters and very practical.

Karkani was in charge in the apartment and left me to my own devices in the Surgery. I liked the idea of her doing all the necessary things to make the place comfortable and she saw her role as a clear and defined one that made her happy. It made me happy too because I am a person who likes to know what's what. Simple, yes I am, but simplicity, especially in the division of roles within a relationship make life a lot easier for everyone concerned.

On my mornings at the Surgery, I would leave home at 9.50am precisely, although it was certain that no-one would be waiting for me when I got there at 9.57am. It was more about keeping up a routine. In fact, most days I didn't see anyone until about lunchtime, and even then it was just the locals, completing their own routines, who felt it was necessary for them to look in on me. I carried my laptop bag with me and looked forward to starting it up and settling down for a day of

writing, or simply amusing myself by looking out of the window and watching the world go by.

The locals especially liked the idea of stopping off and enjoying tea and biscuits. One of my main activities was to make sure the biscuits didn't run out. Really, on some days, the Surgery was more like a free café. I enjoyed that but had to insist that the services were strictly self service!

Over time, I heard rumours of places that were worth visiting to the east, towards the Tibetan border. These rumours were carried mainly by Buddhist monks and something inside me told me I had to find out. And so, after a leisurely autumn and winter at the surgery, the springtime awoke in me the urge to stop messing around and get off to satisfy my curiosity. Karkani would also travel with me because she didn't want to be left alone, and also because she said she wanted to make sure I was alright. Sometimes, she was more of a mother than a girlfriend!

## Part Five

As we were riding, I had a thought. I was wondering; what happens to a thought once it has been thought? Ancient wisdom tells us that nothing can disappear, and modern physics also says the same. If you burn some wood, it cannot be seen after it is burned out, but it hasn't disappeared. The wood turns into heat and ash; it is transformed into something else. And so I was confronted with a question that I reflected on for almost a year before the answer came to me. Something I wrote previously, I repeat below.

*What happens when a branch grows out of the trunk, and the trunk then continues to grow upwards? Does the branch freeze, or die? No! The branch continues its own growth, outwards and upwards, creating in turn, smaller branches, twigs and leaves. The trunk may not realise what is happening below it because it is in its own creative phases.*

*With a bit of thought though, the trunk realises that all the energy from its roots is not reaching to the top, to the place its own creativity is happening.*

*So, what happens to a thought once it is thought? It does not finish as the mind races on. It continues and the story continues. If you have left a piece of your heart somewhere, you can travel back down the trunk until you come to the junction with the branch of that experience, and if you want to, you can travel out along the branch and see how the story is developing. In fact, if you want to you can re-engage with that experience and influence it.*

I had to verify if this was true and so tried an experiment. I travelled down the trunk of my own life by means of meditation and trance to the branch that represented my love for a particular woman. She had told me that she wouldn't contact me again and so I started to re-engage with her spiritually after a break of more than a year. I didn't tell her or anyone else about what I was doing. I sent thoughts to her subconscious mind for several months. One day, she sent me a text message and said that it was for old time's sake. I emailed her back and amongst the tittle-tattle of the everyday, mentioned to her that the 'dreams' she had been having had been sent to her by me. She replied that I was making it all up, and so I typed out the 'dreams' and emailed them to her. She was flabbergasted. And so I proved to myself that I could re-engage with a story that in the present has ended more than a year ago, but in the spiritual realm does continue. I am now engaged in two other lives at the same time as living this one. It is relatively easy and fun. There is only one case I have ever heard of where someone has been imprisoned for 'telepathic stalking'. If I am ever questioned by the police I shall not admit anything!

## Part Six

Karkani is a very patient woman and puts up with me beyond the call of duty. But, even I, who seems able to solve some of the deepest mysteries that people bring to me, (oh really?), have to be awake to her needs. Some days after setting off on our pony trek, I knew that we would be reaching a good sized trading town that was also a tourist spot. I told Anand that we needed to stop off at the town and spend a few days just relaxing. Anand thought I meant all of us, but I soon clarified with him that it was time for us all to split up and do our own thing. We would meet up again in a few days. After a bit of negotiating with our guides, Anand told me that they could visit their own relatives and return on the third day after we split up, and he himself had a few people he could visit and 'catch up with'. And so, Karkani relaxed in the thought of a comforting hotel, real showers and baths, and a wider range of cuisine. She never really admitted it, but I think she preferred a town life rather than my meanderings through the wilderness.

At the hotel, we handed over almost all of our clothes for washing and ironing. I ordered some beer and slavered at the prospect of drinking. We had lots of spirits packed on our ponies, but it was impractical to carry beer; weight issues, and all that. We both agreed that whatever and wherever we ate, we both needed meat, because all our trekking food was vegetarian. I recommended that we avoid Indian food because it would be a change to eat different cuisines. Karkani agreed, and said she had seen a Chinese restaurant on our way in. She used the bathroom first, to shower and 'freshen up', which gave me an hour or so to enjoy my beer in peace. It only took me ten minutes to get sorted, and then we went out wandering through the streets, and shopping.

I felt a certain freedom away from the ponies and the guides, and smiled at the irony of feeling freer in a town rather than in the mountains. For some reason, Karkani bought lots of brightly coloured but really light and thin scarves, and then we went to eat Chinese food, which was delicious and very different from what we had got



used to. We didn't really do much more for the rest of the evening and slept early in the sure knowledge that the town would be waiting for us tomorrow.

Early the next morning, our clothes arrived back, clean and well ironed, and after a continental breakfast, including three jams and a marmalade saucer with crusty fresh bread, we set off to investigate the town. I had mentally rehearsed that I wouldn't visit any religious or spiritual places, and would instead concentrate on the needs of my Karkani.

We were carefree, and went along the streets, holding hands, laughing and generally making other people feel that they were in our way. We stopped at a small patch of grass with a few benches and had a brunch of fresh fruit, later followed by very strong tea, in tiny cups.

We got talking with some westerners; a French girl, and a German couple, who told us they had 'done' Vietnam, Cambodia and Nepal. I am always disappointed by these sorts of tourists who miss everything and concentrate on quantity. They would probably be in another country in a few days, and tell people there, that they had 'done' the Himalayas. I soon managed to extricate us from their company and we continued on our way.

Being the romantic that I am, I took Karkani into a jewellery shop and bought her some silver Himachali earrings. She was beginning to think I was an ear fetishist because I had bought her some Rajasthani earrings in England. I told her that it wasn't a fetish of mine but that if we ever went to Karnataka, a state in southern India, I would get her some of their style of earrings as well. After that, I told her, I wouldn't have any further notion to buy any type of jewellery. I mockingly told her that she should enjoy the attention I was giving her because after earrings, I might turn to collecting seashells or something.

## Part Seven

Karkani always liked to be with me on my spiritual journeys and talks, and although she hardly commented on my practices, she wanted to listen to what I said. And here she was, sitting at the edge of the group of villagers who were waiting for me to begin. The village had been split for years over some land dispute or other, and I had been asked to offer guidance. As is usual with many such meetings, the issues were not really spiritual but based on greed, materialism and ambition.

I began with: Did the past ever happen?

There was a rumbling in the audience, not I think because of the title of my talk, but because the villagers were remembering the past that so clearly had happened for them.

When there is a car accident and the police are called, they always ask for as many witnesses as possible. Have you ever asked yourself why that is? It is because people remember different things and not everyone remembers everything. For example; the witness who is a driver themselves may be able to estimate the speed of the cars more accurately than someone who does not drive. Some people will know the makes of the cars whilst others will focus more on the colour of the cars. Some people may be more emotional and concentrate on the people involved, especially if someone is injured. The police take statements and then analyse them. If eight witnesses out of ten remember a particular event, it is likely that it is true, whilst if two witnesses remember a different event, it is likely that they are mistaken. And in this way, the police build up a picture of the sequence of events and what had most likely happened.

So, you can see that even a short time after the event, people remember it in different ways. If you asked the same witnesses again, perhaps a few months after the event, the statements would be different again, because some things stick in the mind and some are

lost, and many of them will be subject to exaggeration or embellishment in some way.

Take another example. When two friends meet after many years and recall their childhood, when they used to play together, often it is like they had different childhoods completely. One friend may remember something that the other has no recollection of at all, whilst the other may remember something that was very important for them but not at all important for the other friend.

So we come to the question; did the past ever happen? The simple answer is yes it did, because although people may remember particular parts more than other parts of the event, they would all agree that the event they are recalling did actually happen. The car accident did happen, and the friends did have a childhood. But we have to pass beyond the simplicity of this and look at how our recollection of the past affects our present. If we agree that the past event did happen, but that we all remember different parts or aspects of it, are the decisions we make today really as certain as we give them credit to be? We do not operate like the police investigation. The police look at the whole picture as far as they can discern it, but people sit alone in their homes and make decisions based on their singular point of view. And so our decision making can be even more skewed, until our viewpoint starts to take us away from the reality and into a fantasy land entirely of our own. So my attitude to an event that happened in the past might be completely different to someone else's, even though in the beginning we were both roughly on the same side. The past influences us greatly in our present day decisions, even though we accept that the event remembered may be incorrect in some details.

Now, I would like you to try out an experiment. Think of someone you dislike. Think of them in your head and don't say their name out loud. Now, take away all the deeds that the person has done to make you dislike them. Think only of the person right at this moment with no

past memories. Do you still dislike them? Really, it is difficult to dislike someone in the present if there is no past reference point. And so we can say that it is the past that decides our present. Think it over in the coming days; can we still be so certain about our decision making? We have seen how past memories can be bitty, can change with time, and can be unreliable. Do we build our castles in the sand? And ask yourself one more question; how long can dislike for someone last: a week, a month, a year, a decade, or seven lifetimes? And what pain does it cause us, to hold negative emotions inside us? Sometimes we even dislike people after they have died. What can that possibly do to help us in our lives?

I ended the discourse for the evening, and left the troubled villagers to reflect on the issues raised. I told everyone that I would take questions the next morning, if there were any, and that people should first talk to my guide Anand who would filter the people to me at a suitable time. I needed a buffer between me and the villagers because I needed to relax and enjoy myself as well as work on these matters.

## Part Eight

You do know that you can't stay with me overnight at the Snake Shrine, don't you?

The trail was wide enough for us to ride side by side. Karkani said nothing as I spied her through a sideways glance. She was beautiful with her long henna brown hair blown by the warm breeze; twisting and curling just like a snake perhaps. She said nothing and I took that as her way of saying she didn't like being left out.

There are some things that you can't play like a game show; everyone can't 'have a go' or 'join in'. Tantra is a very powerful technique and, although anyone can learn it, untrained people cannot get involved. Basically, the Snake Shrine was a place that had gained a lot of Shakti, (spiritual energy), by people visiting during the day and even by people

at home in the evening projecting energy via their thoughts, good or bad. Energy itself isn't good or bad, but simply energy. My aim was to uncork the energy and imbibe it myself. This can sometimes lead to great moments of revelation, and sometimes to nothing at all. It's a bit like electricity; you can use it to heat up a room, light up a dark place, or electrocute a condemned man. The electricity itself is not judgemental; simply it is available.

How far away will we camp? She asked.

Well we'll have to see the terrain first, I said, but I think at least two miles away because I don't want to hear anyone or see the light from the camp fire. Especially, I don't want anyone 'braving' the darkness to get a sneak view. We will, of course, all go there in the daytime and see for ourselves. Then, when the camp is set up and everyone is settled, I will return myself and stay for the whole night.

And what will you do there, in the night? She asked.

Well, I will take some provisions with me; a bottle of vodka and some cooked rice. *(The vodka is my choice of intoxicant. Throughout history many different types of intoxicants have been used. It is a personal preference.)* The vodka is used to relax the walls built up around the mind and helps to speed up the pace at which I can enter the circle which will be made using the rice. Inside that circle which will enclose the shrine, I will make another circle in front of the shrine in which I will sit. Then I will enter my trance using a mantra and call for the Devi, (Goddess), to appear. It will definitely be a female and not a male form. Then I will see what happens.

Is it dangerous? She sounded a bit worried.

Not for me it isn't, as long as I remain in my circle for the duration of the experience. After that I can leave the circle and will then sleep in

the larger circle. In the morning I will return, but if for any reason I am late, do not come to find me. You must all be patient.

She knew not to try to dissuade me from the task and we had argued many times about my involvement in Tantra. Although she didn't like it, for me it was like nectar for a bee. It was my spiritual food.

By the way, I added, don't expect a huge shrine or a temple. I have visited snake shrines in the past and they are usually very small and if you didn't know, you might think they are simply a milestone marker that you often find at the side of the road.

We arrived at the snake shrine in mid afternoon the next day. The trekking guides and Anand were not happy and had been quiet and subdued ever since we had broken camp in the morning. We left the trail and followed a barely discernable path to our left. Anand had asked directions from five people at different times in order to find it. We followed this path for a few hundred yards and then it ended and in front of us was the shrine. It was square; each side about eighteen inches wide, and it was about four feet tall. On top was a small pyramid about a foot tall. It was made of solid stone with some worn carvings cut into the otherwise smooth surface. Around it, the grass was short and the ground uneven. The route we had travelled had been grassy but on the other three sides of the shrine there were bushes and woodland. It was clear that no-one lived anywhere nearby, and although people revered this shrine, there was also a tangible sense of fear. Even the people who directed us simply pointed and then hurried on their way. In fact it was typical Himachal behaviour and I had experienced it many times before in these parts.

Anand and the trekking guides halted their ponies well away and I dismounted and handing the reins to Karkani, who had ridden up with me, walked up to and around the shrine. There are several levels of awareness that can be felt at times like these but usually there is nothing out of the ordinary. It's like looking at a bottle of vodka, with

the lid firmly on and the seal in place. There is no chance of merriment, dancing, fighting or making love until the seal is broken and the liquid poured out and drunk. This shrine was the same except I could feel the energy waiting to be released, unlike the others, who just saw a stone and feared because other people were afraid.

After some time, about fifteen minutes, we returned to the main trail and continued on to find a camp site. Where we joined the main trail, I stuck a tall twig into the ground so that I would not miss the junction when I returned later in the day. We rode for about twenty minutes. Everyone was silent for the next few hours of camp site preparation and it didn't do my mood much good. All I wanted was for everyone to be happy doing what they were doing and leave the shrine to me.

I set off back to the shrine on foot just before dusk because I felt the path might be easily missed if I went when it was completely dark. I had my bottle of vodka, the cooked rice, some ash I had from a previous practice, and Karkani had made me a food parcel since I hadn't eaten. I find that the excitement at times like these makes my appetite disappear and in any case, I was about to have a banquet of spiritual proportions at the shrine. I easily found the marker and took the correct path. I stopped short of the shrine itself and sat down in now almost complete darkness. I don't think most westerners know what complete darkness is because of the reflected light in towns and cities. The darkness out in the wilderness means you cannot see your hand in front of your face unless there is a moon. There was a sliver of a moon here and it was enough for me to make out the outline of the shrine but nothing else. I broke the seal on the vodka and started drinking straight out of the bottle. The intention was not to enjoy the drink but simply to get drunk and then be able to relax into my trance.

I sat in silence, moving myself in to the place I wanted to be, away from the head, and into my heart centre. I took off all my clothes and after a few hours approached the shrine, and using the rice, made a circle around the shrine, making sure to elongate it in front. Then I

made the smaller circle in front and sat down. I used a Shiva mantra to induce my trance. Shiva is male, but I have found that I can extract female energy from this source. In fact, many of the Devis (Goddesses) come out of the fountainhead of Shiva.

I am not going to explain my direct experience because everyone has their own path, but I will describe the process of tapping into spiritual energy in detail.

The practice is simple. When you connect to your Devi through the mantra, you can channel energy. Imagine a triangle. The first part of the triangle runs from the top of your spine and just below the back and bottom of your skull, (feel the dip at the base of your skull now). Follow a path across and inside your head to your third eye centre, in between and about half an inch above your eyebrows. The second part of the triangle runs from the third eye centre down to your heart centre which for the purposes of this exercise is where your physical heart is but more central. The third part runs up from the heart centre back to the base of your skull where it meets the spine. Many people try to imbibe the spiritual energy by focussing on their third eye. But that is not the correct place to gather the energy. Spiritual energy enters through the base of the skull and is drawn to the third eye. People get this wrong because most of their experiences come from the third eye centre. It's like watching television; the picture comes out of the screen, but you have to follow the cable back to find out where the power to run the TV comes from.

When you breathe in during the mantra feel the energy entering in to you from the base of the skull and direct it to the third eye centre. When you breathe out, let the energy slip downwards to your heart centre. Don't worry about how the energy returns to complete the triangle; just let the process continue and you will feel the triangle.

At some point in this process, you will feel very energised and it is then that you can have real experiences or moments of revelation. You do



need to know what you want otherwise you will be like a child in a sweet shop, running here and there and wasting a lot of energy, and ending up with very little.

I didn't tell Karkani why I was doing this exercise and am continually surprised that people never ask the question of why. I think she just thinks I want to do it because no-one else dares to spend a night at this shrine. This is very childish! It's like going to the bank, to take money out just to take it out. When I go to the bank it is to take it out for a purpose; to buy something in particular, or pay a bill, or similar. I was here to gather energy to be able to continue my work at the surgery, and to help me prepare for the demands on me later on in this trip. I wanted to know who I was going to meet in the remote regions as we neared the Tibetan border so I could be ready for when we arrived. Often faces appear but not names. I saw many faces on this occasion but didn't really sense any really difficult cases.

After a session like this one, the feelings that I have are both extreme tiredness and a huge buzz of energy. In all cases, the sleep I have if I get round to it, is fitful and full of images and experiences, some of them from my own past or future lives, and many that make little sense at all at the present moment. Sometimes I have met people years later that were there in my dreams. It does allow me to work on them very quickly, as if the experience has led me to diagnose and solve their issues in my sub conscious.

Sometimes, I can meet someone and tell them the story that they had come to tell me. It is strange but happens, and in many ways it's like reading a story that is yet to happen and knowing what happens next.

It was light when I woke up lying naked and on my side in the grass in front of the snake shrine. Some people ask me what the snake looked like and don't understand that it is very rarely a real snake that lives there. In fact what lives or doesn't live there is entirely irrelevant. It is a tool of the spiritual seeker to collect gathered energy left behind by thousands of pilgrims, and utilise it. It could easily have been a shrine

to celebrate a local holy man, or a place where someone said a miracle had happened. I had a slight headache and was very hungry. I tore open the food parcel and stuffed my mouth. There was a bit of vodka left which I drank to overcome the slight hangover. At times like these, although I can feel the energy pulsing through me, I always feel physically weak and vulnerable and it takes a few days to feel just right again. And just a sideline; after a session like this, the sex can be very good for many days, as the energy bubbles over again and again before settling down.

I took my time before setting off back to the camp site. I lay down and assessed my body and its state of weakness. I travelled through my heart centre and felt good. The sun warmed me as I got dressed and I set off back to the others and decided I wouldn't explain anything of what had happened, although I was sure I would be closely interrogated by Karkani.

## Part Nine

It must be something about riding a pony; the rhythm of the ride often leads me to ponder on matters very easily. Today, I was struck by the times when I predicted events yet to happen. Once I was visiting the Hindu holy town of Jawalamukhi, in the Himalayas. I wrote a poem about my experiences:

In Jawalamukhi

At the temple

Three renunciants came

Up to me.

Where have you been?

I started,

I have been waiting here

For you for half an hour.

I have travelled 4,000 miles

To get here and you

Are late.

They, having never seen me  
Before, were shocked into  
Silence, hands still outstretched.  
We need money, one began,  
Three hundred rupees.  
No you don't, I told him,  
Actually you need only 120.  
Big eyes and short breath.  
They didn't know how  
I knew.  
But I did.

Often I know what is going to happen before it does and this example is typical. The three men were shocked into silence and bewilderment because they simply had not had access to the script. It's just like going to see a movie for the second time. Your friend may only be watching it for the first time and so is buffeted by the emotions, action, and the direction that the story takes. But for the person watching it for the second time, it's all fairly predictable, although there might be a few twists and turns that were forgotten and still surprise the second time around.

A second example:

The beggar woman  
Pleaded in a familiar way.  
No, I said  
You don't need money today.  
You've had a  
Good day's trading.  
But you will need some  
Money tomorrow  
So I'll see you here at  
11am.  
She was a bit bemused  
But had never come across

A crazy benefactor  
Like me before.  
The next day she was waiting  
For me and I told her,  
See, I was right.  
She said nothing.

Future events do not come to me all the time, just sometimes. Many people have that feeling, that they have seen or heard something before, or have a premonition. It isn't something that I have perfected, or really want to, but when something does happen that you know about in advance, it can be really weird, or funny, depending on your point of view.

This leads me to another question. If I can tell the future, even if only occasionally, then I am remembering something. So, is the future really the past, because it must already have happened if I know about it? I quote from someone else:

*Mahavir, the ancient Jain Teerthankara, used to say that whatever is happening has in some sense already happened. If you are walking, then in a sense you have already arrived at the destination. If you are growing old, then in a sense you have already grown old. Mahavir used to say that whatever is happening, whatever is in process, has already occurred.*

All this leads me on to reflect on what the past, present, and future actually are? They are certainly constructs of the mind and are easy to categorise if you are living in the material and objective world. But when you venture into a spiritual journey they all need further investigation because they certainly are not clear cut and obvious.

## Part Ten

We stopped at a monastery near Dankhar Gompe and I was invited to address the new intake of Buddhist novice monks. They were all teenage boys with freshly scraped heads, and about ten of them. I like this kind of talk because if the novices get it right at this stage of their development it will save them years of wandering up blind alleys trying to discover the correct path. Lots of westerners dislike me because I tell them they are wasting their time and try to guide them onto the correct path for spiritual search. But once you have spent lots of money and time on books and foolishness, it is very difficult to change someone. So, I leave the westerners alone and have learned to mind my own business. These novices, however, were fresh and had enquiring minds.

I asked them; can I watch a TV programme on a radio? They were all suitably confused and a bit shy, until one of them raised his hand and said no. I then told them that there were all kinds of equipment for different tasks, like motor mechanics having toolboxes that would not be useful for a plumber, for instance. Then I told them to listen very carefully.

You have two centres inside you, (actually there are more but at this level they didn't need to know). The centre that you are all familiar with is the head centre where your brain is, and the other centre is your heart centre. The brain is a very useful tool and you cannot function without it. Some people say it is the most important centre but that is not true. You would die without the brain, but it is also true that you would die without your heart, lungs, kidneys, stomach and so on. But it is an important centre.

If you want to follow a spiritual path, you must find and nurture your heart centre. It has all the equipment required to give you enlightenment. If you try to gain enlightenment by using the brain you will always fail. It is just like trying to watch a TV programme on a

radio; it is simply the wrong equipment. If you want to watch a TV programme you must have a television set. Simple! If you want to gain enlightenment you must use the correct equipment, and that is your heart centre. So, if you are trying to do some spiritual practice that your teachers tell you about, firstly you should think which centre am I plugged into at the moment? Make sure you are in your heart centre.

I will tell you how to activate your heart centre. Close your eyes and take yourself down to where you think the heart centre is, roughly near your actual heart. In there you will find a mirror that is very dusty. The shape of the mirror doesn't matter; you can choose the size and design of it yourself. It is dusty because since you were born, you have never been there or even knew it existed. Clean the mirror. Watch the dust coming off and realise the shiny mirror of your heart. You don't have to do anything else yourself. Every time you remember, travel down to the heart centre and polish the mirror, and every time you have a spiritual question, travel down and listen to your heart centre. The heart centre will only give you one answer, and that will be the right one, even if everyone else tells you it isn't. If you ever get more than one answer, you can be certain that the head centre is at work and so you can dismiss those answers and try again to ask the heart centre. Often, you have to come back out of the heart centre and do something else and return there a bit later on.

Consider, when you turn on the TV, that is all you have to do except change the channels. The TV works by itself, inside. In the same way, once you have polished your heart centre, it will switch on. You do not have to do anything but be there, just as you are there when the TV is working away.

The head centre needs you to do things, like make decisions. The heart centre does not need you to do anything, but just to be there. If you go to the market to buy a cauliflower, you have to make all sorts of decisions: how fresh is it, how big is it, how much money is it, and so on. You are used to doing these kinds of thinking activities and have

been doing them since you can remember. But the heart centre needs you to just relax and do nothing. Things are revealed by themselves to you, when you need to know. You should try it and see. If you fight to gain enlightenment, you can be sure that you won't because you are trying and therefore using your head centre. Enlightenment will come by itself because you already have it. You don't have to work for it, find it, or earn it in any way. It is part of you. Don't rush. Follow the practices that your teachers tell you about and be happy.

Finally, I will give you one more example to help you. If there is a bucket sitting outside, what does it have to do to get filled up with water? It simply has to be there, and when it rains, the bucket will fill up by itself. The bucket itself does nothing.

Tell me the answer to this riddle. There are four buckets in the middle of a field. There are no trees or anything to block the rain when it falls. When it rains only one bucket fills with water. Why don't the other three fill up with water as well?

I left them to think about that whilst I went to talk with a senior monk who laughed out loud at the talk I had given. Most monks do a lot of laughing and I have often spent lots of time laughing along with them. Often, we don't have a common language, but then again, laughter is universal.

When I went back to the novices, they were all stuck with the riddle and no-one could guess the answer. In the end I put them out of their misery and told them.

It's simple. Three of the buckets were upside down and only one was the right way up. We burst out laughing and I felt my job was done for now.

## Part Eleven

Many people ask me what they can do to start moving from the head centre to the heart centre, and one simple technique that I know, I presented to the novice monks at the monastery near Dankhar Gompe. The novices I addressed were the same group as the ones that listened to me before.

Imagine, in the head centre there are three buckets that are filled with different kinds of information; one is filled with things you know, the second with things you don't know, and the third with things that you believe in. We can ignore the bucket filled with things you know for now, and so let's look at the bucket with things you don't know. They are the kinds of things you hear other people talk about but do not understand yourself. For example; you might have heard about Japan, but because you have never been there or read much about the country, you can acknowledge that it exists but you have little information about it. The only thing to remember about the bucket full of things you don't know is that you should not feel bad or negative about it. You should feel pleased that you have realised that you don't know. Not knowing something is a very positive place to be and much better than pretending to know.

The third bucket that contains the things you believe in is the most important one to tackle. I tell you now; you must empty that bucket completely. Belief is a very poor thing to have. If I tell you about some news that has happened and I have seen on TV, you might believe me, but when you get the chance, you will want to watch the news yourself to be certain of it. So, for minor events you want confirmation, but when it comes to huge matters like, is there a God, you are happy to simply believe that there is without even a tiny bit of proof. Another example is the business man who cheats the poor for six days a week, and then goes to the temple on the seventh day and makes a small donation and lets everyone see him and proclaims his great belief in God! He is never going to achieve anything in his spiritual life even if he gave everything he has, because the money is



gained by corrupt methods, and he thinks that belief is enough to gain nirvana.

All belief is poor.

What you need to do is reduce the three buckets in your mind in to two; things you know, and things you don't know. You should also remember that both buckets are as important as each other and never be ashamed or embarrassed because there are things you do not know. There is no one alive who knows everything.

When it comes to belief, and you are confronted with such an issue, simply take it down to your heart centre and look for an answer there. You may not get an answer immediately, but leave it there for your heart centre to ponder on. One day, the answer will come, and if it doesn't, don't worry about it. Any questions about spiritual matters are best considered by your heart centre and you should put aside belief and prove something to yourself. Don't listen to me about God either; my experiences are different to yours. Learn for your own sake and you will be surer of what is true for you.

Another matter I want to talk about today is the difference between knowledge and understanding. Knowledge is something that you accumulate through learning. Understanding is something that you know because you have lived through it. An example: you can read all about how to drive a car, and even learn all the road signs, but it is not the same as driving the car yourself. Another example: someone can show you a cookery book and you can learn about all the ingredients and the processes of cooking but it is not like cooking for real. Another example: someone tells you that the death of a close relative is very painful; you can certainly imagine that it is. But it not the same as if you lose a close relative yourself; then you will experience the emotions and feelings directly.

So, learning and gaining knowledge can be very useful, but the really important experiences are when you actually understand the experience for yourself by living through it. Books and teachers give you knowledge. Direct experience gives you understanding. You should give more importance to the things you learn by experiencing them yourself rather than the knowledge learned.

## Part Twelve

Whilst I have written lots about Karkani, I have never included pictures of her in my accounts. It's all to do with her not wanting to be photographed, and whilst I do have a few pictures, she still doesn't want me to 'parade her in public'. I have worked on her and she eventually agreed to let me include a picture of her as long as she picked the picture, and as long as I agreed that there would be no more 'exposure' in the future. She supplied me with a small picture which I have enlarged, hence a bit of quality loss.



Perhaps Karkani is right because since I decided to put my picture in the account, it feels like my ego is growing at a considerable rate. In any case, here we both are, and as long as the other characters in the stories don't start sending me pictures of themselves, these will be the only images on offer.